An Analytical Study Motivating And Inhibiting Factor For Gen Z Customer Of Online Apparel Retailer

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Abstract: This research examines the impact of social media influencer marketing on Generation Z consumers' buying habits in India's online retail clothing market. With platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok dominating social media landscapes, influencers have become central figures in shaping customer preferences. This study aims to explore the extent to which influencer marketing influences Gen Z's trust, brand perception, and purchasing decisions within the online clothing industry.

A mixed-methods approach is utilized, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative in-depth interviews to gather comprehensive insights. The survey sample comprises 222 respondents aged between 18-25 years, predominantly engaging with social media fashion influencers. Statistical methods such as chi-square tests and regression analysis are employed to examine the relationships between demographic factors and consumer purchasing behavior.

Findings indicate that most Gen Z consumers find influencer endorsements more trustworthy than traditional advertisements. The authenticity and credibility of influencers are identified as the most significant drivers of trust and purchasing decisions. Visual content formats such as outfit reviews, styling tutorials, and haul videos notably enhance product awareness and purchasing intent.

However, the research also highlights challenges such as growing skepticism towards sponsored content and the overwhelming volume of influencer promotions, which can erode trust and engagement. While influencer marketing proves to be a powerful sales driver, it is essential for brands to maintain authenticity and transparency to foster long-term consumer relationships.

The study offers valuable insights for marketers, suggesting that they should collaborate with authentic influencers, develop engaging and informative content, and adhere to ethical marketing practices to build

trust with Gen Z consumers. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior and digital marketing and provide useful guidance for brands aiming to engage India's young, digitally-savvy online clothing shoppers.

2. Introduction:

The Indian online retail clothing industry has undergone a profound transformation with the rise of social media, especially among Generation Z (Gen Z)—individuals born between 1997 and 2012. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have given influencers the ability to share personal stories, fashion tips, product reviews, and styling videos, earning them credibility and trust from their followers. This shift has led to the widespread use of social media influencer marketing, where influencers promote clothing brands to their audiences, significantly impacting buying behaviors.

Clothing brands have recognized the power of influencer marketing and are using it as a core strategy to target Gen Z. Influencers, known for their authentic content and genuine product recommendations, play a major role in shaping the purchasing decisions of this generation. Understanding the dynamics of influencer marketing is crucial for brands to tailor their marketing strategies and connect effectively with their target consumers in the online clothing retail industry.

2.1. Background:

The online retail clothing market in India has experienced significant growth with the proliferation of social media. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have reshaped the way brands engage with consumers, especially Gen Z—digital natives who are highly influenced by content shared by fashion influencers. These influencers often post personal experiences, product reviews, styling tips, and fashion tutorials, which have created a sense of trust and authenticity. This shift has led to the rise of social media influencer marketing, where influencers recommend clothing products to their followers, giving them a perceived credibility and influence over consumer choices.

Influencer marketing has become integral for clothing brands seeking to attract the attention of Gen Z. Influencers, with their relatable and authentic content, significantly impact purchasing behaviors and brand perceptions among this demographic. To effectively reach and engage this audience, it is essential for clothing brands to understand how influencer marketing drives the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers.

2.2. Problem Statement:

The rapid growth of social media and influencer marketing has drastically altered consumer behavior, particularly among Gen Z, who primarily rely on social media platforms for product information. Influencers have become key opinion leaders within the online clothing industry, shaping consumer attitudes, preferences, and buying decisions through engaging content and personal endorsements.

Although influencer marketing is gaining prominence, the actual influence of social media influencers on Gen Z's clothing purchase behavior remains unclear. While some studies suggest that influencers foster brand loyalty and trust, others point out that excessive endorsements or inauthentic content may diminish consumer trust. Moreover, issues like content saturation, the ethics of sponsored promotions, and concerns about transparency also need to be addressed to ensure the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

This study aims to evaluate the impact of influencer marketing on Gen Z's purchasing behavior in India's online clothing retail sector, focusing on factors such as credibility, authenticity, trust, engagement, and the effectiveness of content. The results will help clothing brands, marketers, and influencers develop more impactful and responsible campaigns tailored to this digitally savvy generation.

2.3. Objectives of the Study:

The marketing landscape has evolved with the growing influence of social media, particularly in the online retail clothing sector, where Gen Z consumers rely on influencers for recommendations, product reviews, and brand endorsements. This study aims to explore the impact of influencer marketing on Gen Z's purchasing behavior, allowing brands to optimize their marketing strategies.

The primary objective of this study is:

- To investigate the effect of social media influencer marketing on Gen Z consumers' purchasing behavior in India's online retail clothing industry.

The secondary objectives are:

- To assess whether Gen Z consumers place more trust in social media influencers compared to traditional advertisements.
- To identify the primary psychological and behavioral factors that influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions in online clothing retail.
- To examine how social media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok) facilitate Gen Z's engagement with online clothing brands.
- To evaluate the influence of different types of influencers (macro, micro, nano, and celebrity) on Gen Z's clothing purchase behavior.
- To measure the effectiveness of influencer marketing tactics, such as product reviews, fashion tutorials, discount codes, and unboxing videos.
- To investigate the ethics of influencer marketing and how Gen Z perceives authenticity in brand endorsements.

