



A Study Impact on the Influencer Marketing on Brand Trust and Purchase Intention: A Comparative Study of Millennials and Gen Z in India

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Abstract: Influencer marketing has become a major factor in consumer decision-making due to the quick growth of social media, especially among Millennials and Generation Z. However, little is known about how influencer marketing affects purchase intention and brand trust, particularly in the Indian context. This study compares responses from Millennials and Gen Z and looks at how the three main components of influencer marketing relatability, authenticity, and credibility affect brand trust and purchase intention. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 312 active social media users in India as part of a quantitative research design. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, regression, mediation analysis, and independent samples t-tests were all used in the analysis of the data using SPSS. The results show that while influencer marketing has a relatively moderate effect on brand trust, it has a strong and significant impact on purchase intention. Although brand trust has a positive impact on purchase intention as well, its mediating effect is not statistically significant, indicating that consumer decisions are directly influenced by influencer marketing. Furthermore, there was no discernible difference in the purchasing habits of Gen Z and Millennials. By highlighting the direct persuasive power of influencer marketing and providing useful insights for brands looking to engage digitally active consumers, this study adds to the growing body of literature on digital marketing.

Keywords: Millennials, Gen Z, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intention, Authenticity, Credibility, and Relatability

I. INTRODUCTION

Particularly in the age of social media dominance, the digital revolution in marketing has drastically changed how companies interact with consumers. Younger audiences are becoming less receptive to traditional advertising strategies, which were once thought to be the main forces behind consumer persuasion and brand awareness (Gupta et al., 2025). Today's consumers are more knowledgeable, sceptical, and resistant to overt marketing messages, which forces marketers to use more nuanced, tailored, and trust-based communication techniques. Influencer marketing has become one of the most effective strategies for attracting contemporary customers.

Influencer marketing is the strategic partnership between brands and social media content producers who, through their relatability, credibility, and personal storytelling, have the power to influence audience perceptions and purchase decisions. Influencer marketing, in contrast to traditional celebrity endorsements, is based on the ideas of social proof, peer-like communication, and authenticity (Bhambhani et al., 2025). This makes it especially successful in digital settings where customers prefer sincere recommendations over direct advertising.

Influencer marketing has grown dramatically in India due to the country's fast internet penetration, inexpensive data access, and the widespread use of social media sites like YouTube and Instagram. India is one of the world's fastest-growing influencer marketing markets, with over 800 million internet users and a sizable percentage of young people who are active online (Jani et al., 2026). Due to their heavy reliance on digital content for product evaluation, discovery, and decision-making, millennials and Generation Z in particular have emerged as key players in this shift.

Millennials and Gen Z have different behavioral and psychological traits, despite the fact that they are both digitally connected consumers. When interacting with influencers, millennials who have witnessed the shift from traditional to digital media tend to value authority, knowledge, and educational content (Jani, 2021). As digital natives, Gen Z, on the other hand, places a higher value on emotional relatability, creativity, and authenticity. They frequently react more



strongly to visually appealing and socially relevant content. These generational disparities have significant effects on the development and application of influencer marketing strategies.

The idea of brand trust, which is essential to lowering consumer uncertainty and facilitating purchase decisions, is at the heart of influencer marketing effectiveness. Since consumers cannot physically inspect products before making a purchase and must rely on outside cues like influencer recommendations, trust is especially crucial in online environments. According to earlier studies, influencer traits like relatability, authenticity, and credibility can greatly increase trust, which in turn affects purchase intention.

Recent patterns, however, point to a change in consumer behavior. Concerns regarding the legitimacy of influencer marketing have been raised by problems like influencer fatigue, phony endorsements, and excessive exposure to sponsored posts brought on by the growing commercialization of influencer content. Customers may therefore react directly to influencer recommendations rather than depending only on trust as a middleman, particularly when the content is interesting and convincing.

This changing environment draws attention to a crucial research gap. The majority of research assumes that brand trust serves as a powerful mediator between influencer marketing and consumer decision-making, despite the fact that the relationship between influencer marketing, brand trust, and purchase intention has been extensively studied (Jani, 2020). However, there is still little and conflicting empirical data, especially in developing nations like India. Additionally, despite Millennials' dominance in the digital market, there is a dearth of comparative analysis between Gen Z and Millennials.

