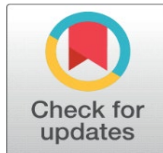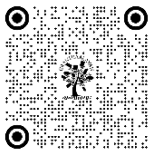# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON GENERATION Z'S PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN THE COSMETIC AND SKINCARE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing, the practice of analyzing, identifying, and endorsing beauty influencers who represent the brand's clientele, is a contemporary trend in the digital landscape across several social media platforms, providing firms with the possibility to promote through social media influencers. The researchers conducted a quantitative analysis utilizing Pearson Product Moment Correlation to assess the effectiveness of social media influencers in the cosmetics and skincare industry on the purchase intentions of Indian consumers. This research is unique since it focuses on the rapidly developing and rising cosmetic and skincare sector within the Indian market. This study is distinguished by the lack of research in India, where social media influencers are integral to brand marketing and advertising strategies. The research has identified four primary hypotheses. The influencing elements for Generation Z Indian consumers encompass Trust, Perceived Credibility, Perceived Image, and Brand Attitude. The data collected indicates that all hypotheses had a strong link and positive association with purchasing intention.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Perceived Credibility, Trust; Purchase Intention, Cosmetics, Social Media, Brand Attitude, Perceived Image

1. INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of social media influencers allows corporations to engage in the contemporary digital landscape, hence impacting brand advertising on social media, as companies increasingly utilize diverse influencer marketing strategies for their products. Implementing approaches that enable direct engagement with the target audience is cost-effective. Beauty is not confined by gender. As media and technology evolve, individuals have adjusted to the beauty and skincare sector. [39] Moreover, these alternatives have facilitated the expansion of social media influencer marketing, representing a significant transformation for organizations to enhance their brand. The increasing prevalence of influencer marketing has accelerated the expansion of the cosmetics and skincare business. [39] The attitudes and behaviors of consumers purchasing beauty and skincare goods are influenced by a set of variables, primarily three elements: physical and personal characteristics, marketing factors, and socio-cultural factors. Influencers serve as brand ambassadors to endorse brands via social media platforms. Consequently, engage more profoundly with their clientele.

Social media influencers have emerged as prominent endorsers for promotional methods. These influencers are renowned for endorsing numerous beauty products across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, having established their reputations as experts in the digital sphere. The cosmetics and personal care sector consistently evolves to offer consumers safe, sustainable, and creative goods. Evidence indicates that social media influencers exert a favourable influence on the online audiences' perceptions of beauty and lifestyle, often regarded as role models whose preferences, concepts, and attitudes merit admiration. [40]

This study will primarily examine the efficacy of influencers in the cosmetic and skincare business on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z in India. The literature review discusses several supplementary research studies that elucidate factors impacting consumer purchasing intentions. The study approach will include data collection procedures and the presentation of the research idea. Finally, the data interpretation and discussion will be presented, followed by the conclusion and recommendations.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

• To collect data on the utilisation and frequency of social media platforms
• To evaluate the perceived trustworthiness of influencers in the cosmetics and skincare business and its impact on consumers' purchase intentions towards a brand.
• To compare customers' attitudes directly towards brands and influencers.
• To formulate recommendations for the influencer marketing strategy in the cosmetics and skincare sector.

HYPOSTASIS

1.   H1. The perceived credibility of the consumer to the cosmetics and skincare industry
2.   Influencer significantly affects their purchase intention towards a brand.
3.   H2. Consumers' brand attitude directly influences the consumers' purchase intention
4.   H3. Consumers' trust in the cosmetics and skincare industry influencers directly impacts their purchase intention for the brand.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

•   Sample size
•   Lack of available or reliable data
•   Lack of prior research studies on the topic
•   Measure used to collect the data
•   Self-reported data
•   Lack of time for given study

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Cosmetics Influencer Marketing Beauty brands used social media as a crucial marketing tool early on [1]. Beauty is mostly visual, and influencer marketing shines in visual media [2]. The beauty sector is expected to reach $580 billion by 2027, growing 6% annually [3]. Ad agencies are creating varied beauty care product advertising methods to influence consumers' motivation [5]. According to Valentine [4], social media influencer marketing has proven effective for brand visibility and cosmetic and skin care product promotion [6].[7][8]. Beauty postings are most popular on Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok for social media marketing [1]. According to Abraham et al. [5], consumer confidence in influencer marketing depends on influencers' authenticity and honest product reviews. Sincere content influences target market purchases, and reputable influencers impact product recommendations. Influencer marketing promotes brands, but brands must choose reliable influencers.

