The Effect of Influencer Marketing on Gen Z Purchasing Intentions in Emerging Economies

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

The emergence of influencer marketing in developing countries has been facilitated by Generation Z's use of social media. This study's goal is to discover how influencer marketing will affect Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Nigeria. In this study, the data were examined utilizing descriptive, reliability, correlation, and regression analysis employing quantitative research and IBM SPSS Statistics 26. The data collection method was carried out online with a group of 150 individuals from the Gen Z demographic participating. The study highlights that perceived influencer credibility, product-influencer relevance, perceived expertise, and trustworthiness significantly impact Gen Z's purchasing intentions in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Nigeria. Authentic, credible influencers who align with a brand's image strengthen consumer trust and purchase intent. Marketers should prioritize collaborations with influencers known for genuine, relatable, and expert content, fostering deeper engagement and brand loyalty. While peers' reviews showed less impact, further research could explore Gen Z's evolving approach to social proof.

Keywords: Consumer Trust; Influencer Credibility; Marketing Strategies; Product-Influencer Relevance; Purchasing Intentions

INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing is gaining traction as a prominent form of online advertising, blending traditional marketing techniques with modern digital strategies. Despite its growing popularity, many still find influencer marketing complex. At its core, influencer marketing reimagines the concept of celebrity endorsements by creating content-driven campaigns that resonate with contemporary audiences. This approach enables brands and influencers to collaborate effectively, aligning campaign outcomes with the interests and preferences of target consumers.

In this marketing model, brands partner with online influencers to promote products or services. These collaborations vary in intensity; while some are structured partnerships aimed at specific marketing goals, others focus on enhancing brand awareness more informally. A notable example is YouTuber PewDiePie, who has been instrumental in the evolution of influencer marketing. By creating engaging content, such as videos featuring challenges related to a horror film, PewDiePie effectively showcased the film to his 111 million subscribers. This creative approach led the promotional content to achieve nearly twice the views of the official movie trailer, demonstrating influencer marketing's power to capture audience attention.

The rise of influencer marketing is notable not only for its financial impact but also for its adaptability and innovation. Brands are now using data analytics to identify influencers who align with their values and target audiences, ensuring more effective campaigns. Additionally, influencer marketing is increasingly integrated into broader marketing strategies, as brands aim to build cohesive narratives across platforms. This multifaceted approach allows companies to engage consumers more authentically, fostering deeper connections. As influencer marketing continues to evolve, its influence on consumer behavior and sales is likely to grow, solidifying its place in the marketing landscape.

Generation Z (Gen Z) is a crucial demographic focus for today's marketers. Defined by the Pew Research Center as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, the oldest members of Gen Z are around 25 years old, with many entering the workforce and beginning to establish families. This generation is distinctive not only for its diversity—49% identify as queer—but also as "digital natives." Having grown up with technology, Gen Z has a unique relationship with the digital world, with 98% owning smartphones and spending an average of three hours online daily, significantly more than previous generations (Grigoreva et al., 2021).

The influence of social media on Gen Z is profound. In fact, it is rare to find members of this generation not engaged with various social media platforms. An impressive 85% of Gen Z learns about new products through social media, and they readily shop online, supported by their trust in digital systems and consumer protection laws (Walk-Morris, 2023). Social influencers are pivotal in shaping their purchasing decisions, with nearly 44% of Gen Z citing influencer recommendations as a major factor in their buying choices. Furthermore, 87% of this demographic follows at least one influencer on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube (Williams, 2020).

As traditional media channels like television and print lose effectiveness in reaching Gen Z, influencer marketing on social media has become an essential strategy for brands aiming to connect with this audience. By leveraging influencers who resonate with Gen Z, companies can effectively engage this influential generation and build lasting relationships. Through a strategic focus on influencer partnerships, brands can increase visibility, foster trust, and ultimately drive purchasing behavior among Gen Z consumers.