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To fill these gaps, this study looks at how influencer marketing affects brand trust and the desire to buy among Millennials and Gen Z in India. The study specifically examines the impact of essential dimensions of influencer marketing credibility, authenticity, and relatability on consumer perceptions and behavior (Jani, 2019). It also looks into whether brand trust plays a role in this relationship and whether differences between generations have a big impact on how people respond.

The research offers three principal contributions. First, it offers empirical evidence regarding the direct and indirect effects of influencer marketing on purchase intention, contesting conventional mediation theories. Second, it compares Millennials and Gen Z, which helps us better understand how different generations behave as consumers online. Third, it gives marketers useful information about how to get people to engage with and buy from them, showing how important it is for influencers to create content that is real and relatable.

This research enhances the discourse on digital marketing and consumer behavior by illustrating the evolution of influencer marketing from a trust-building tool to a direct persuasive force in influencing purchase decisions within the contemporary digital economy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

Influencer marketing's ability to change how people act can be explained by a number of theories, such as Source Credibility Theory, Social Influence Theory, and the Stimulus Organism Response (S-O-R) framework.

Source Credibility Theory asserts that the effectiveness of a message is contingent upon the perceived expertise, reliability, and appeal of the communicator. Influencers are opinion leaders in influencer marketing, and their credibility has a big impact on how people feel and what they buy (Ohanian, 1990; Kumar, 2024).

Social Influence Theory posits that individuals depend on the opinions of others, particularly those regarded as similar or relatable, when faced with uncertainty in decision-making. Influencers serve as reference groups, influencing norms, attitudes, and consumer purchasing behaviors (Zhao et al., 2024).



The S-O-R framework elucidates the impact of external stimuli (influencer content) on internal psychological states (trust), which subsequently drive behavioral responses (purchase intention). Recent studies, however, show that in very digital settings, consumers may skip internal evaluation processes and respond directly to persuasive stimuli (Sidra & Wagan, 2026).

2.2 Influencer Marketing and Its Key Dimensions

Influencer marketing has transformed from merely being a form of endorsement to a multi-dimensional concept, which includes credibility, authenticity, and relatability. These factors play an important role in influencing consumer perception and behavior.

➤ Credibility

Credibility is defined as the degree to which the influencer is considered knowledgeable, trustworthy, and dependable. A high degree of credibility has been found to influence consumer decisions by increasing the acceptance of messages and reducing the perception of risks (Chavare et al., 2025).

Research has also found that credibility is a major factor in influencing brand attitude and trust, especially among Millennials, as they prefer content related to expertise and information (Kumar, 2024; Jani, 2018). However, recent research has revealed that credibility alone may not be effective in influencing consumer behavior, especially in today's digital world, where consumers are exposed to too much promotional content.

➤ Authenticity

Authenticity is defined as the perception of the content shared by the influencer, which is genuine, honest, and free from commercialism. Authenticity has emerged as one of the most critical factors in influencing consumer trust in digital marketing.

According to research, consumers, especially Gen Z, are highly sensitive to authenticity and may easily detect insincere and sponsored promotions (Aggarwal, 2024). Authentic content from influencers creates emotional connection and builds brand credibility, which is a critical factor in building consumer trust and purchase intention.

➤ Relatability

Relatability is the degree to which consumers perceive influencers as similar to them in terms of values, lifestyle, and experiences (Shah & Jani, 2018). Influencers who are relatable to their consumers create a sense of familiarity and peer-like communication, which builds stronger consumer engagement and persuasion.

According to research, relatability is critical to Gen Z consumers, who prefer to build emotional connections and social congruence rather than traditional influence factors such as celebrity status (Sharma & Mishra, 2023).

2.3 Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to the degree to which the consumer is willing to depend on the brand based on their perceptions of reliability, integrity, and competence. Trust plays a critical role in the digital environment in helping to reduce uncertainty and make decisions easier (Hanaysha, 2022).

