



The Impact Of Social Media Influencer Marketing On Purchase Decisions: A Study Of Gen Z Consumers In The Beauty Products Market In India

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Abstract: This research explores the impact of social media influencer marketing on Generation Z consumers' buying habits in India's beauty products market. As more and more platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok become popular, the influencer stands at the center of influencing customers. This research seeks to examine the degree to which influencer marketing impacts Gen Z's trust, brand attitude, and buying behavior.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, with quantitative questionnaires merged with qualitative in-depth interviews in order to derive in-depth data. The survey sample consists of 349 respondents aged between 18-25 years, predominantly engaging with social media beauty influencers. Statistical analyses such as the chi-square test and regression analysis are employed in identifying significant relationships between demographic factors and consumer buying behavior.

Findings are that most Gen Z consumers find influencer endorsement more credible than traditional advertising. Influencer authenticity and credibility are the most powerful purchase drivers and trust drivers. Visual formats such as review and tutorial videos significantly boost product awareness and purchase drive.

However, the research also points to issues such as consumer distrust of sponsored content and sheer numbers of promotions. These negatively affect trust and engagement. The research holds that while influencer marketing is a sales driver, it should be balanced with authenticity and openness to ensure consumer trust.

Implications for marketers are that they have to collaborate with genuine influencers, create interesting and informative content, and adhere to ethical standards in order to establish long-term relationships with consumers. The study contributes to the existing literature on consumer behavior and digital marketing, and the findings are useful for brands that need to target the busy Gen Z consumers in India.

Keywords: Social Media Influencer Marketing, Gen Z Consumers, Beauty Products Market, Purchase Decisions, Consumer Behavior, Authenticity and Credibility, Content Engagement, Authenticity and Credibility

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian beauty product industry has seen a huge transformation with the advent of social media, especially targeting Generation Z (Gen Z), or people born between 1997 and 2012. Social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have provided the platform for beauty influencers to upload personal accounts, product ratings, and tutorial videos, and hence acquire an implied authenticity and trustworthiness.

This has resulted in social media influencer marketing, where influencers promote products to social media buyers.

Beauty companies have embraced influencer marketing as a primary tactic to target Gen Z. Influencers, fueled by their genuine content and genuine recommendations, are significant influencers of the purchasing behaviors of this generation. It is vital to comprehend this dynamic so that beauty companies can strategize their advertising efforts and target their intended customers.

Background:

The beauty products market in India has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of social media. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have revolutionized how brands engage with consumers, especially Generation Z (Gen Z)—individuals born between 1997 and 2012. These digital natives are heavily influenced by social media content, particularly from beauty influencers who share personal experiences, product reviews, and tutorials. This trend has catalyzed the rise of social media influencer marketing, where influencers promote products to their followers, creating a perceived sense of authenticity and trust.

Influencer marketing has become a cornerstone for beauty brands aiming to capture the attention of Gen Z. Influencers, with their relatable content and genuine endorsements, have a profound impact on the purchasing decisions of this demographic. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for beauty brands to strategize their marketing efforts effectively and connect with their target audience.

Problem Statement:

The rapid evolution of social media has had a profound impact on consumer behavior, especially among Gen Z, who use online channels mostly for product information. Social media influencers have become influential opinion leaders in the beauty industry, shaping consumer opinions and buying behaviors through word of mouth and engaging content.

Although it is becoming more popular by the day, the real impact of influencer marketing on Gen Z's purchasing behavior is not yet known. While some research attributes influencers for establishing consumer trust and brand loyalty, others indicate that excessive endorsement of brands and fake advertising can break trust. In addition, content overload, ethical concerns about sponsored content, and short-term interest are the pitfalls to brands.

This study seeks to determine the effect of influencer marketing on Gen Z consumption patterns in India's beauty market through investigation of factors such as credibility, authenticity, trust, engagement, and content effectiveness. The findings will allow beauty companies, marketers, and influencers to develop more effective and responsible campaigns to engage this digitally native generation.

Objectives of the Study:

The marketing environment has shifted with the increased influence of social media, particularly within the beauty industry, where purchasing behavior among consumers is driven by influencers. Generation Z, the people born from 1997 to 2012, is a highly engaged digital shopper who utilizes influencers to endorse, comment on, and endorse brands. Brands need to understand the effects of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of Gen Z so that they can maximize their marketing efforts.

The primary objective of this study is:

To investigate the impact of social media influencer marketing on Gen Z consumers' buying in India's beauty industry.

The secondary objectives are:

- To see whether Gen Z shoppers place greater confidence in social media influencers than traditional adverts.
- To determine the primary psychological and behavior drivers that impact Gen Z consumption behavior.
- To identify the ways in which social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok) support Gen Z's engagement with beauty products.
- To compare the influence of different types of influencers (macro, micro, nano, celebrity) on Gen Z's buying behavior.
- To measure the effectiveness of influencer marketing tactics, including product reviews, testimonials, voucher codes, and tutorials.
- To explore ethics in influencer marketing and how Gen Z perceives authenticity.