B. Consumer Perception of Influencers SMIs influence followers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours [9]. Solomon [10] defines consumer behaviour as "the study of processes involved when individuals or groups select, buy or reject products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires". Chaturvedi and Barbar [11] agree with Solomon that customer behaviour is the study of people, groups, or organisations' selection and rejection of products and services that suit their needs and wants. Many influencer marketing academics focus on authority, credibility, and social appeal, which are related to compliance, internalisation, and identification [12]. Credible endorsers usually improve consumer impressions [13]. Influencers provide more input than traditional media and develop direct ties and brand commitment. Consumers find personal brand recommendations by social media influencers (SMIs) more relevant

than celebrity endorsements [14]. They foster a sense of community and support among their like-minded audience [15]. Influencers change how consumers perceive and interact with brands. Consumers find SMIs more relatable and credible than celebrities. [16] Ki and Kim [17] say Social Media Influencers (SMIs) are taste and opinion leaders. This dual position encourages consumers to imitate influencers, prompting them to buy their products, services, or brands. Visual appeal, status, and competence in SMI content influence consumers' perceptions [17]. Van Eldik et al. [18] indicated that social media influencers' success depends on audience connection. Influencers' capacity to connect with followers is crucial to their credibility [19]. The match-up hypothesis—influencer-brand alignment—also affects influencer endorsement effectiveness [16][20]. How close or consistent the influencer is to the brand emphasises the necessity of a harmonious fit [16]. Schouten et al. [21] agree that including an endorser (influencer) in an ad does not guarantee success. The study found no interactions between product-endorser fit and endorser type for trustworthiness or knowledge. It shows that influencer likability may explain the link between endorser type and advertisement performance [21].

C. Influencers Shaping Consumer Purchasing Behaviour Kotler and Keller [29] describe customer purchasing decisions as "problem definition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior". Companies must build trust, support, and goodwill along the consumer's purchase journey and understand their buying habits to influence these decisions. Consumer purchase behaviour is driven by cultural, social, personal, and psychological variables [29]. Influencers can motivate consumers to buy and feel good. Ki and Kim [5] observed a positive correlation between Social Media Influencers' (SMIs) influential activities and consumer responses. SMIs affect consumers' social sharing and purchasing behaviours by starting with good attitudes, then a drive to emulate, according to the study. When consumers established good views towards SMIs, they wanted to emulate their behaviours and preferences. Thus, this mimicry affected social Word-of-Mouth (sWOM) and customers' purchase intentions [40]. Informative Value and Purchase Intent SMI content's utility and informativeness also affect consumers' interactions with it. People interact more with valuable information. Erkan & Evans [30] found that SMIs' educational content increases purchasing intention. When followers respect and agree with the influencer's message, they process it thoroughly. This cognitive process involves people adopting the message's action (such as following an expert's advice) because it helps them solve problems, matches their values, or aligns with their orientations [24]. The Social Media Influencer Value Model by Lou and Yan [31] examined how customers' trust affects influencer marketing effectiveness by merging advertising value and source credibility. Their analysis indicated that followers trust branded content more when influencers are knowledgeable and credible. Trust affects brand awareness and purchasing intent. The results show that informative content greatly affects purchasing intentions, highlighting influencers' importance as information producers