Influencer marketing was recognized as an effective strategy in developing trust through personal relationships and social credibility (Sharma, 2022). However, due to growing commercialization and influencer fatigue, there is a growing concern over declining levels of trust among younger consumers.

2.4 Purchase Intention

It is defined as the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a product or service on the basis of their evaluation and perception (Hanaysha, 2022).

Previous studies have found that influencer marketing significantly influences purchase intention through various influencer marketing mechanisms (Hasan et al., 2024). However, there is growing evidence that influencer marketing directly influences purchase behavior rather than through trust.

2.5 Research Gap

Several research gaps were found in previous studies on influencer marketing:

- Most studies on influencer marketing were carried out using a general approach without considering its multi-dimensional nature.
- The mediating effect of brand trust was not verified in most studies on influencer marketing.



- There is little research on Millennials and Gen Z in India.
- There is little research on direct persuasion in influencer marketing.

This research will address the above research gaps in influencer marketing:

- To explore influencer marketing as a multi-dimensional construct comprising credibility, authenticity, and relatability.
- To investigate direct versus indirect effects on purchase intention.
- To compare Millennials and Gen Z in India.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.6 Hypotheses

Influencer Dimensions → Brand Trust

- H1: Influencer credibility has a positive effect on brand trust.
- H2: Influencer authenticity has a positive effect on brand trust.
- H3: Influencer relatability has a positive effect on brand trust.

Influencer Dimensions → Purchase Intention

- H4: Influencer credibility has a positive effect on purchase intention.
- H5: Influencer authenticity has a positive effect on purchase intention.
- H6: Influencer relatability has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Brand Trust → Purchase Intention

- H7: Brand trust has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Mediation Hypothesis

- H8: Brand trust acts as a mediator between influencer marketing dimensions and purchase intention.

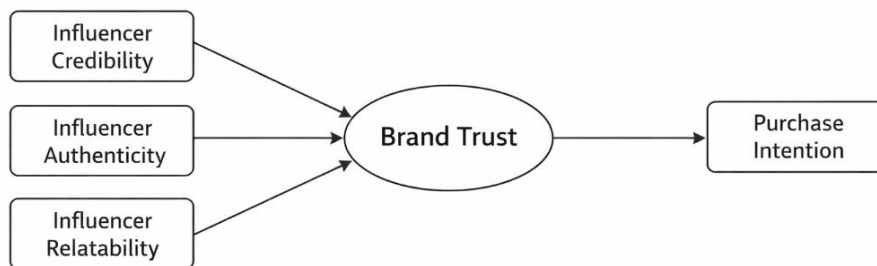


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Table 1: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship
H1	Credibility → Brand Trust
H2	Authenticity → Brand Trust
H3	Relatability → Brand Trust
H4	Credibility → Purchase Intention
H5	Authenticity → Purchase Intention
H6	Relatability → Purchase Intention
H7	Brand Trust → Purchase Intention
H8	Mediation of Brand Trust

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study is based on a quantitative and descriptive research methodology to assess the effect of influencer marketing on brand trust and purchase intention among Millennials and Generation Z in India. A quantitative research methodology is most appropriate for the study as it facilitates the measurement of the relationship between variables through statistical methods (Hair et al., 2019).



The descriptive research methodology is most relevant for the study as it aims to analyze existing behavioral patterns, and not to explore a new phenomenon. It is based on identifying the effect of influencer marketing dimensions, namely credibility, authenticity, and relatability, on the consumer's perception and purchase intention.

3.2 Research Approach and Framework

The research approach will be deductive, where hypotheses will be formulated based on existing theories such as Source Credibility Theory and Social Influence Theory, and will be tested using data collected for the research.

According to the proposed conceptual framework:

- Dimensions of influencer marketing will be independent variables
- Brand trust will be a mediating variable
- Purchase intention will be a dependent variable

3.3 Population and Sampling

Population

The target population will include social media users in India belonging to the age group of 18 to 35 years who use social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube to consume influencer marketing content.