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H₀):

- There is no significant impact of buying decision and age on influencer-endorsed beauty products.
- No such substantial correlation between gender and the beauty product purchase decision in the case of influencer-supported endorsements exists.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):

- There exists a strong correlation between age and beauty product purchase decision on the basis of influencer influence.
- There is a close connection between the purchase decision of beauty products based on age.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ekta Lalwani (2021) focused on Gen Z's engagement intentions on TikTok, finding that authenticity and reliability are key factors influencing their trust in cosmetic brands. This study underscores the significance of platforms like TikTok in shaping Gen Z's purchasing behavior.

Kapoor (2020) compared the preferences of Millennials and Baby Boomers, noting that Millennials seek entertainment and trends while Baby Boomers prefer reality-based content. This generational difference suggests that influencer content must be tailored to specific audience segments for maximum impact.

Młodkowska (2019) emphasized the cost-efficiency and productivity of using Instagram and YouTube influencers for brand promotion. This study suggests that leveraging these platforms can be a powerful marketing strategy for reaching a broad audience.

Wansi (2020) discussed the role of influencers as the initial touchpoint in the consumer buying journey. Influencers draw attention to products, prompting consumers to seek additional information and reviews, thus influencing their purchase decisions.

Ricardo Godinho Bilro (2020) highlighted that the type of influencer post significantly impacts consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. This indicates that influencers' posts have a substantial effect on consumers' engagement with brands.

Lei Wang (2021) examined the role of Korean beauty influencers and found that sponsorship display by general public influencers increases product acceptance. This study suggests that transparency and authenticity in promotions drive consumer acceptance.

Dogra (2019) investigated the motivations of young women following beauty influencers, finding that recommendations and affirmation are key drivers. This highlights the role of influencers in increasing brand awareness and driving purchases among young women.

Grynow (2019) provided an overview of top beauty influencers in India, noting that a significant portion of their followers are Gen Z consumers. This demographic insight emphasizes the influence of beauty influencers on younger consumers.

Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace (2018) discussed Generation Z's preferences, highlighting their value for digital communication and authenticity. This study reinforces the importance of genuine engagement in influencer marketing for Gen Z.

Lee (2017) found that strong bonds with endorsers lead to higher brand loyalty and purchase interest. This suggests that choosing the right influencer is critical for successful brand campaigns.

Anjali Sharma et al. (2013) explored the influence of brand loyalty on purchase behavior, emphasizing quality and price as key aspects. This study indicates that brands should focus on these factors in their marketing strategies.

Neal (2017) examined the impact of paid content on customer engagement in the fitness industry and found that organic posts generate more favorable correlations than sponsored posts. This suggests that consumers tend to trust and engage more with content that appears authentic and not overly commercialized.

Carolina Stubb et al. (2019) explored the effects of disclosing sponsorship compensation on consumer perceptions. They found that justification of sponsorship compensation leads to better consumer perception and increased credibility, highlighting the importance of transparency in influencer marketing.

Morgan Glucksman et al. (2017) highlighted that authenticity, trust, and interaction are crucial for influencers to effectively communicate lifestyle brands. This study emphasizes the importance of influencers' genuine connection with their followers, which enhances their credibility and ability to influence purchasing decisions.

Jin, A. Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019) found that Instagram celebrity brand posts are perceived as more credible than traditional advertisements. This indicates that influencer marketing can be more effective in branding and consumer engagement compared to conventional marketing methods.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Study Design:

Using a descriptive research approach, this study examines how social media influencer marketing affects Gen Z consumers' choices in the Indian beauty product industry. The descriptive method was employed to methodically observe and record consumer patterns, behaviour, and viewpoints on influencer marketing. The methodical approach guarantees a quantitative assessment of the major factors influencing purchase choices.

Data Collection:

Data Sources:

- Primary Data: Gathered via an online survey (Google Forms) disseminated via email and social media sites like Instagram and WhatsApp. First-hand customer experiences, opinions, and actions about influencer marketing were recorded in the study.
- Secondary data: Collected from scholarly publications, industry papers, and case studies to offer comparative analysis of trends in influencer marketing.

Data Collection Methods:

- Enquiries about demographics
- Replies on a Likert scale (from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)
- Multiple-choice questions (MCQs) assessing several facets of influencer marketing

Sampling Techniques:

People:

Gen Z consumers in India who regularly follow beauty influencers on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are the study's main emphasis. One of the most important demographics for social media-driven marketing is Gen Z, which is defined as those born between 1997 and 2012.

Sampling Unit:

The sample unit consists of active users of beauty products who interact with influencers on social media and take part in online beauty forums.

Sample Size:

349 people in total took part in the poll. Despite the intended goal of a larger sample size, these 349 replies were accepted as legitimate and satisfied the study's inclusion requirements.

Sampling Method:

The simplicity of accessing respondents through digital channels led to the deployment of a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Even while convenience sampling could restrict generalisability, it works well for exploratory research that aims to find patterns and connections within a particular consumer group.