Male and female purchasing behavior towards cosmetic and skin care products

Nayak, M.et al. (2023) found that cosmetics are part of South Indian women's daily grooming practice in a cross-sectional study from March 2021 to July 2022. Most women use cosmetics without knowing their adverse effects. Product use can cause adverse responses instantly or over time. Cosmetic adverse effects go unreported. Men are less prone to experience unfavourable reactions than women. Park, G. H.et al. (2018) found limited investigations on Asian cosmetic exposure despite daily chemical exposure. We investigated Koreans' cosmetics usage, including eye makeup, scents, colour makeups, hair, and nail care items. Online poll of 1,800 Koreans aged 15–59 (908 men and 892 women) from 5 Metropolitan cities (Seoul, Incheon, Daejeon, Daegu, and Busan). Males used 7.1% (range: 0.0-46.3%) of overall cosmetics and females 30.7% (range: 1.0-82.8%). The most popular product in men was perfume (46.3%).

E. Theoretical Framework :- This study report uses Kelman's Social Influence Theory [12]. This paradigm examines how influencers affect cosmetic and skin care product use in the social setting. Social, normative, and informational influence are fundamental elements in Social Influence Theory. Social influence describes how external variables affect consumers' cosmetic and skin care product attitudes and purchases, while normative influence measures influencers' conformance to social norms. Informational influence analyses how influencers change consumers' perceptions and choices by giving useful information and assistance. Influencer credibility, social proof, and identification with influencers are key components in this approach. Influencer credibility involves influencers' reliability, expertise, and attractiveness, while social proof shows influencers' product usage and its impact on product popularity. How much consumers relate to and identify with influencers affects their likelihood to buy advised cosmetics. According to the Social Influence Theory, people are influenced by their peers' behaviour, attitudes, and preferences. Influencers' normative impact shapes cosmetic product selections by conforming to social norms. Influencers also affect consumers' cosmetic product impressions and understanding through product suggestions and insights. Credibility, social proof, and identification with influencers all strengthen social impact on purchasing decisions. This theoretical framework assumes that consumers are social beings influenced by others, that social norms communicated through influencers significantly impact cosmetic product preferences and behaviours, and that influencer information helps consumers make informed

choices. This framework suggests that influencer credibility positively affects consumer cosmetic product purchasing behaviour, that social proof demonstrated through influencers' product usage affects cosmetic product popularity and desirability, and that influencer identification moderates social influence on cosmetic product purchasing behavior.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology and systematic study in some field of knowledge which undertakes to facts of principles, the study is to analyst the effectiveness of influencer marketing among the students.

• **Research Design:-** The researchers used a descriptive correlational design to further describe the variables and the relationships that occur naturally among them. Through a quantitative gathering of information,

• **Area of Study** The study is under taken in Lucknow city

• **Sample Size** Sample size measures the number of individual samples measured used in a survey as sample size of 100 respondents was taken to conduct of study

• **Data Collection** the primary data was collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data for his study was also collected through internet and journals on related topic.

• **Sample Technique** .The sampling techniques used for the project is convenience sampling method convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling method that releases data collection from population members who are available to participate in the study.

Results and Discussion

Gender

Figure 1: Showing the percentage of the gender of both male and female from the responses.
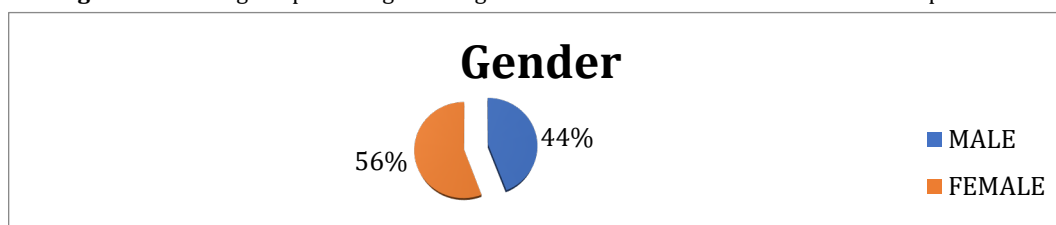
(Source: Author's Creation)