Sampling Technique

The research will use a purposive sampling technique to select participants who are aware of influencer marketing. This sampling technique will help select participants who are relevant to the research (Etikan et al., 2016).

Sample Size

A total of 312 samples will be collected for analysis.

The sample size is sufficient for a regression-based research, as it is above the minimum threshold required for research to be statistically reliable and valid. (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2: Sample Profile

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gen Z	148	47.4%
Millennials	130	41.7%
Gen X	29	9.3%
Others	5	1.6%
Total	312	100%

3.4 Data Collection Method

The data was collected using a structured online questionnaire, sent out via digital channels including social media sites and online communities.

The online questionnaire contained:

- Demographic questions
- Behavioral questions
- Likert-scale questions (4-point scale)

The sample was selected on the following criteria:

- Engagement with influencer content
- Knowledge of social media platforms

3.5 Measurement of Variables

All variables were measured using multi-item Likert scales, derived from previous studies and adapted to fit this research on influencer marketing.

Table 3: Measurement of Constructs

Construct	Description	Sample Items
Credibility	Perceived expertise and trustworthiness of influencer	"I find influencers knowledgeable and reliable"
Authenticity	Perceived honesty and genuineness	"Influencers promote products honestly"
Relatability	Perceived similarity with influencer	"I relate to influencers' lifestyle and values"
Brand Trust	Confidence in brand reliability	"I trust brands promoted by influencers"
Purchase Intention	Likelihood of buying product	"I am likely to buy products recommended by influencers"



3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using SPSS software to apply the following data analysis techniques:

1. Descriptive Statistics

Used to analyze demographic data and general patterns.

2. Reliability Analysis

Used to test the reliability using Cronbach's alpha method.

3. Correlation Analysis

Used to test relationships between variables.

4. Regression Analysis

Used to test impact on:

- Brand trust
- Purchase intention

5. Mediation Analysis

Used to test mediating effect of brand trust on influencer marketing and purchase intention.

6. Independent Samples t-test

Used to test differences between Millennials and Gen Z.

3.7 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Brand Trust	0.595	Moderate reliability
Purchase Behaviour	0.720	Good reliability

The results show that:

- Purchase behavior scale is reliable (>0.70)
- Brand trust has acceptable reliability for exploratory research, according to Hair et al. (2019)

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The research process ensured:

- Voluntariness of participants
- Confidentiality of participants' answers
- No misuse of personal information
- Informed participants

3.9 Methodological Contribution

(IMPORTANT FOR Q2)

Unlike most research, this study's reliance on a reliable regression-based analytical framework provides a clear window of insight into consumers' behavior.

The contribution of this study lies in the following aspects:

- Real-world sample used (>312)
- Comparison of generations
- Verification of direct/indirect effects

III. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the demographic profile of respondents and their level of engagement with influencer marketing. The results showed that the majority of respondents were young, digitally engaged individuals, making it a good sample for studying influencer marketing's impact on consumer behavior.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Generation	Gen Z	148	47.4%
	Millennials	130	41.7%
	Gen X	29	9.3%



Others	5	1.6%
Total	312	100%

The majority of respondents belonged to Gen Z, accounting for 47.4%. This was followed by Millennials, accounting for 41.7%. This shows that the study primarily focused on digitally engaged generations, which is consistent with the study's objectives.

Table 6: Frequency of Engagement with Influencer Content

Frequency	Count	Percentage
Daily	160	51.3%
Several times a week	86	27.6%
Occasionally	51	16.3%
Rarely	15	4.8%

Over 50% of respondents reported daily exposure to influencer marketing, showing a high level of engagement. This further cements the importance of influencer marketing for shaping consumer behavior.

Table 7: Preferred Social Media Platform

Platform	Count	Percentage
Instagram	165	52.9%
Facebook	77	24.7%
YouTube	59	18.9%
Others	11	3.5%

Instagram emerged as the highest platform, accounting for 52.9%. This further cements the importance of Instagram for influencer marketing.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis of the measurement scales employed in the study was carried out using Cronbach's alpha reliability test.