Data Analysis:

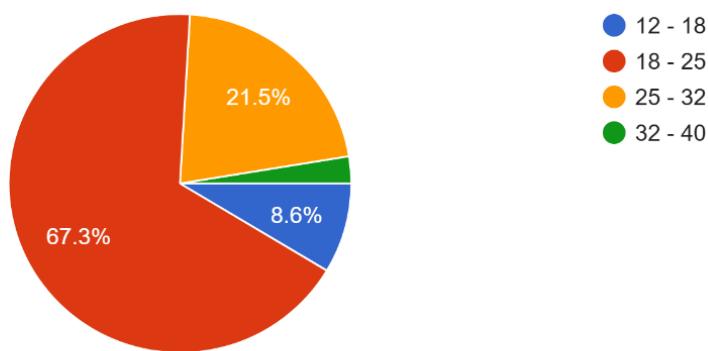
- Descriptive statistics are used to compile information on demographics, social media activity, and purchasing patterns.
- The Chi-Square Test is used to evaluate how age, gender, and social media marketing affect purchasing decisions.
- Frequency Analysis: Assessed the frequency with which respondents engage with influencers and buy things that are suggested.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

The impact of social media influencer marketing on Gen Z consumers' decisions to buy cosmetic goods in India was the main focus of the study. 349 respondents' information was gathered using an online survey. Below are the main conclusions:

Age

349 responses

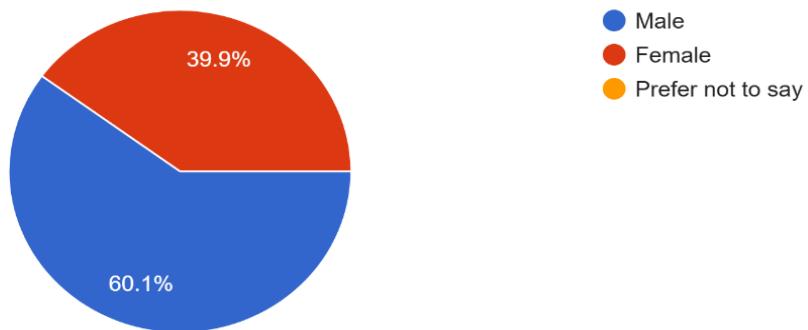


Analysis and Interpretation:

The respondents' age distribution is shown in the Geaph. Ages 18 to 25 make up a sizable majority (67.34%), suggesting that this age group is the main demographic. The next largest age group is 25–32 years old (21.49%), followed by 12–18 years old (8.6%). Those between the ages of 32 and 40 are the least represented, accounting for just 2.58%. According to this statistics, the survey was mainly completed by young adults and late teens, which probably reflects the accessibility or interests of the target population. Older age groups' decreased representation might be a sign of their dissimilar interests or lack of interest in the survey subject.

Gender

348 responses

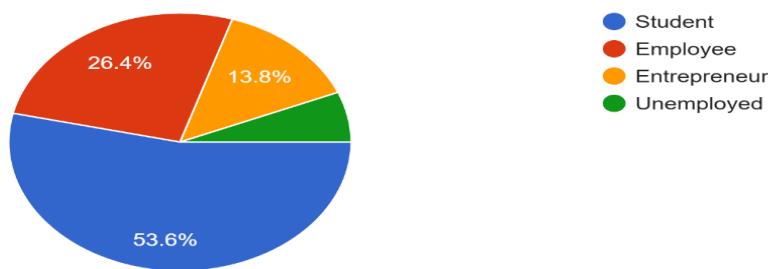


Analysis and Interpretation:

The respondents' gender breakdown is displayed in the figure. At 59.89%, men make up the majority, followed by women at 39.83%. The percentage of respondents that identify as "Other," which is only 0.29%, is extremely small, and none of them chose to withhold their gender. According to this statistics, the sample is dominated by men, which may be a reflection of the target population's demographics or the accessibility of the poll. Due to the survey's reach or topic relevance, the much lower number of non-binary or other gender respondents indicates minimal participation from this group.

Occupation

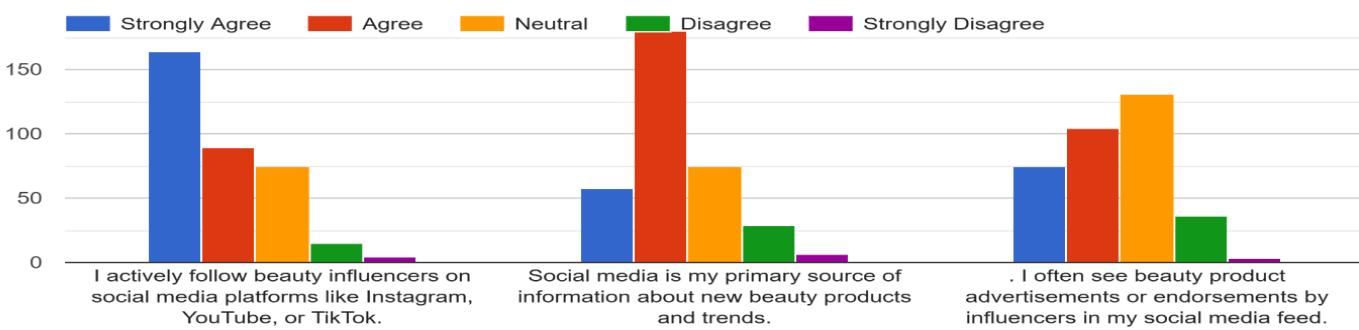
349 responses



Analysis and Interpretation:

The occupational distribution of the respondents is shown in the figure. Students are significantly represented in the poll, accounting for 53.58% of the total respondents. Workers comprise 26.36%, followed by business owners (13.75%) and the unemployed (6.3%). Based on the survey's intended audience or on students' general accessibility, this data points to a predominately student demographic. The respondents' varied employment position is highlighted by the participation of workers and entrepreneurs, although the lesser percentage of jobless respondents indicates comparatively weaker engagement from this category.

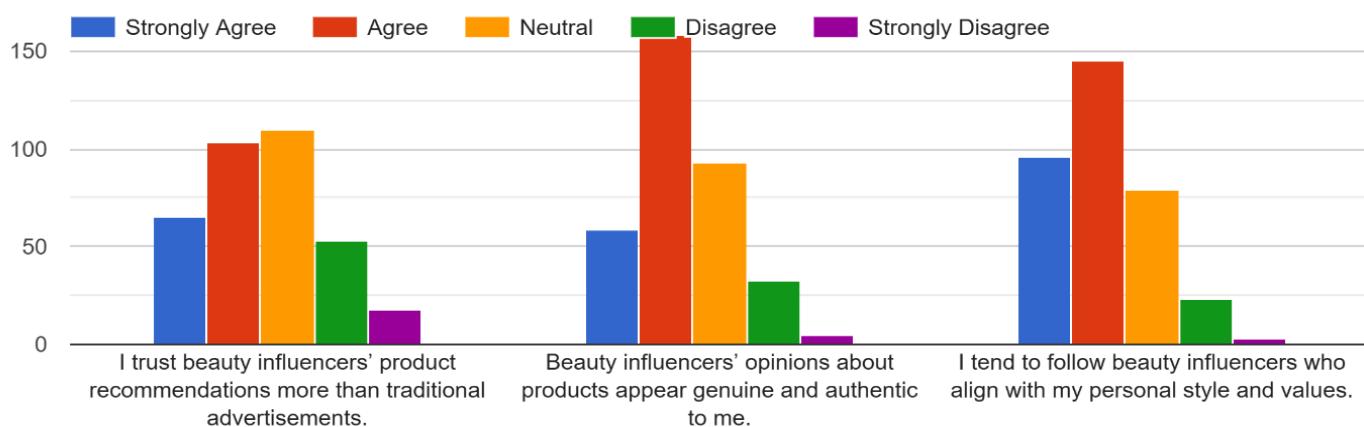
Section 1: Social Media Usage and Exposure



Analysis and Interpretation:

The social media usage and exposure to beauty influencers of the respondents are displayed in the figure. 71.07% of respondents regularly follow beauty influencers, indicating a high level of interest in beauty-related material on social media. With 66.57% of respondents agreeing, social media is a significant primary source of beauty information, highlighting its impact on consumer awareness. Influencer marketing is also widely used, as seen by the fact that 50.02% of users often see endorsements or advertisements for beauty products in their feeds. The study highlights the significance of social media in the beauty business by showing that beauty influencers significantly impact respondents' knowledge and purchase decisions about beauty.

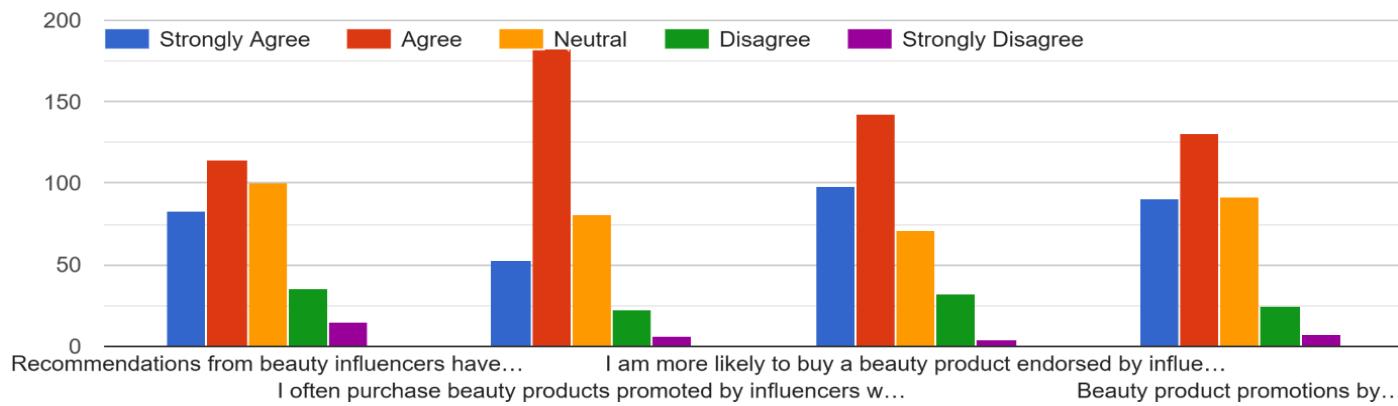
Section 2: Influencer Credibility and Trust