Table no.1

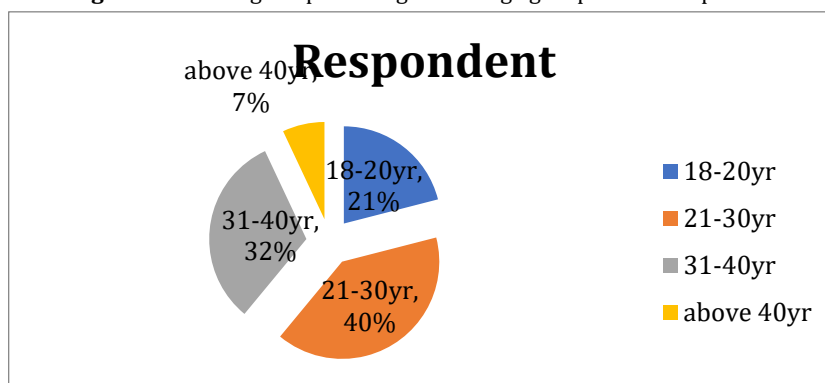| Gender	Responses
MALE	30%
FEMALE	70%

Respondents were asked their gender in the poll. The statistics show 55.8% are male and 44.2% female. The graphic shows that gender does not affect selection probability.

Age

**Figure 2:** Showing the percentage of the age group for the responses.

Table.2

Age Group	Respondent

18-20yr	21%
21-30yr	40%
31-40yr	32%
above 40yr	7%

Table.2 shows that age is another important aspect in product sales. Candidate age range was also queried in the survey. The survey indicated that 40% of respondents are 21–30 years old. Additionally, persons aged 31-40 are deemed more important. Thus, the bulk of survey respondents are mid-aged and active.

Figure 3: The types of social media platforms that the respondents use.
(Source: Author's Creation)
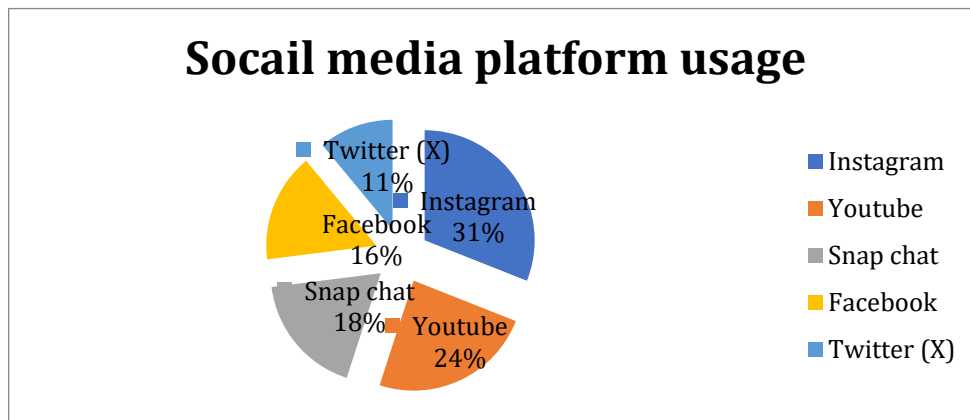
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of What Social Media Platforms Do They Followed Beauty Influencers

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of What Social Media Platforms Do They Followed

	Frequency	percentage
Instagram	31	31%
Youtube	24	24%
Snap chat	18	18%
Facebook	16	16%
Twitter (X)	11	11%

Table 3. displays the frequency and percentage of beauty influencers who follow which social media sites. Most (31%), followed them on Instagram.24% of respondents used YouTube, 18% used Snap chat, 16% used Facebook, and 11% followed beauty influencers on Twitter (X).