This research aims to investigate the effect of influencer marketing on the purchasing intentions of Generation Z consumers in emerging economies, with a specific focus on how different attributes of influencers and their content influence purchasing decisions. The significance of this study lies in its focus on Gen Z, a digitally native and highly social media-engaged generation that is particularly susceptible to influencer marketing. While existing research has extensively explored influencer marketing in developed markets, there is a gap in understanding how it operates within the unique context of emerging economies, where consumer behaviors and access to digital platforms may differ. This study is novel in its examination of multiple influencer-related factors—credibility, relevance, expertise, trustworthiness, and peer influence—each hypothesized to impact Gen Z's purchase intentions (H1-H5). By exploring these factors, this research contributes valuable insights into the mechanisms driving Gen Z consumer behavior in these rapidly growing markets. The findings will not only enhance the academic understanding of influencer marketing's impact on Gen Z in emerging economies but also provide actionable recommendations for brands seeking to optimize their influencer strategies and effectively reach this influential demographic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has become a strategic tool in digital marketing, leveraging social media personalities to enhance brand visibility and engagement (Sutiono et al., 2024). As Prasetya et al. (2021) explain, this strategy utilizes platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and blogs where influencers can reach large audiences. These influencers often have dedicated followers who trust their opinions, making them highly effective for product promotion. According to Lengkawati and Saputra (2021), influencer marketing features individuals who, through their personal brand and following, can sway their audiences' attitudes and ultimately encourage product usage. Hassan et al. (2021) further elaborates on five key characteristics to analyze the effectiveness of influencers, which include: relatability, knowledge, helpfulness, confidence, and articulation. These traits enable influencers to create a meaningful connection with audiences, build trust, and communicate messages persuasively.

According to Sugiharto and Ramadhana (2018), company marketing efforts leverage influencers for three primary purposes: to inform, persuade, and entertain. Influencers serve an educational role by providing audiences with detailed content about products or services, helping them gain new information. Through the sharing of product details and benefits, influencers act as intermediaries that enhance the audience's understanding of a brand. The persuasive nature of influencer marketing is also vital, as influencers use their authority and relatability to sway audiences. This persuasion helps audiences align with the influencer's viewpoints, feelings, or behaviors regarding a product or service, which can ultimately lead to purchasing decisions. Additionally, the element of entertainment plays a significant role in influencer content. By capturing attention and making messages more engaging, entertainment ensures that informative and persuasive content is more appealing. This approach resonates emotionally with audiences and helps advertisements stand out in a digital landscape that is saturated with content.

In recent years, influencer marketing has evolved, becoming a central part of marketing strategies for businesses of all sizes. Companies recognize that working with influencers allows them to reach specific demographics with tailored messages. This targeted approach is more effective than traditional advertising since it resonates with niche audiences who follow influencers for their authenticity and expertise. Through influencer

marketing, brands can foster consumer loyalty, create organic engagement, and increase the likelihood of conversion by establishing a trusted recommendation source.

Consumer Behavior

Understanding consumer behavior is essential for companies aiming to market products effectively (Liew et al., 2022). Consumers may display a variety of individual preferences, habits, and purchasing influences, yet they also share common traits that marketers must recognize. According to Putlia and Thioanda (2020), while consumers exhibit many unique characteristics, there are substantial similarities that provide key insights for marketers to shape their strategies effectively.

In a study by Acebrón et al. (2001), the focus was on how past experiences shape purchasing decisions for fresh products, specifically mussels. The researchers applied structural equation modeling to understand the impact of consumer habits and prior experience on purchase decisions. Their findings highlighted that a consumer's specific tastes and previous experiences with a product, such as the quality and freshness of mussels, have a strong influence on whether they choose to repurchase. Moreover, the study revealed that a product's image significantly influences consumer decisions, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a favorable and consistent brand image to encourage buying behavior. This suggests that customers are not only influenced by intrinsic product qualities but also by the perception and trust they associate with the brand.

For marketers, these insights indicate the need to cultivate a product image that resonates with positive consumer experiences and aligns with customer expectations. In practice, this means investing in brand reputation, ensuring product quality, and creating marketing messages that emphasize consistency and reliability. Additionally, companies should leverage customer feedback and past interactions to refine their marketing approaches. By understanding the dual influence of individual preferences and shared consumer behavior patterns, companies can create targeted, experience-based marketing strategies that appeal to both new and returning customers.

Behavioral Intention

Behavioral intention is a significant predictor of consumer actions, defined as the strength of one's intention to engage in a specific behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This encompasses various consumer responses, such as the likelihood of engaging in positive word-of-mouth, planning future purchases, and showing loyalty to service providers (Saha & Theingi, 2009). Essentially, behavioral intention represents a subjective probability – the perceived likelihood that a person will act in a particular way, reflecting a strong propensity to continue engaging with a preferred company or service provider.