Analysis and Interpretation:

- Actively following beauty influencers on social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok is a substantial 71.07% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree). This high degree of interaction suggests that respondents were greatly influenced by beauty-related information on social media.
- Source of Beauty knowledge: 66.57% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) cited social media as their main source of knowledge about beauty products. This emphasises the vital role social media plays in spreading knowledge about products and cosmetic trends.
- Exposure to Advertisements: Approximately 50.02% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) said they regularly saw marketing for beauty products or influencer endorsements on social media. This demonstrates how prevalent influencer marketing is in the internet experiences of the respondents.

Section 3: Purchase Decisions

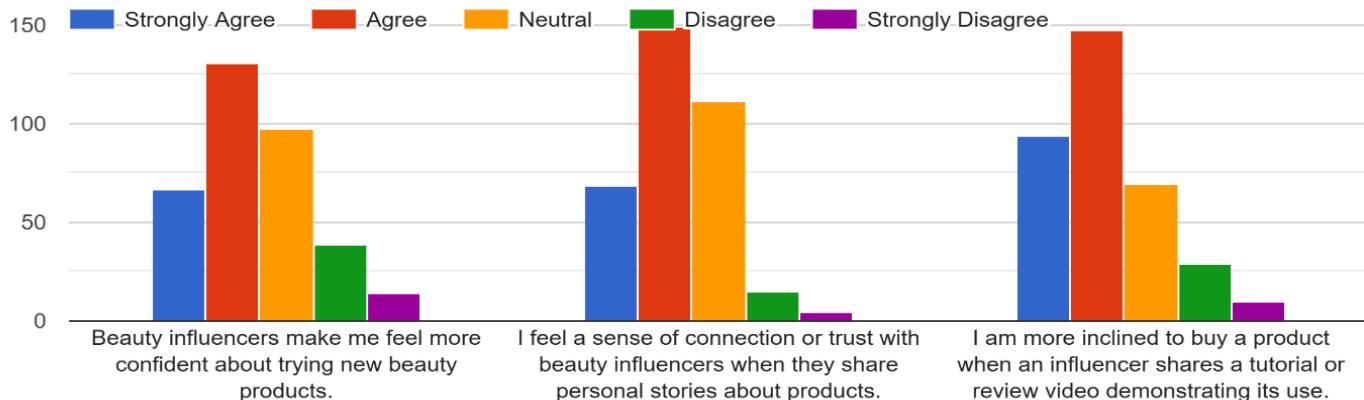


Analysis and Interpretation:

- Purchase decisions were significantly impacted by the recommendations of beauty influencers, as indicated by the 50.6% of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with them. A lesser percentage (13.09%) are unaffected, while a noteworthy 25.71% are Neutral.
- Strong faith in influencers' recommendations is demonstrated by the fact that 61.58% of respondents bought beauty goods as a result of influencer marketing without doing any more research. 21.13% of answers are neutral, and 7.83% are wary and unaffected by these kinds of advertisements.
- Significantly, 63.55% of consumers are more inclined to acquire goods recommended by well-known influencers, indicating the significance of influencer reach in consumer decision-making. 18.72% of respondents are neutral, and 9.49% of respondents are less likely to be influenced by the popularity of influencers.

- With 58.30% of respondents agreeing, influencer advertising help consumers understand products better than internet evaluations or descriptions. 24.16% of replies are neutral, and 8.67% disagree, suggesting a preference for conventional product reviews.

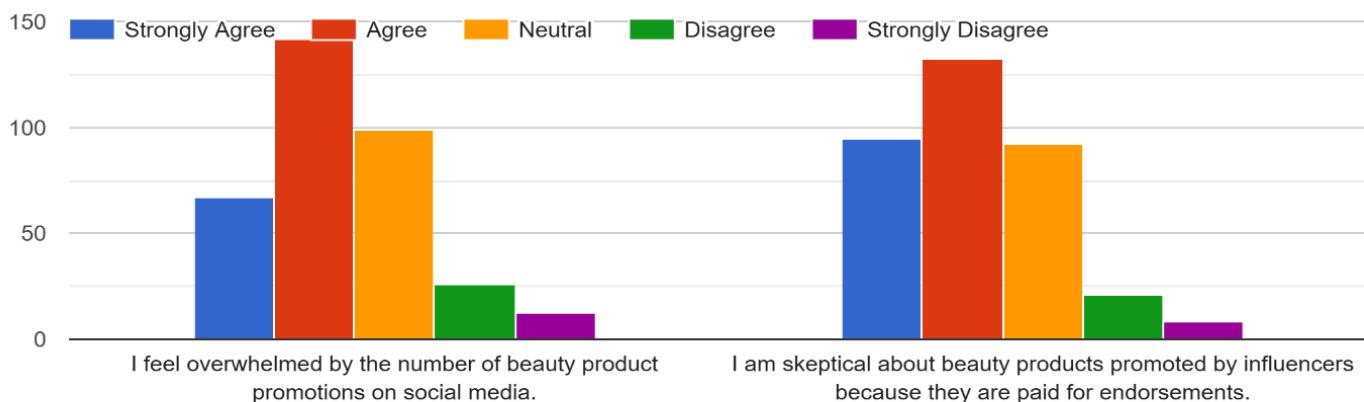
Section 4: Emotional and Psychological Impact