Respondents' Perceived Credibility on the Cosmetics and Skin Care Influencers

Table 4. Respondents' Perceived Credibility on the Cosmetics and Skin Care Influencers

Statements	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I believe that the more followers an influencer has, the more authentic are his/her recommendations	3.91	Agree
I believe the Influencer's recommendations are more trustworthy when they are not being sponsored by the brand they are recommending	4.17	Agree
I perceive influencers as credible when their message in their post (on social media) is clear and persuasive	4.13	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.07	Agree
Legend: "(1.00-1.51) Strongly Disagree", "(1.51-2.50) Disagree", "(2.51-3.50) Neutral", "(3.51-4.50) Agree", "(4.51-5.00) Strongly Agree"		

Table 4 demonstrates if respondents trust cosmetics and skincare influencers, answering the first hypothesis. Overall, respondents agreed with the aforementioned statements with a weighted mean of 4.07. The highest weighted mean is

"I believe the Influencer's recommendations are more trustworthy when they are not being sponsored by the brand they are recommending" (4.17), while the lowest is "I believe that the more followers an influencer has, the more authentic are his/her recommendations" (3.91). All statements are understood as "Agree", indicating respondents' preference for cosmetics and skincare influencer trustworthiness.

Respondents' Brand Attitude on the Cosmetics and Skin Care Influencers

Table 5.Respondents' Brand Attitude on the Cosmetics and Skin Care Influencers **Statements**	**Weighted Mean**	**Verbal Interpretation**
I perceive the brand as a quality brand based on the influencer who promotes them	4.03	Agree
If my favourite online personality recommends a brand, I am more likely to try it	4.14	Agree
I feel good about buying from a brand represented by a reputable influencer	4.16	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.11	Agree
Legend: "(1.00-1.51) Strongly Disagree", "(1.51-2.50) Disagree", "(2.51-3.50) Neutral", "(3.51-4.50) Agree", "(4.51-5.00) Strongly Agree"		

In relation to the second hypothesis, Table 5 shows the respondents' brand attitudes toward cosmetics and skincare influencers. It is shown that overall, respondents agreed on the above statements with a weighted mean of 4.11. The statement with the highest weighted mean is "I feel good about buying from a brand represented by a reputable influencer" (4.16), while the statement with the least weighted mean is "I perceive the brand as a quality brand based on the influencer who promotes them." (4.03). All of the statements are interpreted as "Agree". The result implies respondents' preference on brand attitudes toward cosmetics and skincare influencers.

Table 4. Respondents' Perceived Image on the Cosmetics and Skin Care Influencers **Statements**	**Weighted Mean**	**Verbal Interpretation**
The beauty influencer impacts my perception of the brand	4.02	Agree
I associate the influencer's image with the beauty brand he/she promotes	4.02	Agree
The appearance & content (i.e. the overall aesthetic, post content) on influencers' posts regarding the product/brand affects my decision in purchasing a product.	4.18	Agree
Overall Weighted Mean	4.07	Agree
Legend: "(1.00-1.51) Strongly Disagree", "(1.51-2.50) Disagree", "(2.51-3.50) Neutral", "(3.51-4.50) Agree", "(4.51-5.00) Strongly Agree"		

Table 5 illustrates respondents' views on cosmetics and skincare influencers for the fourth hypothesis. Overall, respondents agreed with the aforementioned statements with a weighted mean of 4.07. The statement with the highest weighted mean is "The appearance & content (i.e. the overall aesthetic, post content) on influencers post regarding the product/brand affects my decision in purchasing a product." (4.18), while "I associate the influencer's image to the beauty brand he/she promotes" and "The beauty influencer impacts my perception towards the brand" had the lowest weighted means of 4.02. All statements mean "Agree". This indicates respondents' views on cosmetics and skincare influencers