2.4. Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H₀):

- There is no significant impact of age and purchasing decision on influencer-endorsed clothing products.
- No significant correlation exists between gender and the purchase decision of clothing products in the case of influencer-supported endorsements.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):

- There is a significant relationship between age and purchasing decisions for clothing products based on influencer influence.
- There is a noticeable connection between gender and clothing purchase decisions influenced by social media endorsements.\

3. 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 clothing brands. This study highlights the role of platforms like TikTok in shaping Gen Z's purchasing behavior in the online retail clothing sector, where influencers drive brand engagement.

Kapoor (2020) compared the preferences of Millennials and Baby Boomers, noting that Millennials value entertainment, trends, and social influence, while Baby Boomers prefer more traditional, reality-based content. This generational difference emphasizes the importance of tailoring influencer marketing content to specific audience segments, especially for fashion and clothing brands.

Młodkowska (2019) highlighted the cost-efficiency and productivity of using Instagram and YouTube influencers for brand promotion, specifically in the fashion sector. This study suggests that leveraging these platforms to reach a broad, targeted audience can significantly enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing in online clothing retail.

Wansi (2020) discussed the role of influencers as the initial touchpoint in the consumer buying journey. Influencers often introduce fashion products to consumers, prompting them to seek further information, reviews, and brand exploration, thus driving purchasing decisions in the online clothing retail industry.

Ricardo Godinho Bilro (2020) emphasized that the type of influencer post significantly impacts consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. The study shows that influencers' posts—such as styled outfits, unboxing videos, and lookbooks—have a substantial effect on consumer engagement with clothing brands.

Lei Wang (2021) examined the role of fashion influencers and found that sponsorship display by influencers increases product acceptance. The research underscores that transparency and authenticity in clothing promotions drive consumer trust and acceptance, which are essential in the fashion industry.

Dogra (2019) investigated the motivations of young women following fashion influencers, finding that clothing recommendations and affirmation from influencers are key drivers of purchase decisions. This suggests that influencers are crucial in increasing brand awareness and driving clothing sales among young female consumers.

Grynow (2019) provided an overview of top fashion influencers in India, noting that a significant portion of their followers are Gen Z consumers. This demographic insight highlights the influence of fashion influencers on younger shoppers, making them a vital target group for online clothing retail marketing.

Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace (2018) discussed Generation Z's preferences, emphasizing their strong inclination toward digital communication and authentic engagement. This study reinforces the importance of genuine and transparent influencer marketing strategies for clothing brands targeting Gen Z.

Lee (2017) found that strong emotional bonds with fashion endorsers lead to higher brand loyalty and purchase interest. This finding suggests that clothing brands need to choose the right influencers to create lasting connections with consumers and achieve successful marketing outcomes.

Anjali Sharma et al. (2013) explored the influence of brand loyalty on purchasing behavior, noting that factors like quality, price, and brand image are crucial in shaping consumer preferences in the clothing market. This study implies that brands should prioritize these aspects while collaborating with influencers to ensure better outcomes in the online clothing industry.

Neal (2017) examined the impact of paid content on customer engagement in the fitness industry and found that organic, non-sponsored content generates more favorable consumer reactions compared to heavily commercialized posts. This insight is relevant for the online clothing industry, where consumers may be more responsive to authentic, organic influencer content than paid promotions.

Carolina Stubb et al. (2019) explored the effects of disclosing sponsorship compensation on consumer perceptions. They found that transparency in sponsorship led to more positive consumer perceptions, increasing credibility. This finding suggests that clothing brands need to adopt transparent influencer partnerships to maintain consumer trust.

Morgan Glucksman et al. (2017) highlighted that authenticity, trust, and interaction are critical for influencers to effectively communicate lifestyle brands, including clothing brands. This study emphasizes the importance of genuine relationships between fashion influencers and their followers to enhance brand influence and engagement.

Jin, A. Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019) found that Instagram celebrity brand posts are perceived as more credible than traditional advertisements. This study suggests that influencer marketing can be more effective in engaging Gen Z consumers and driving brand interactions compared to conventional advertising in the online clothing retail space.

3.1. Trends, Gaps, and Areas for Further Research

The literature reflects several key trends in influencer marketing, such as the importance of authenticity, trustworthiness, and transparency. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are central to shaping Gen Z's purchasing behaviors, particularly in the online clothing retail sector. Influencer marketing is increasingly becoming a primary method for clothing brands to reach and engage with consumers.

However, there are notable gaps in the literature regarding the long-term influence of influencer marketing on brand loyalty and consumer retention. Further research is needed to investigate how influencer marketing can foster sustained consumer loyalty, especially in the highly competitive and fast-moving online clothing market.

Another area for further exploration is the ethical concerns surrounding paid influencer endorsements, including the impact of over-commercialization on consumer trust. Understanding how brands can maintain transparency and authenticity in their influencer partnerships will be vital for future influencer marketing strategies.

Additionally, research could delve into the performance of various types of influencers (mega, macro, micro, and nano) in the online clothing retail space and their differing impacts on consumer behavior. Investigating how new and emerging platforms, such as Snapchat or Threads, influence consumer perceptions and purchase decisions could also provide valuable insights for clothing brands.

Furthermore, understanding the psychological drivers of consumer behavior in the online clothing industry and how cultural differences influence influencer marketing success would help brands optimize their campaigns and connect more deeply with diverse consumer segments.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Study Design:

This study employs a descriptive research approach to investigate the impact of social media influencer marketing on Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions in India's online retail clothing industry. The descriptive method is used to systematically observe and document consumer behaviors, preferences, and opinions regarding influencer marketing. The approach ensures a quantitative analysis of the major factors influencing purchase decisions, with a focus on the online clothing retail sector.