Analysis and Interpretation:

- Confidence Boost:** Because of beauty influencers, 50.01% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) feel more comfortable trying new cosmetics. This implies that influencers have a big impact on increasing confidence when it comes to trying out cosmetic products.
- Connection and Trust:** When beauty influencers share personal product tales, roughly 55.74% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) say they feel connected to or trust them. This emphasises how crucial personal storytelling is for fostering emotional ties and trust.
- Influence of Tutorials:** Purchase decisions are greatly influenced by influencer tutorials or review videos, as 62.43% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) are more likely to purchase goods that influencers endorse. This demonstrates how well visual material may affect customer behaviour.

Section 5: Negative Impact and Challenges

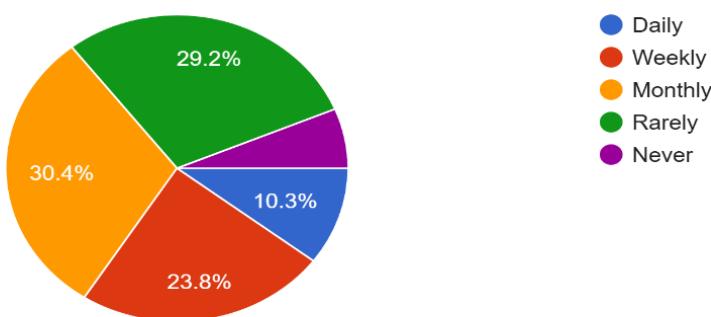


Analysis and Interpretation:

- Feeling Overwhelmed:** The quantity of beauty product advertising on social media overwhelms a noteworthy 52.98% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree). This suggests that a sizable percentage of respondents think the advertising material is overly obtrusive.
- Scepticism:** Due to compensated endorsements, 58.92% of respondents (Strongly Agree and Agree) express scepticism regarding cosmetic goods advertised by influencers. This implies a keen understanding of and concern for the legitimacy of influencer marketing.

How often do you interact with beauty influencers on social media platforms?

349 responses

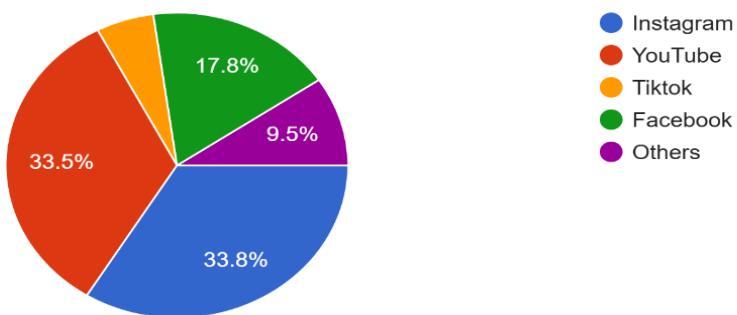


Analysis and Interpretation:

The frequency with which respondents engage with beauty influencers varies: 10.32% daily, 23.78% weekly, and 30.37% monthly. Notably, 6.30% never interact, and 29.23% do so infrequently. This data demonstrates that although a large percentage of respondents connect with beauty influencers on a regular basis, a sizable fraction do so less often, indicating a range of engagement levels within the sample.

Which social media platform do you primarily use to follow beauty influencers?

349 responses

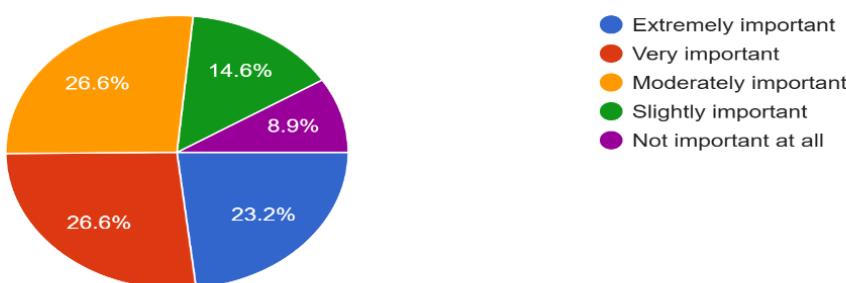


Analysis and Interpretation:

The main social media sites that respondents use to follow beauty influencers are displayed in the figure. The most widely used platforms for beauty content are Instagram (33.81%), which is slightly ahead of YouTube (33.52%). Facebook makes up 17.77%, which indicates that some user groups still find it relevant. TikTok's lower presence (5.44%) can be the result of its more recent launch or emphasis on younger users. Platforms other than these comprise 9.46%. With sizable Facebook user bases and an increasing presence on TikTok, this research identifies Instagram and YouTube as the leading channels for beauty influencer engagement.