In retail contexts, behavioral intention manifests in consumer readiness to display specific behaviors, including repeat purchases, recommending the company to others, and, at times, even demonstrating willingness to pay higher prices for the same goods or services. This readiness is influenced by factors like word-of-mouth intentions, price sensitivity, complaint behaviors, and referral likelihood. Behavioral intention is essential in understanding customer loyalty, as it reflects the perceived satisfaction and trust customers feel toward the brand or service.

Research findings by Chao (2019) highlight that perceived pleasure, performance expectancy, and effort expectancy have positive associations with behavioral intention. Customers who find the purchasing process satisfying and manageable are more inclined to return and recommend the brand. Additionally, mobile self-efficacy –

confidence in using mobile technology to shop or interact with services – significantly enhances perceived pleasure, making customers more likely to exhibit positive behavioral intentions. Conversely, perceived risk plays a negative moderating role, particularly between performance and effort expectancy. If customers sense potential risks in their purchase experience, it can reduce the positive effects of their performance expectations, thus impacting behavioral intentions. Consequently, businesses can strengthen behavioral intention by enhancing customer experiences, managing perceived risks, and fostering satisfaction, encouraging repeat engagement and loyalty.

Purchasing Intention

Purchase intent reflects a customer's willingness to buy a specific product or service and serves as a crucial metric for understanding consumer behavior. As a dependent variable, purchase intention is shaped by various internal and external factors, such as personal preferences, social influences, perceived product quality, and brand reputation. This concept indicates a consumer's predisposition or attitude toward making a purchase (Imran et al., 2024). Therefore, it is an essential measure for marketers when evaluating potential demand and developing targeted strategies. By assessing purchase intention, businesses can better estimate the likelihood of a consumer converting into an actual buyer, thereby facilitating the design of effective marketing campaigns and the strategic allocation of resources.

Intent-based marketing, also known as consumer intent marketing, capitalizes on the consumers' demonstrated or implied interest in a product or service. This marketing approach enables companies to tailor content and promotions based on consumer intent data, such as previous search behavior, engagement with brand content, or specific interactions with advertisements. By focusing on consumer intent, companies can display the most relevant information to prospective buyers, which can increase engagement, enhance the consumer experience, and drive higher conversion rates. Intent data also provides valuable insights into a consumer's mental framework and buying readiness, allowing brands to fine-tune the timing, message, and medium of promotional efforts.

The utility of purchase intent as a measure is evident in various aspects of marketing planning, from product positioning to personalized advertising. By analyzing customer intent, brands can deliver targeted messaging that aligns with individual preferences and expectations. For example, an advertisement tailored to a consumer's recent interests or preferences may be more impactful than a generic ad, increasing the likelihood of conversion. Understanding purchase intention not only aids in effective campaign design but also informs long-term business strategy by revealing customer satisfaction levels, brand loyalty potential, and opportunities for product innovation.

Credibility

Credibility plays a critical role in communication, encompassing both objective and subjective elements that contribute to a source's or message's believability. Defined as the quality or capacity to inspire trust, credibility is often linked with the reputation and authority of a person or institution. Rooted in Aristotle's philosophy of rhetoric, credibility is primarily built through three persuasive modes: ethos (character), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical argument). Ethos is central to credibility, as it establishes the communicator's trustworthiness and expertise, which are both essential elements. Trustworthiness reflects honesty and reliability, while expertise indicates knowledge and competence; both factors possess subjective and objective dimensions that impact a source's credibility.

With the rise of the internet since the mid-1990s, digital credibility has become a major area of focus. The internet's expansion as an information hub has heightened the importance of assessing the credibility of online sources. The Credibility and Digital Media Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) examines various dimensions of digital credibility, including youth interactions with digital media and their perceptions of credibility. This research highlights how digital platforms and influencers, in particular, shape young people's understanding of credibility in online spaces.

Influencers' credibility often stems from their popularity and visibility in mass media, as noted by Gómez (2019). Their familiarity with the public and regular media presence contributes to a sense of trust and reliability among audiences. This is especially relevant in social media marketing, where influencers leverage their reach and perceived credibility to shape consumer behavior. By fostering a positive reputation and consistent engagement, influencers can develop a credible persona that appeals to their followers, thereby increasing their persuasive power. For brands, selecting credible influencers is key to maximizing impact, as audiences tend to trust and act on recommendations from personalities they find reputable and authentic.