4.2. Data Collection:

4.2.1. Data Sources:

- **Primary Data:** The primary data will be collected through an online survey (Google Forms), shared via email and social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. The survey will capture firsthand customer experiences, opinions, and actions concerning influencer marketing in the online clothing retail space.

- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data will be collected from academic journals, industry reports, and case studies that provide insights into current trends in influencer marketing in the fashion and clothing industry.

4.2.2. Data Collection Methods:

- **Demographic Information:** Participants will be asked to provide demographic details, including age, gender, and location, to better understand their consumer profile.

- **Likert Scale:** Responses will be gathered on a Likert scale (from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) to assess participants' opinions and attitudes toward various aspects of influencer marketing, such as trust, authenticity, and engagement.

- **Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs):** The survey will include multiple-choice questions to explore various dimensions of influencer marketing, including the type of influencers they follow, engagement frequency, and product preferences influenced by influencer recommendations.

4.3. Sampling Techniques:

4.4. Population:

The target population for this study consists of Gen Z consumers in India who are active users of social media and regularly follow fashion influencers on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Gen Z, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, represents a key demographic in the online retail clothing market and is highly influenced by social media content.

4.5. Sampling Unit:

The sampling unit will include active Gen Z consumers who interact with fashion influencers on social media platforms and engage in online discussions about clothing brands, fashion trends, and influencer-endorsed products.

4.6. Sample Size:

A total of 222 respondents participated in the survey. Although a larger sample size would have been ideal for broader generalization, the 222 valid responses meet the study's inclusion criteria and provide meaningful insights for analyzing consumer behavior in the online retail clothing sector.

4.7. Sampling Method:

Given the ease of reaching participants via digital channels, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. While convenience sampling can limit the ability to generalize results to the broader population, it is suitable for exploratory research focused on identifying patterns and relationships within a specific group of online clothing consumers.

4.8. Data Analysis:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize demographic data, social media usage patterns, and purchasing behavior related to online clothing. This will provide an overview of consumer preferences and trends in influencer-driven purchases.
- **Chi-Square Test:** A chi-square test will be applied to examine the relationship between demographic factors (age, gender) and purchasing decisions influenced by social media marketing. This will help determine the extent to which these factors affect consumer behavior in the online clothing sector.
- **Frequency Analysis:** Frequency analysis will be conducted to measure how often respondents engage with fashion influencers and make purchases based on their recommendations. This will help assess the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies in driving consumer actions in the online clothing retail market.

5.Results and Discussion:

The population that is easily accessible is the source of primary data. Data from 222 respondents was gathered for the study. To improve comprehension and display the results in an aesthetically pleasing manner, the data is presented in tables and diagrams. The goals of this investigation form the basis for the data analysis and interpretation in the context of online retail clothing.
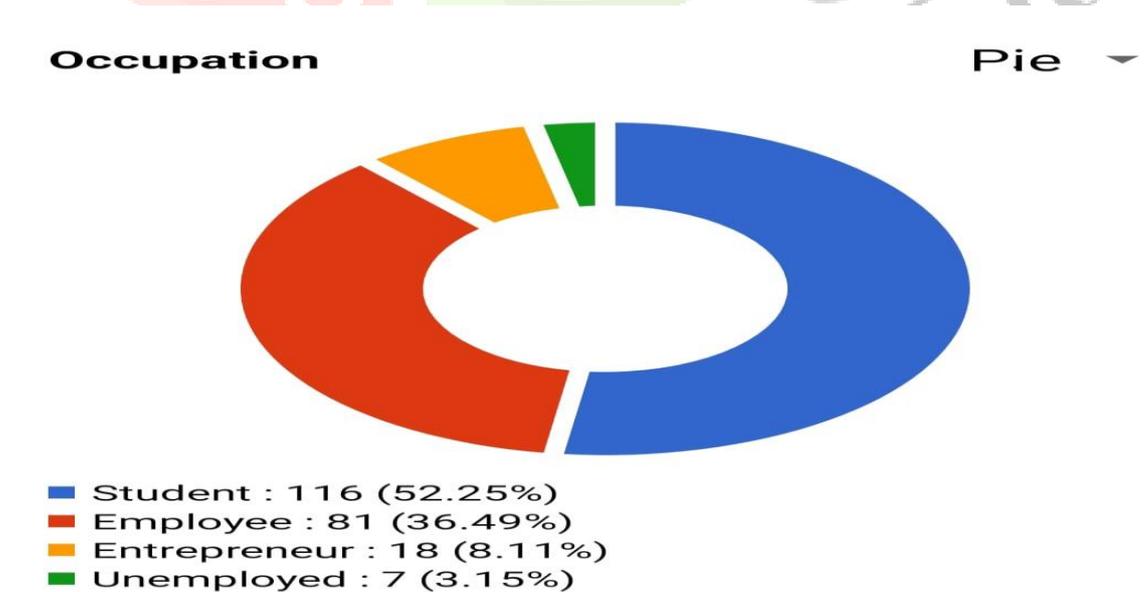
Below are the main conclusions:

1.Gender

Gender   Pie ▾

■ Male : 158 (71.17%)
■ Female : 64 (28.83%)
■ Prefer not to say : 0 (0%)
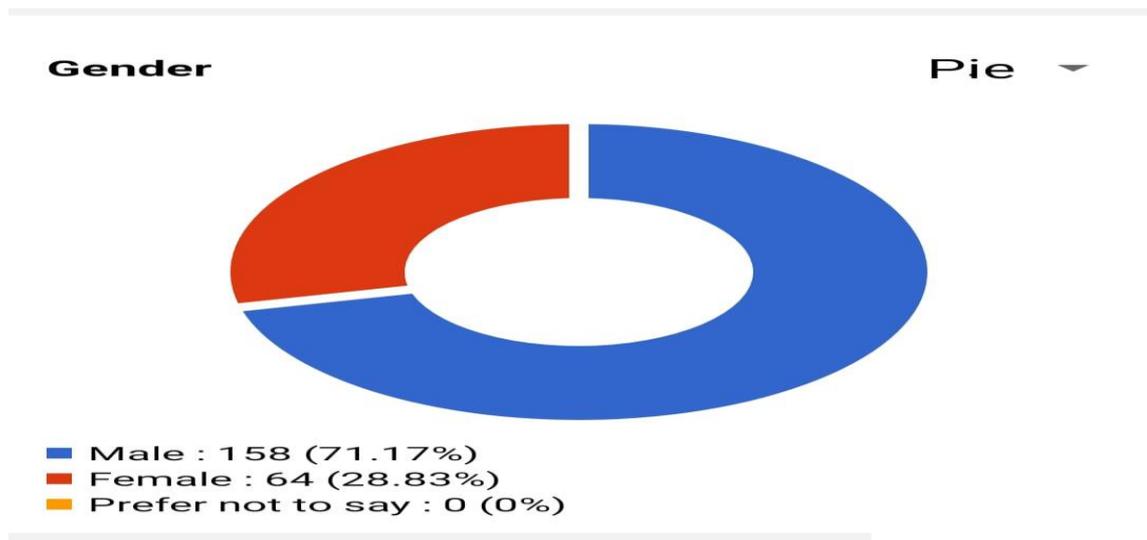
Analysis and Interpretation:

- The respondents' age distribution is illustrated in the graph.
- **Ages 18 to 25** make up the majority at **67.34%**, indicating that this age group is the primary demographic for the study.
- The next largest age group is **25–32 years** at **21.49%**, followed by **12–18 years** at **8.6%**.
- **Ages 32–40** are the least represented, accounting for only **2.58%**.

2.Occupation

Occupation   Pie ▾

■ Student : 116 (52.25%)
■ Employee : 81 (36.49%)
■ Entrepreneur : 18 (8.11%)
■ Unemployed : 7 (3.15%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

• The respondents' occupation distribution is shown in the pie chart.

• **Students** make up **52.25%** of the respondents, indicating that the sample is predominantly youth-oriented.

• **Employees** account for **36.49%**, suggesting a notable presence of working individuals in the dataset.

• **Entrepreneurs** make up **8.11%**, showing some interest in business ventures among the respondents.

• **Unemployed** individuals represent the smallest group at **3.15%**, indicating that most individuals in the dataset are either studying or working.

3. The primary motivation for you to shop for apprael online

What is primary motivation for you to shop for apprael online ? Pie

■ Convenience of shopping from home : 102 (45.95%)
■ Access to wide variety of brands : 76 (34.23%)
■ Attractive discounts and offers : 36 (16.22%)
■ Trendy and fashionable items : 8 (3.6%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

• **Convenience is Key:** A significant 45.95% of respondents (102 out of 222) prefer online shopping because it allows them to shop from home. This indicates that ease and accessibility are the primary factors influencing online shopping behaviors for apparel.

• **Brand Variety Matters:** 34.23% of respondents (76 out of 222) shop online due to the wide selection of brands available. This demonstrates that consumers are drawn to the variety and options they can explore, which online shopping offers compared to traditional retail.

• **Discounts Attract Some Buyers:** While not the leading motivation, 16.22% (36 out of 222) are enticed by discounts and offers when shopping online. Pricing is an important consideration for some buyers, suggesting that promotions can still drive consumer behavior.

• **Fashion Trends Are a Minor Factor:** Only 3.6% of respondents (8 out of 222) shop online specifically for trendy or fashionable items. This implies that fashion-forward consumers may still

prefer physical stores or dedicated fashion platforms rather than relying on general online shopping sites.

4. How important is brand reputation when purchasing appreal from online retailer ?

How important is brand reputation when purchasing appreal from online retailer ?   Pie
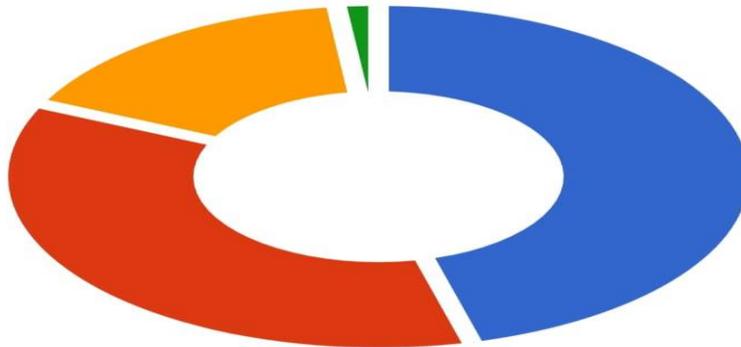
- Very important : 102 (45.95%)
- Someone important : 80 (36.04%)
- Not very important : 36 (16.22%)
- Not important at all : 4 (1.8%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

- **Brand Reputation Plays a Crucial Role:** A significant 82% of respondents (102 + 80 out of 222) consider brand reputation when shopping for apparel online. This suggests that most consumers place a high level of trust in well-known and reputed brands, prioritizing reliability and quality.