How important is the credibility of a beauty influencer in your decision to trust their recommendations?

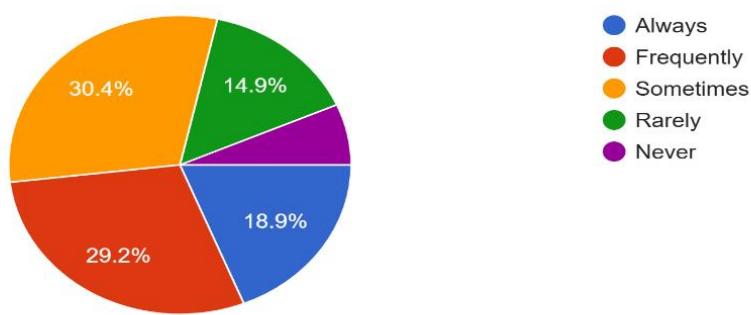
349 responses



Analysis and Interpretation:

The figure illustrates how crucial credibility is to believing the advice of beauty influencers. 49.86% of respondents, a sizable majority, believe that trustworthiness is extremely or very important. Credibility is regarded as fairly significant by another 26.65% of respondents, meaning that more than three-quarters of them give it a high priority. Just 14.61% of respondents say it is somewhat important, while 8.88% say it is not significant at all. According to the statistics, most respondents consider credibility to be crucial when determining whether or not to believe recommendations from beauty influencers. This highlights the necessity for influencers to continue being genuine and trustworthy in their marketing.

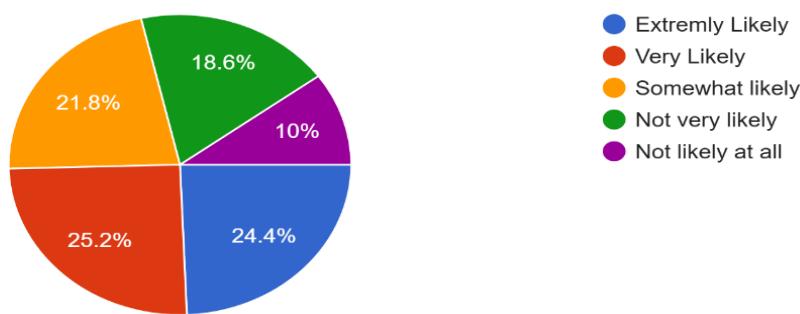
How often do you purchase beauty products recommended by influencers?
349 responses



Analysis and Interpretation:

The frequency of buying beauty items that influencers promote is shown in the figure. Of those surveyed, 78.51% buy these things at least occasionally, with 18.91% constantly, 29.23% often, and 30.37% occasionally. This indicates that beauty influencers have a big impact on consumers' buying decisions. However, among a smaller sample of respondents, 14.90% seldom buy items and 6.59% never buy products based on influencer recommendations, suggesting some degree of independence or scepticism. Overall, the research shows that beauty influencers have a significant impact on consumers' shopping decisions, with most being impacted to some degree.

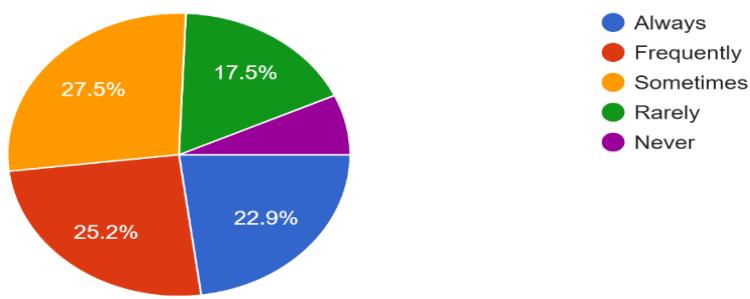
How likely are you to try a new beauty product after seeing it promoted by an influencer?
349 responses



Analysis and Interpretation:

According to the research, a sizable percentage of respondents are willing to test new cosmetics that influencers recommend. 49.57% of respondents say they are "Very Likely" or "Extremely Likely" to buy, underscoring the powerful impact of social media recommendations. On the other hand, 28.65% exhibit some resistance and fall into the "Not Very Likely" or "Not Likely at All" categories. "Somewhat Likely," which denotes a moderate influence, is the remaining 21.78%. All things considered, the data highlights the potential efficacy of influencer marketing in the market for beauty products, but it also indicates that a sizeable portion of the audience is still dubious.