Hypotheses Development
Influencer Credibility and Gen Z Purchasing Intention
Credibility, defined as the ability to inspire trust, is an essential quality that applies to both individuals and institutions. This attribute plays a fundamental role in shaping public perception and is often discussed concerning a person's character or an institution's reputation. In many cases, credibility is associated with the believability of a witness or a testimony, emphasizing the importance of trust and integrity. In the context of marketing, particularly in social media, the credibility of celebrities used as endorsers has a notable impact on consumer perceptions and satisfaction (Sanjaya & Berlianto, 2022). As celebrities endorse products, their credibility becomes pivotal; this credibility hinges on three main factors: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise.

Attractiveness not only refers to physical appeal but also to the celebrity's personal charm, which draws audiences and makes them more receptive to their messages. Trustworthiness speaks to the perceived honesty and reliability of the celebrity, which reassures consumers and reduces skepticism. Expertise refers to the knowledge or authority that the celebrity holds in relation to the product or service they endorse. Together, these factors create a compelling sense of credibility that marketers aim to leverage in a crowded marketplace, hoping that a recognizable face with high credibility will enhance the product's appeal and foster brand loyalty. Given these dynamics, the hypothesis is proposed that a celebrity's credibility significantly impacts consumer purchase intentions, suggesting that endorsements from credible figures are likely to increase consumer interest and trust in the promoted brand. This highlights the strategic importance of selecting endorsers who embody these qualities, as they directly influence consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior.

H1: Influencer credibility will positively influence Gen Z consumers' purchasing intention.

Product and Audience Relevance in Influencer Marketing
Influencers play a crucial role in building trust and awareness for brands among their followers. By effectively promoting products or services, influencers help ensure that these offerings are not only recognized but also remembered by their audience. Previous studies indicate that aligning brands with suitable influencers can enhance brand trust and boost purchase intentions (Nam & Dân, 2018). Moreover, product relevance, defined as the degree of alignment between the product and the consumer's interests, is a

significant factor that stimulates consumer curiosity and engagement (Moreau et al., 2001).

Research by Erkan and Evans (2016) emphasizes that the credibility, perceived value, and quality of information shared on social media significantly influence consumer purchase intentions. Furthermore, Xu and Pratt (2018) highlight that establishing a strong connection between influencers and followers requires influencers to possess lifestyle traits and behaviors that resonate with their audience. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed that the relevance of an influencer's lifestyle and values to their followers positively influences brand trust and enhances consumers' purchase intentions. This relationship underscores the importance of strategic influencer selection in marketing efforts to create authentic and impactful connections with target audiences.

H2: The relevance of products and targeted consumers to influencers will positively influence Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

Influencer Expertise and Its Impact on Gen Z Purchase Intention
Expertise refers to the communicator's ability to make credible and authentic claims within a specific area of knowledge. According to Hovland et al. (1953), expertise encompasses the endorser's comprehension, skills, and knowledge level. Sources of information that possess high expertise can persuade individuals to accept their claims as valid (Sternthal et al., 1978). An endorser's expertise acts as a qualification that significantly influences consumers' trust and willingness to purchase the endorsed product (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Conversely, a perceived lack of expertise can diminish the influencer's credibility (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Research by Till and Busler (2000) indicates that expertise positively influences both brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Moreover, trustworthiness, intertwined with expertise, has a strong positive correlation with purchase intention. When trusted influencers exhibit genuine care for their followers and demonstrate proficiency in a particular subject, their long-term followers are more likely to purchase the products they endorse (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Thus, the proposed hypothesis is that an influencer's expertise significantly enhances their perceived credibility, thereby positively affecting consumers' purchase intentions. This relationship emphasizes the critical role of expertise in influencer marketing, suggesting that brands should prioritize partnerships with knowledgeable influencers to foster trust and drive consumer engagement effectively.

H3: Perceived expertise of influencers will positively influence Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

The Role of Influencer Trustworthiness in Shaping Gen Z Consumer Intentions
Credibility remains a vital component of social media influencer marketing, similar to traditional media. Historically, credibility has been defined as the degree of trustworthiness and reliability attributed to a source. Sternthal et al. (1978) emphasize that credibility is influenced by both trustworthiness and expertise, representing how valid the audience perceives the speaker's claims to be. A speaker's honesty is intrinsically tied to their credibility. Numerous studies have highlighted the significance of influencers' credibility, including trustworthiness, as a key factor impacting followers' purchase intentions. Studies by Hu et al. (2002) and Xiao et al. (2018) suggest that credibility shapes consumer perceptions regarding the reliability of information, ultimately affecting their purchasing decisions. Therefore, it is hypothesized that higher levels of perceived credibility in influencers lead to increased consumer trust and a greater likelihood of

purchase intentions. This relationship underscores the importance of selecting credible influencers to enhance marketing effectiveness and foster consumer loyalty.