- **A Small Segment is Indifferent to Brand Reputation:** Approximately 18% of respondents (36 + 4 out of 222) do not consider brand reputation as a major factor in their purchase decisions. This indicates that some consumers are more focused on other factors like price, convenience, or variety rather than the brand image.

- **Minimal Disregard for Brand Reputation:** Only 1.8% of respondents (4 out of 222) completely disregard brand reputation, showing that the majority of consumers still consider a brand's reputation to some extent before making a purchase.

5. Which factors most influences your decesion to make a purchase from an online an appreal reatlier ?

Which factors most influences your decesion to make a purchase from an online an appreal reatlier ? Pie

- Quality of the product : 94 (42.34%)
- Price of the product : 65 (29.28%)
- Online reviews and ratings : 53 (23.87%)
- Social media endorsement : 10 (4.5%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

- **Product Quality is the Top Priority:** A significant 42.34% of respondents (94 out of 222) consider product quality the most important factor when shopping for apparel online. This emphasizes the need for online retailers to prioritize high product standards and offer detailed descriptions, images, and guarantees to meet customer expectations.

- **Price Sensitivity Matters:** Approximately 29.28% of respondents (65 out of 222) focus on price when making purchasing decisions, indicating that affordability plays a crucial role. Online retailers should strike a balance between offering quality products and competitive pricing to attract price-conscious buyers.

- **Online Reviews and Ratings Significantly Impact Buying Decisions:** Around 23.87% of respondents (53 out of 222) rely on feedback from other customers when deciding on purchases. This suggests that e-commerce platforms should encourage authentic reviews and maintain a strong reputation, as positive feedback can influence consumer behavior.

- **Social Media Endorsements Have the Least Influence:** Only 4.5% of respondents (10 out of 222) consider social media promotions crucial in their purchase decisions. This indicates that influencer marketing may not be the most effective strategy for all shoppers, especially when compared to other factors like product quality and price.

6. How frequently do you rely on Online reviews before purchasing appreal ?

How frequently do you rely on Online reviews before purchasing appreal ?   Pie

- Always : 83 (37.39%)
- Often : 56 (25.23%)
- Sometimes : 61 (27.48%)
- Rarely : 18 (8.11%)
- Never : 2 (0.9%)
- : 2 (0.9%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

- **Significant Reliance on Online Reviews:** A combined 62.62% of respondents (83 + 56 out of 222) frequently check online reviews before making a purchase, highlighting the importance of customer feedback in influencing buying decisions. Consumers clearly value reviews when considering apparel.

- **Moderate Influence:** Approximately 27.48% of respondents (61 out of 222) rely on reviews "sometimes," suggesting that other factors, such as price, brand reputation, and product quality, also play a significant role in their decision-making process.

- **Minimal Disregard for Online Reviews:** Only 8.11% of respondents (18 out of 222) rarely check reviews, and just 0.9% (2 out of 222) never consider them. This shows that a very small segment of consumers disregards online feedback, further emphasizing the importance of reviews in the purchasing process.

- **Retailers Must Focus on Review Management:** Since most consumers trust reviews, it is crucial for retailers to focus on gathering and managing genuine, positive feedback. Maintaining a strong reputation through customer reviews can greatly enhance brand credibility and influence consumer decisions.

7. what discourages you the most from purchasing appreal from online Retailer ?

What discourages you the most from purchasing appreal from online Retailer ? Pie ▾

■ High shipping or delivery charges : 87 (39.19%)
■ Long delivery time : 66 (29.73%)
■ Uncertainty about the quality or fit of the product : 60 (27.03%)
■ Limited return / Exchange policies : 8 (
■ : 1 (0.45%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

- **High Shipping Costs Are the Biggest Barrier:** A significant 39.19% of respondents (87 out of 222) identified high shipping or delivery charges as the primary discouraging factor. This indicates that customers prefer free or lower-cost shipping options when shopping online for apparel.

- **Delivery Time Concerns:** Approximately 29.73% of respondents (66 out of 222) are concerned about long delivery times, suggesting a need for faster shipping services to meet customer expectations for quick delivery.

- **Product Quality and Fit Uncertainty:** Around 27.03% of respondents (60 out of 222) express concerns about the uncertainty of product quality or fit, indicating that consumers may not fully trust product descriptions and images, and might be seeking more reliable information or assurance.

- **Limited Return/Exchange Policies:** Only 3.6% of respondents (8 out of 222) are discouraged by limited return or exchange policies. This shows that most consumers are accepting of current return policies, and this is not a major barrier for online apparel purchases.

- **Other Reasons:** A minimal 0.45% of respondents (1 out of 222) mentioned other reasons, implying that the main challenges affecting online apparel shopping are well covered by the primary categories outlined above.

8. How do delivery speed and option affect your decesion to buy from online appreal stores ?

How do delivery speed and option affect your decesion to buy from online appreal stores ?

Pie

- A significant influence : 101 (45.5%)
- A moderate influence : 88 (39.64%)
- Little influence : 27 (12.16%)
- Not influence at all : 6 (2.7%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

• **Delivery Speed and Options are Key Considerations:** A significant 85.14% of respondents (189 out of 222) indicate that delivery speed and options play an essential role in their purchase decisions. This highlights that consumers highly value quick and flexible shipping when buying apparel online.

• **Moderate Impact of Delivery Speed:** About 12.16% of respondents (27 out of 222) report that delivery speed has a minor influence, meaning it's not their top priority but still a consideration when shopping.