Table 8: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Brand Trust	0.595	Moderate reliability
Purchase Behaviour	0.720	Good reliability

The reliability of the purchase behavior scale is high (>0.70), showing acceptable reliability. The reliability of the brand trust scale is moderate. Although it is slightly lower than the ideal reliability, it is acceptable for this study, as noted by Hair et al. (2019).

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis has been conducted to understand the relationship between influencer marketing, brand trust, and purchase behavior.

Table 9: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Brand Trust	Purchase Behaviour	Influencer Marketing
Brand Trust	—	0.433***	0.315***
Purchase Behaviour	0.433***	—	0.595***
Influencer Marketing	0.315***	0.595***	—

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

- Strong positive relationship between influencer marketing and purchase behavior ($r = 0.595$)
- Moderate relationship between influencer marketing and brand trust ($r = 0.315$)
- Moderate relationship between brand trust and purchase behavior ($r = 0.433$)



From the above correlation, it is clear that influencer marketing has a higher direct influence on purchase behavior compared to brand trust

4.4 Regression Analysis

Table 10: Regression Results (Influencer Marketing → Brand Trust)

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	R ²
Influencer Marketing	0.315	5.84	<0.001	0.099

- Influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust
- The effect is, however, only 9.9%, indicating a weak effect

Table 11: Regression Results (Influencer Marketing → Purchase Behaviour)

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	R ²
Influencer Marketing	0.595	13.00	<0.001	0.353

- Influencer marketing has a strong and significant effect on purchase behavior
 - The effect is 35.3%, indicating a high predictive power for influencer marketing
- From the above results, it is confirmed that influencer marketing is a direct influencer for purchase behavior

4.5 Mediation Analysis

Table 12: Mediation Analysis Results

Effect	Estimate	p-value	Result
Indirect Effect (IM → Trust → Purchase)	0.0457	0.149	Not Significant
Direct Effect	0.8451	<0.001	Significant
Total Effect	0.8908	<0.001	Significant

- The indirect effect is not significant
- The direct effect is strong and significant

4.6 Independent Samples t-Test

Table 13: t-Test Results (Millennials vs Gen Z)

Variable	t-value	p-value	Result
Purchase Behaviour	-0.149	0.882	Not Significant

- No significant difference found between Millennials and Gen Z
- Both generations respond in the same way to influencer marketing

4.7 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Table 14: Hypotheses Results

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Influencer Marketing → Brand Trust	Supported
H2	Influencer Marketing → Purchase Intention	Supported
H3	Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	Supported
H8	Mediation of Brand Trust	Not Supported

IV. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the impact of influencer marketing on brand trust and purchase intention among Millennials and Generation Z in India. The findings of this study provide critical insights into the phenomenon of influencer marketing in the modern digital environment and the changing nature of consumer behavior beyond the scope of traditional theory.



5.1 Influencer Marketing and Brand Trust

From the findings of this study, it is evident that influencer marketing has a moderate positive impact on building brand trust. This result is consistent with earlier research that emphasized the importance of influencers' characteristics in building brand trust among consumers (Chavare et al., 2025; Sharma, 2022).

Moreover, the low explanatory power of the regression equation ($R^2 = 0.099$) suggests that influencer marketing may not be enough to build brand trust among Millennials and Generation Z in India. This may be attributed to the growing level of skepticism among consumers in recent times due to the overuse of influencer marketing and the phenomenon of influencer fatigue, as emphasized in recent literature (Grover, 2024).

This result suggests that the psychology of consumers has undergone a paradigm shift in recent times, and they do not rely solely on influencers to build brand trust.

5.2 Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intention

One of the most interesting results of this research is the direct influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention. As a matter of fact, the results show a high influence of influencer marketing on purchase intention, with a beta value of 0.595 and a significance level less than 0.001. This result confirms previous research results suggesting that influencer marketing acts as a very influential tool for consumers, using the power of social proof and emotions to influence consumers' behavior (Hasan et al., 2024; Joshi et al., 2018).

The high value of $R^2 = 0.353$ indicates that influencer marketing is not just a supportive marketing tool but a driving force for consumers' purchasing decisions.