Respondents' Perceived Image on the Cosmetics and Skin Care Influencers

Hypotheses Research Questions			
Does the perceived credibility of the consumer to the cosmetics industry affect their purchase intention towards a brand?	The perceived credibility of the consumer to the cosmetics and skincare industry influencer significantly affects their purchase intention towards a brand.	c=0.667 p-value: 0.000 There is a significant relationship between perceived credibility toward cosmetics and skincare industry influencers to the respondents' purchase intention.	Strong Positive Correlation Hypotheses #1 Is Negated
Does consumers' brand attitude directly influence the consumers' purchase intention?	Consumers' brand attitude directly influences the consumers' purchase intention.	c= 0.839 p-value: 0.000 There is a significant relationship between brand attitude toward cosmetics and skincare industry influencers to the respondents' purchase intention.	Very Strong Positive Correlation Hypotheses #2 Is Negated
Does consumers' trust in the cosmetics and skincare industry influencers directly impact their purchase intention for the brand?	Consumers' trust in the cosmetics and skincare industry influencers directly impacts their purchase intention for the brand.	c= 0.806 p-value: 0.000 There is a significant relationship between trust toward cosmetics and skincare industry influencers to the respondents' purchase intention.	Very Strong Positive Correlation Hypotheses #3 Is Negated

SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES

Table 5 shows that the 2nd and 3rd hypotheses, which relate to consumers' trust and brand attitude towards SMI, significantly affect their purchase intention and have a higher correlation than the rest. Because "digital native" or generation Z are very sceptical of influencers, especially their viewpoints, some brands or companies are very choosy in who they associate with. The first hypothesis, about perceived image and credibility, showed a high positive association. Just not as high as in the hypothesis. Findings suggest that cosmetics and skincare sector influencers' reputation, image, trust, and brand attitude affect respondents' purchase intention

4 RESULT DISCUSSION
PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY

Survey respondents agreed on cosmetics and skincare industry influencer credibility. Most responders trust Influencers' recommendations more when they are not paid by the brand. Respondents also think influencers with more following provide more authentic suggestions. Respondents also trust influencers who communicate clearly and persuasively on social media. The results support the first hypothesis that perceived trustworthiness of cosmetics and skincare sector influencers affects respondents' purchasing intentions.

Brand Attitude

Most respondents feel comfortable buying from a respected influencer's brand. The influencer who promotes the brand also makes respondents think it's good. Respondents also agree that their favourite online personality's endorsement makes them more likely to try a brand. Respondents' brand views on cosmetics and skincare influencers. Regarding the second hypothesis, brand attitude towards cosmetics and skincare industry influencers is associated with respondents' purchase intention.

TRUST

Results show that most Indian Generation Z trusts organic reviews over company-controlled reviews. Based on content quality, respondents trust the influencer. They trust influencers' product reviews as much as beauty experts and professionals. Influencers who interact with their followers (answering enquiries, DM, launching pools, engaging) are

also trusted. According to the third hypothesis, customers' faith in cosmetics and skincare influencers affects their brand purchase intention. This suggests that trust boosts respondents' buying intentions. In their poll responses, they expressly trust influencers in buying decisions.

PERCEIVED IMAGE

According to the data, most respondents believed that influencers' posts on the product/brand's appearance and content affect their cosmetic product purchases. Furthermore, respondents correlate the beauty influencer's image with the beauty brand they support, influencing their brand perception. The image of cosmetics and skincare influencers strongly influenced purchase intention. This suggests a positive association between image and buying intent.

IMPACTS OF COSMETICS AND SKINCARE INFLUENCERS

The results suggest that most Indian Generation Z seeks influencer recommendations before buying. This suggests that respondents shop based on influencers and other variables. Respondents also felt more confidence buying a product after seeing their influencer recommend/use it. Influencer-recommended beauty products are also more likely to be purchased.

5. CONCLUSION

Since influencer marketing is the newest marketing tactic, most firms are using it efficiently. Influencer marketing is beneficial for cosmetic and skin care brand building. Females are more involved in this study than males since people believe cosmetic and skin care goods are more for women Park, g. h.et al. (2018). Responses are greatest among Gez-Z respondents. Respondents also use Instagram and YouTube more. Influencers with many followers and popularity are trusted more by respondents. They trust Influencers' suggestions more when they are not paid by the brand. They value non-sponsored posts, blogs, Vlogs, stories, etc. Respondents trust influencers more when their social media posts are clear and compelling. Since this study is for e-commerce users, marketers, and influencers, they may find ways to boost brand exposure, engagement, and profitability. Know Generation Z's social media platforms and communicate with cosmetic and skincare influencers to build influencer-to-consumer trust.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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