• **Minimal Influence of Delivery Speed:** Only 2.7% of respondents (6 out of 222) state that delivery speed has no effect on their purchase decisions, suggesting that the majority of consumers care about fast delivery services.

9. What would make you more likely to recommend an online appreal retailer to others ?

What would make you more likely to recommend an online appreal retailer to others ? Pie ▾

- ■ Excellent product quality : 87 (39.19%)
- ■ Excellent customer service : 73 (32.88%)
- ■ Fast and free delivery : 48 (21.62%)
- ■ Strong brand presence on social media : 13 (5.86%)
- ■ : 1 (0.45%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

• **Product Quality is the Key to Customer Recommendations:** A significant 39.19% of respondents (87 out of 222) consider excellent product quality the most crucial factor when recommending an online retailer. This underscores the importance of high-quality offerings in ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty.

• **Customer Service Enhances the Shopping Experience:** Approximately 32.88% of respondents (73 out of 222) cite excellent customer service as a top consideration, highlighting the value of prompt responses, easy returns, and effective communication in creating a positive customer experience.

• **Fast and Free Delivery is Important but Secondary:** About 21.62% of respondents (48 out of 222) find fast and free delivery significant when recommending an online retailer. While this is important, it ranks lower than product quality and customer service, aligning with earlier findings that delivery speed influences purchase decisions.

• **Brand Presence on Social Media Plays a Minor Role:** Only 5.86% of respondents (13 out of 222) consider a strong social media presence essential for recommending a retailer. This suggests that marketing alone is less impactful compared to tangible aspects like product quality and customer service.

• **Other Factors are Minimal:** A small 0.45% of respondents (1 out of 222) mention other factors, indicating that the major influencers for recommendations are well captured by the primary categories outlined above.

10. How likely are you to abandon a purchase if the website or mobile app has poor user experience (e.g., slow loading , difficult navigation)

How likely are you to abandon a purchase if the website or mobile app has poor user experience (e.g., slow loading , difficult navigation)   Pie

- Very likely : 115 (51.8%)
- Likely : 71 (31.98%)
- Unlikely : 25 (11.26%)
- Very Unlikely : 10 (4.5%)
- : 1 (0.45%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

- **A Poor User Experience Significantly Affects Purchase Behavior:** A large majority, 83.78% of respondents (186 out of 222), indicated that they would abandon their purchase if a website or app was slow or hard to navigate. This highlights the critical importance of a smooth, fast, and intuitive user experience for online retailers in preventing cart abandonment.

- **Most Customers Expect Seamless Digital Interactions:** Only 15.76% of respondents (35 out of 222) would still complete their purchase despite a poor user experience, emphasizing that most customers expect a flawless online shopping process. This reveals that retaining customers in the digital space heavily relies on ease of use and performance.

- **Website Performance and Navigation are Key to Conversion Rates:** Slow-loading websites, poor navigation, and complicated checkout processes are significant factors that influence the likelihood of cart abandonment. These elements directly impact conversion rates, suggesting that retailers should prioritize website performance optimization to enhance customer retention.

- **A Small Percentage of Highly Loyal Customers are Tolerant of Poor Experiences:** The 4.5% of respondents (10 out of 222) who are "Very Unlikely" to abandon their purchase, despite a poor user experience, could represent a small group of highly loyal customers. However, this indicates that only a tiny fraction of shoppers are willing to tolerate subpar digital experiences.

- **Other Factors are Negligible:** Only 0.45% of respondents (1 out of 222) provided alternative responses, indicating that the primary factors influencing purchase decisions, such as website speed and ease of navigation, have a far greater impact than any other potential deterrents.

11. What kind of discounts or promotions would motivate you to purchase apparel from online retailers ?
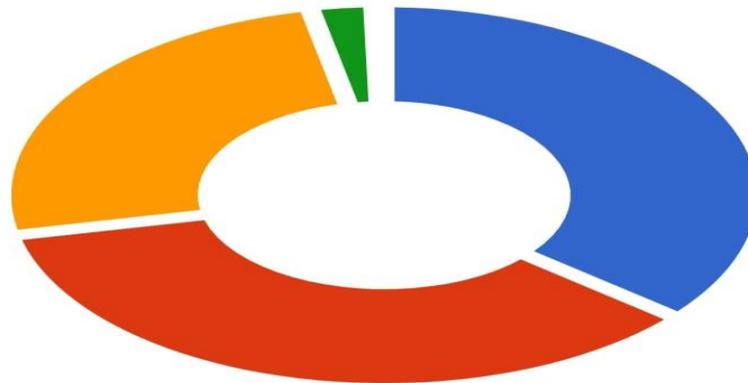
Analysis and Interpretation:

- **Percentage Discounts and BOGO are the Most Popular Promotions:** A near tie between percentage discounts (36.04%, or 80 out of 222 respondents) and Buy One Get One Free (BOGO) offers (35.59%, or 79 out of 222 respondents) shows that customers value direct savings and added value. These types of promotions are highly attractive to shoppers seeking to maximize their purchase value.

- **Free Shipping is a Significant Motivator:** Free shipping, with 25.23% of respondents (56 out of 222), is also an important factor. Consumers are often deterred by additional shipping costs at checkout, and offering free shipping can effectively motivate them to complete their purchases, making it a key conversion strategy.