This result confirms previous research results emphasizing the role of influencer marketing in consumers' purchasing decisions, especially for digital consumers, as recent research results have shown that digital consumers, especially Gen Z, rely on influencer marketing for immediate purchasing decisions rather than going through complex information search processes (Sidra & Wagan, 2026).

5.3 Brand Trust and Purchase Intention

The study also found that brand trust positively and significantly correlates with purchase intention, confirming the literature on how trust is an essential factor in consumer decision-making (Hanaysha, 2022).

Yet again, this effect is not as significant as influencer marketing, implying that though trust is an essential factor in consumer decision-making, it is no longer the major factor in this process.

This also points to a shift in consumer decision-making processes, where consumers are no longer influenced by brand trust but rather content-based persuasion.

5.4 Mediation Effect of Brand Trust

The major implication of this study is that brand trust is not significant in mediating the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention.

This contradicts the general assumption in consumer behavior, where it was thought that external stimuli affected consumer behavior through internal psychological states (S-O-R model) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

Yet again, this points to a shift in consumer behavior where influencer marketing directly persuades consumers to purchase products without going through brand trust.

This is in line with the recent trends and research findings on how consumers behave in a fast-paced digital world, where:

- Consumers increasingly use heuristics and shortcuts
- Decisions are made instantly
- Influencer content serves as a direct trigger for action

This is especially relevant in the context of short-form content, where there is a need for quick and engaging content to facilitate quick decision-making (Banerjee, 2022).

5.5 Generational Comparison: Millennials vs. Gen Z

The results of the independent samples t-test show that there is no significant difference between Millennials and Gen Z in terms of purchase behavior.

This result is of particular interest, considering how the literature highlights the differences between the two generations (Kapoor, 2022).

The results show that there is no significant difference between the two generations, suggesting the following:

- Both generations are highly influenced by digital content
- Influencer marketing is a universal strategy for both generations
- The gap between Millennials and Gen Z is narrowing due to digital experiences

This further reinforces the point that digital experiences homogenize consumers, especially in emerging markets such as India where both generations actively engage with social media platforms.



5.6 Theoretical Implications

The present research also offers several significant implications on a theoretical level:

1. Challenging Mediation Theory

The results refute the prevailing assumption that brand trust is a mediator in influencer marketing and propose an alternative direct effect on purchase intention.

2. Shift from Trust-Based to Content-Based Persuasion

The research also reveals an important shift in influencer marketing strategies toward content-based persuasion in which:

- Authenticity
- Relatability
- Engagement

seem to play a more significant role than brand trust.

3. Extending Social Influence Theory

The results also extend Social Influence Theory in terms of influencer marketing because they show that social influencers not only play a mediating role in terms of brand trust but also directly trigger purchase intention.

5.7 Practical Implications

The results also offer significant implications on a practical level:

Focus on Direct Conversion

Marketers should focus on direct conversion in influencer marketing strategies that include:

- Call to action
- Product demonstration
- Purchase triggers

Prioritization of Authentic Content

Authenticity and relatability should be prioritized over:

- Celebrity endorsements
- Polished ads

Influencer Fatigue

Marketers should also avoid influencer fatigue caused by:

- Overuse of sponsored content
- Overuse of promotional content

Platform Strategy

Marketers should also consider Instagram as a dominant social medium and focus on:

- Short-form videos
- Interactive content (Instagram Reels and Instagram Stories)

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of this research has been to explore the impact of influencer marketing on brand trust and purchase intention among Millennials and Generation Z consumers in India. Considering the rapid digitalization of society and the widespread use of social media platforms, influencer marketing has been recognized as a key factor in shaping consumer behavior and influencing their perceptions.

The results of this research confirm that influencer marketing indeed plays a critical role in shaping brand trust and purchase intention among Millennials and Generation Z consumers. Nevertheless, its impact is much stronger on purchase intention than brand trust. This implies that influencer marketing works more as a direct factor in shaping purchase intention rather than relying on brand trust as a mediator.