How often do you feel misled by beauty product promotions from influencers?
349 responses



Analysis and Interpretation:

According to the research, a sizable percentage of respondents had some degree of skepticism regarding influencers' endorsements of cosmetic products. A considerable amount of suspicion regarding influencer endorsements is evident from the 48.13% of respondents who said they felt "Always" or "Frequently" misled. A mixed perception is indicated by the additional 27.51% of respondents who say they feel "Sometimes" deceived. A small percentage of respondents (24.36%) say they are "rarely" or "never" misled, indicating that they still have faith in these campaigns. This report emphasizes how difficult it is for influencer marketing to continue to be genuine and credible in the eyes of customers.

Result and Finding:

The study emphasizes how social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on Gen Z consumers' decisions to buy beauty products. With 67.34% of the responders, the 18–25 age group is the most active demographic. With 71.07% of them regularly following beauty influencers and 66.57% of them citing social media as their main source for beauty trends, this group is very dependent on it. The distribution of responses by gender shows that men make up the majority (59.89%), although women (39.83%) are also quite important in influencer-driven buying. The majority (53.58%) are students, suggesting a young customer base with strong levels of digital engagement.

Although 58.92% show scepticism owing to compensated endorsements, 54.86% of respondents believe influencer comments are genuine. Additionally, 61.58% of respondents bought items without doing additional research, and 50.6% of respondents acknowledged that they were affected by beauty influencers while making purchases.

However, 52.98% of respondents feel overloaded by the constant marketing for cosmetic products, raising concerns about information saturation. According to the study, micro-influencers can become popular because of how genuine they are seen to be. In general, to increase the efficacy of influencer marketing, firms must place a high priority on openness, genuineness, and audience trust.

Critical Analysis: limitations and potential biases.

Although this study offers insightful information on how social media influencer marketing affects Gen Z's decisions to buy cosmetic products, there are a number of restrictions and possible biases to take into account. The sample makeup is one significant drawback. The survey mostly used young, tech-savvy people, mostly students (53.58%), which could not be representative of all Gen Zers, including working professionals and others who use social media less. Furthermore, the gender distribution of the study is skewed (59.89% male), which may have an impact on the findings' generalisability considering that the beauty sector mostly caters to female consumers.

Self-reported data might potentially contain potential biases. Because of social desirability bias, respondents may overestimate or underestimate how much they depend on influencers. Furthermore, answers may be influenced by past exposure and brand familiarity, making it challenging to distinguish the direct impact of influencer marketing.

The study's emphasis on social media sites like YouTube and Instagram is another drawback. Offline impacts and new platforms (like rivals to TikTok) are not thoroughly examined. Furthermore, the study limits insights into long-term brand loyalty by failing to take consumer retention or long-term buying behaviour into consideration.

Conclusion:

The report emphasises how social media influencer marketing has a big impact on Gen Z's buying habits in India's beauty goods sector. Research indicates that Gen Z customers, especially those between the ages of 18 and 25, actively follow and have faith in beauty influencers on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Although influencer marketing has been successful in influencing consumer impressions of brands and decisions to buy, its effects vary depending on a number of variables, including the trustworthiness of the influencer, engagement levels, and the authenticity of the material. Interestingly, males are more inclined to buy seldom, while women are somewhat more likely to buy regularly. Statistical tests, however, indicate that although there are trends in age and gender, they are not statistically significant. Additionally, the study finds a significant gender gap in survey responses, suggesting that future studies should aim for more equal representation. Furthermore, the overwhelming participation of students (53.58% of respondents) implies that beauty businesses ought to target this group with their marketing campaigns. Influencer marketing is a potent tool, but the report also points out drawbacks including excessive advertising, mistrust of sponsored endorsements, and shifting customer confidence. Maintaining the efficacy of influencer-driven initiatives requires continued transparency and genuineness.

Practical Implications:

Beauty firms should give priority to working with influencers that have established a reputation for being truthful and open in light of the results. Long-term engagement and preserving customer trust depend heavily on authenticity. Although micro and nano influencers have smaller fan bases, they frequently have more devoted and active audiences, thus brands should concentrate on them. Marketing tactics must be platform-specific, utilising YouTube and Instagram to create graphic and video content that appeals to Gen Z customers. In-depth and instructive information, such as advice on how to use the product and firsthand accounts, may improve brand comprehension and customer trust. Brands must make sure that their partnerships with influencers are transparent in order to combat customer scepticism. Genuine reviews and transparent sponsorship disclosure can reduce customer mistrust and lessen feelings of deception.

Suggestions for Future Research:

The long-term impacts of influencer marketing on Gen Z consumers' brand loyalty may be the subject of future studies. Longitudinal studies that monitor customer behaviour over time may shed further light on how long influencer-driven marketing campaigns may last.

The effect of new and developing social media platforms on influencer marketing might also be the subject of future research. Knowing how platforms like TikTok and new trends like virtual influencers impact consumer behaviour will be essential as digital landscapes change. Examining how Indian culture differs, especially between urban and rural customers, may help us comprehend the diverse effects of influencer marketing more thoroughly. Finally, methods for improving the efficacy of influencer partnerships may be found by investigating the psychological processes behind consumer trust and scepticism towards influencers. Future studies that focus on these topics may yield more complex and useful information, allowing companies to improve their marketing plans and establish stronger ties with India's vibrant Gen Z customer base.

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