- **Exclusive Member Offers Have Limited Appeal:** Only 2.7% of respondents (6 out of 222) find exclusive member offers appealing, indicating that most customers prefer immediate, tangible discounts over loyalty-based incentives. This suggests that retailers should prioritize promotions that provide instant gratification.

- **Combining Popular Promotions Can Maximize Conversions:** Retailers can increase conversions by combining the most popular types of offers, such as pairing percentage discounts with free shipping, or offering BOGO deals alongside limited-time free delivery. This strategy would cater to a broader range of customer preferences and drive higher sales.

- **Other Factors are Minimal:** A very small percentage, 0.45% (1 out of 222 respondents), mentioned other types of promotions, suggesting that the key motivators for purchasing apparel are well-represented by the main categories outlined above.

12 What role does sustainability (eg., eco-friendly products , Ethical labour practices) play in your decesion to purchase appreal online ?

What role does sustainability (eg., eco -friendly products , Ethical labour practices) play in your decesion to purchase appreal online ?

Pie

- ■ Major role : 114 (51.35%)
- ■ Minor role : 85 (38.29%)
- ■ No role : 19 (8.56%)
- ■ I don't consider it : 4 (1.8%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

- **Sustainability Plays a Significant Role in Purchase Decisions:** A majority of 51.35% of respondents (114 out of 222) consider sustainability to have a major influence on their apparel purchasing decisions, highlighting a strong consumer preference for eco-friendly and ethical fashion choices.

- **A Large Portion of Consumers Acknowledge Sustainability's Impact:** An additional 38.29% of respondents (85 out of 222) see sustainability as a minor factor, reinforcing the idea that environmental and ethical concerns are increasingly important in the decision-making process, even if they are not the primary driver for all consumers.

- **Only a Small Percentage Disregard Sustainability:** Only 8.56% of respondents (19 out of 222) say sustainability has no impact on their purchases, with an even smaller 1.8% (4 out of 222) completely disregarding it. This suggests that the vast majority of consumers, nearly 90%, are influenced by sustainability to some degree.

- **Consumer Expectations Align with Industry Trends Toward Sustainable Fashion:** The data indicates a growing shift toward ethical and sustainable fashion, with consumers placing importance on green materials, fair labor practices, and transparent sourcing. Retailers must adapt to these expectations to remain competitive in the evolving market.

- **Other Factors are Minimal:** The very small percentage of respondents (1.8%) who do not consider sustainability, shows that the industry's focus on sustainability aligns closely with consumer preferences and is likely to shape future purchasing behavior.

13. How do you feel about purchasing appreal from online reatliers that offers a variety of payment methods (e.g., COD, Credit / debit wallets) ?

How do you feel about purchasing appreal from online reatliers that offers a variety of payment methods (e.g., COD, Credit / debit wallets) ?   Pie ▾

- It encourages me to buy : 95 (42.79%)
- It has no effect on my purchase decesion : 93 (41.89%)
- It slightly discourages me : 27 (12.16%)
- I avoid reatliers that don't offer multiple payment option : 6 (2.7%)
- : 1 (0.45%)

Analysis and Interpretation:

• **Multiple Payment Options Drive Purchases:** A significant 42.79% of Indian consumers are influenced to buy apparel online when offered various payment methods, such as Cash on Delivery (COD) and digital wallets. This indicates that offering diverse payment choices is a key factor in driving sales, especially given the strong preference for COD in India.

• **Payment Variety is a Baseline Expectation for Many:** A considerable 41.89% of consumers are neutral, suggesting that while payment options don't actively encourage them to make purchases, their absence would be a deterrent. This implies that for many Indian consumers, offering multiple payment methods is an essential expectation and retailers must ensure this to stay competitive.

• **Ignoring Payment Diversity Risks Alienating Customers:** A smaller segment of 12.16% of consumers are slightly discouraged by limited payment options, and 2.7% actively avoid retailers with fewer choices. This highlights that failing to offer a variety of payment methods can negatively impact a portion of Indian consumers, especially those with strong preferences for specific payment methods, leading to a loss of potential business. Retailers must prioritize payment diversity to avoid alienating these customers.

5.15. Result and Finding:

The study highlights the significant influence of social media influencer marketing on Gen Z consumers' decisions to purchase beauty products. Among the 18–25 age group, 67.34% are the most engaged, with 71.07% following beauty influencers regularly and 66.57% using social media as their primary source for beauty trends. This group's heavy dependence on influencer-driven content underscores the importance of influencers in shaping purchasing decisions.

The gender distribution reveals that while men make up the majority (59.89%) of the respondents, women (39.83%) also represent a substantial portion, indicating that influencer marketing has broad appeal across genders. Additionally, the fact that 53.58% of respondents are students suggests a younger, highly engaged demographic.

Despite this, skepticism is present, with 58.92% expressing doubt due to compensated endorsements. However, 54.86% still believe the influencer's comments are genuine, indicating a level of trust in influencer content. More than half (61.58%) have made purchases without additional research, further supporting the strong impact of influencer recommendations. Moreover, 50.6% of respondents acknowledged being influenced by beauty influencers in their buying decisions.

However, a majority (52.98%) of respondents expressed feeling overwhelmed by the constant marketing of cosmetic products, signaling potential fatigue from excessive promotion. The study also suggests that micro-influencers, who are perceived as more authentic, may gain greater traction in this space.

To improve the effectiveness of influencer marketing, brands must focus on transparency, authenticity, and building trust with their audience.

5.16. Critical Analysis: Limitations and Potential Biases

Although the study offers valuable insights into the impact of influencer marketing on Gen Z's cosmetic purchasing decisions, there are several limitations and potential biases that should be considered.