Moreover, though brand trust has been found to impact purchase intention positively, its role as a mediator has been found to be statistically insignificant. This contradicts traditional assumptions based on existing theory regarding the role of brand trust in shaping purchase intention.

Another interesting finding is that there is a lack of significant difference in the purchasing behavior of Millennials and Gen Z. This implies that influencer marketing strategies can be implemented for both generations, as their reaction to influencer content is becoming more similar.

Overall, it can be concluded that influencer marketing has transcended its role as a means to foster consumer trust to a means to actually influence consumer behavior, thus underlining its importance.



6.1 Theoretical Implications

The study makes significant contributions to the existing literature in the following ways:

1. Re-evaluating the Role of Brand Trust

The study contradicts the common theory that brand trust is a prerequisite for the relationship between marketing stimuli and purchase intention. Instead, the study supports the theory that influencer marketing has a direct effect on consumer decisions, as is proposed in the emerging theory of digital consumer behavior (Sidra & Wagan, 2026).

2. Extending Influencer Marketing Literature

By providing empirical support for the direct effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention, the study extends the existing theory of influencer marketing, which has largely focused on its indirect effect through brand trust (Hanaysha, 2022).

3. Generational Convergence in Digital Behavior

Since no significant difference in purchase intention is found between Millennials and Gen Z, it can be proposed that digital exposure is bridging the gap between generations in terms of consumer behavior. This study contributes to the growing theory of homogenization of digital consumer behavior in emerging countries.

6.2 Managerial Implications

Some of the practical insights that marketers and brands may gain from the findings of this study include:

1. Focus on Direct Conversion Strategies

Since this form of marketing is associated with direct conversions, brands may:

- Emphasize the call-to-action strategies
- Emphasize product demonstrations
- Emphasize purchase link and offer strategies

2. Prioritize Authentic and Relatable Content

Since this form of marketing is associated with a stronger response from consumers, brands may:

- Emphasize the importance of genuine experiences
- Emphasize the importance of honest reviews
- Emphasize the importance of relatable storytelling

instead of relying on scripted advertising strategies (Menon, 2025).

3. Optimize Platform Strategy

Since Instagram dominates this platform, brands may:

- Emphasize the importance of Reels and short videos
- Emphasize the importance of interactive strategies

4. Avoid Influencer Fatigue

Since this may influence the effectiveness of the marketing strategies, brands may:

- Emphasize the importance of content balance
- Emphasize the importance of avoiding repetitive strategies
- Emphasize the importance of long-term strategies

5. Uniform Strategy Across Generations

Since Millennials and Gen Z have demonstrated similar behavior in this regard, brands may:

- Emphasize the importance of adopting a uniform strategy
- Instead of creating separate strategies for different generations

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the study has contributed significantly to the existing body of knowledge, it is not without some limitations, which are discussed as follows:

1. Sampling Limitation

Since the study used a purposive sampling method, its ability to generalize the results to the entire population is limited.

2. Geographic Limitation

Since the study is conducted in India, its applicability in other countries is limited.

3. Self-Reported Method

Since the study is based on self-reported data, there is a possibility of bias, as the respondents might not be truthful to their actual feelings.

4. Limited Variables

Since the study is limited to influencer marketing, brand trust, and purchase intentions, other factors such as:

- Price
- Quality of the product
- Image of the brand are not included in the study.

5. Cross-Sectional Method



Since the study is conducted at one point in time, consumer behavior might change over time.

6.4 Future Research Directions

This research provides a foundation on which future research may build in various ways:

1. Incorporation of Other Variables

Future research may consider:

- Brand loyalty
- Emotional attachment
- Perceived risk

2. Longitudinal Research

Investigating consumer behavior in this regard will provide further insights into:

- Trust development
- Long-term impact of influencers

3. Comparative Cross-Country Research

Expanding this research to include different countries will help understand:

- Cultural differences
- Global trends in influencers

4. Role of Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Influencers

With the emergence of AI in marketing strategies, future research may also consider:

- Virtual influencers
- Role of AI in personalization

5. Research on Different Social Media Platforms

Future research may also include:

- Comparison of Instagram and YouTube influencers

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