One notable limitation is the sample composition. The survey primarily targeted young, tech-savvy individuals, particularly students (53.58%), which may not fully represent the broader Gen Z demographic, including working professionals and those less engaged with social media. Additionally, the gender distribution is skewed, with a higher proportion of male respondents (59.89%) compared to female respondents (39.83%), which could affect the findings' generalizability, especially given that beauty products predominantly cater to female consumers.

Self-reported data also introduces the possibility of biases, particularly social desirability bias. Respondents may exaggerate or understate their reliance on influencers, skewing the results. Furthermore, the influence of prior exposure to brands or influencer content could also affect the responses, making it difficult to isolate the direct impact of influencer marketing.

The study also focuses primarily on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, neglecting newer platforms (e.g., TikTok competitors) and offline influences. The lack of consideration for long-term consumer loyalty or retention further limits the study's ability to provide insights into lasting brand relationships, focusing more on immediate purchasing behavior rather than sustained consumer engagement.

9. Conclusion/Suggestions:

The analysis of consumer behavior in online apparel shopping reveals crucial insights into consumer motivations, preferences, and challenges. These findings offer valuable directions for e-commerce businesses in India to enhance the customer experience, increase trust, and drive sales.

1. Consumer Motivations: Why Do People Prefer Online Apparel Shopping?

- **Convenience is the Key Factor (45.95%)**: The majority of consumers prefer online shopping because of the convenience it offers, such as shopping from home. This highlights the importance of providing seamless navigation, user-friendly websites/apps, and hassle-free ordering processes to retain customers.
- **Brand Variety Matters (34.23%)**: The availability of multiple brands on e-commerce platforms is a significant factor for consumers. Retailers must ensure a diverse and well-stocked product catalog, collaborating with popular brands and continuously updating their inventory.
- **Attractive Discounts (16.22%)**: While discounts influence purchase decisions, they are not the top priority. Consumers seek value in their purchases, not just the lowest price.
- **Fashion Trends Have Minimal Impact (3.6%)**: A small percentage of consumers prioritize trendy fashion, suggesting that functionality and practicality outweigh style for most online shoppers.

Key Takeaway: Online retailers should prioritize convenience, offer a wide variety of brands, and provide competitive pricing while ensuring a smooth and hassle-free shopping experience.

2. The Role of Brand Reputation and Product Quality in Purchasing Decisions:

- **Brand Reputation Matters (82%)**: A large portion of consumers considers brand reputation when shopping online, indicating that established brands are trusted more than lesser-known alternatives.

- **Product Quality is the Top Priority (42.34%)**: Consumers value product quality over price. E-commerce businesses should focus on maintaining high standards, providing detailed product descriptions, and ensuring quality assurance.

- **Price Sensitivity is Considerable (29.28%)**: While quality is key, a significant portion of consumers still considers price a crucial factor, highlighting the need for competitive pricing strategies.

- **Online Reviews Have a Strong Influence (62.62%)**: Consumers rely heavily on reviews before purchasing, making customer testimonials, product ratings, and influencer endorsements critical in influencing buying decisions.

Key Takeaway: Retailers must focus on building strong brand trust, ensuring product quality, and encouraging authentic customer reviews to enhance credibility and increase conversions.

3. Barriers to Online Shopping: What Discourages Consumers? Despite the benefits of online shopping, several barriers deter consumers from completing their purchases:

- **High Shipping Costs (39.19%)**: Expensive shipping is the biggest deterrent. Offering free shipping on orders above a certain value or providing cost-effective shipping options could boost conversions.

- **Long Delivery Time (29.73%)**: Consumers expect quicker delivery times. Retailers should invest in reliable logistics, offer expedited shipping, and provide accurate delivery timelines.

- **Uncertainty About Product Quality and Fit (27.03%)**: Many consumers hesitate due to concerns about whether the product will meet their expectations. Providing detailed sizing charts, high-quality images, and customer reviews can alleviate these concerns.

- **Limited Return/Exchange Policies (3.6%)**: While a minor concern, some consumers are discouraged by rigid return policies. Offering flexible, hassle-free return options can enhance trust and increase sales.

Key Takeaway: To improve the online shopping experience, e-commerce businesses should focus on reducing shipping costs, ensuring faster deliveries, improving product descriptions, and offering flexible return policies.

4. Implications for E-Commerce Businesses: Based on the insights derived from the analysis, online retailers should take the following strategic steps:

- **Enhance Convenience**: Optimize website and mobile platform navigation, ensuring a seamless and quick checkout experience for customers.
- **Build Brand Trust**: Strengthen brand reputation through transparent communication, quality assurance, and influencer partnerships.
- **Encourage Customer Reviews**: Actively collect and display authentic reviews to reassure potential buyers and improve brand perception.
- **Offer Competitive Pricing**: Balance affordability with high-quality products to attract price-sensitive consumers without compromising on quality.
- **Reduce Shipping Costs**: Implement strategies such as free shipping for orders above a certain value, partner with reliable logistics providers, and optimize fulfillment centers.
- **Ensure Faster Delivery**: Invest in efficient shipping partners, provide express delivery options, and offer clear delivery timelines.
- **Improve Product Descriptions**: Use high-quality images, detailed product specifications, and interactive sizing tools to reduce uncertainty about fit and quality.
- **Introduce Flexible Return Policies**: Provide hassle-free return and exchange options to build customer trust and improve loyalty.

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