H4: Trustworthiness of the influencers positively influences the purchase intention of Gen Z customers.

Impact of Peer Reviews and Recommendations on Gen Z Purchase Intentions
Growing up in the digital age, Gen Z has never experienced a world without the internet, mobile technology, smartphones, or social media (Shin & Lee, 2021). This generation spends nearly 11 hours a day engaging with content across various devices (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019) and frequently checks their social media platforms throughout the day (Vițelar, 2019). Consequently, social media serves as their primary means of establishing and maintaining social connections. For Gen Z, peer acceptance is crucial; they seek belonging, and their self-concept is influenced by their social groups (Soltan, 2004). As such, recommendations from peers emerge as a significant information source for Gen Z when making purchasing decisions (Silva et al., 2017). This reliance on peer input indicates that social proof significantly impacts consumer behavior. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis: The influence of peer recommendations on purchase intentions is significant among Gen Z, highlighting the importance of social validation in their decision-making processes. By understanding this dynamic, brands can tailor their marketing strategies to leverage peer influence effectively, fostering trust and encouraging Gen Z's engagement with their products.

H5: Peer reviews and recommendations will positively influence Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

Gen Z consumers rely heavily on peer opinions and recommendations, making them a central factor in shaping purchase decisions. As a generation that grew up with unprecedented access to information and a strong digital presence, Gen Z often seeks out the opinions and experiences of others before making purchases. Peer reviews on social media and e-commerce platforms are seen as authentic, unbiased sources of information, offering reassurance and validation for their choices. This generation values authenticity and transparency, which are often perceived in honest reviews and feedback from peers or others within their social networks.

Furthermore, the social dynamics of Gen Z underscore the need for connection and shared experiences. When peers recommend products, it not only strengthens their trust in the brand but also fosters a sense of community and belonging, as they feel part of a shared trend or experience. This desire for social validation and community-based decision-making means that peer influence plays a significant role in reinforcing Gen Z's purchasing decisions. Thus, peer reviews and recommendations can significantly increase purchase intentions, providing brands with a unique opportunity to harness peer-driven marketing strategies that build trust and credibility among Gen Z consumers.

The following Figure 1 represents the framework of this study.

Figure 1. Research Framework
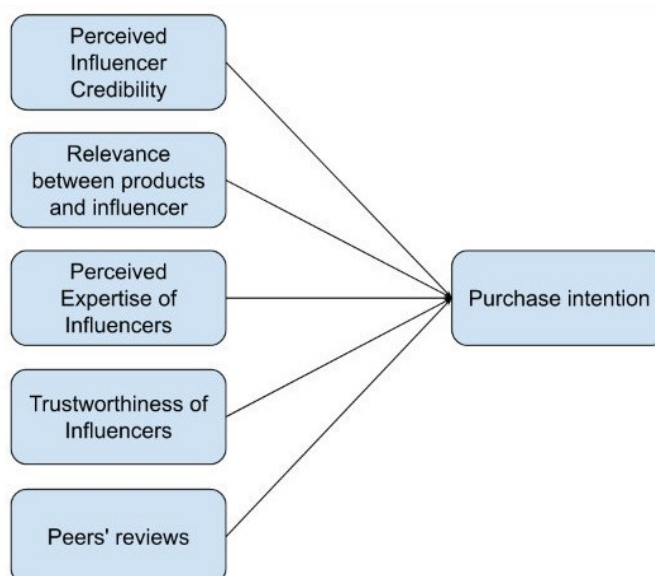
RESEARCH METHOD

To gain insights into the factors influencing purchase intention, a comprehensive online survey was conducted using Google Forms. The survey included both demographic questions and thematic items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Totally Disagree" to "Totally Agree." This format allowed respondents to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with statements about influencer marketing and purchase intention. The survey targeted Gen Z respondents from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Nigeria, specifically reaching a sample of 150 participants through social media channels like Line, Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp.

Data analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 26, employing descriptive, reliability, correlation, and regression analysis methods. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of demographic data and response trends, while reliability analysis assessed the internal consistency of the scale items. Correlation and regression analyses were then used to explore the relationships between variables and their influence on purchase intentions. The core aim of the study was to determine the impact of influencer marketing on Gen Z's purchase intentions, focusing on five key variables: perceived influencer credibility, perceived influencer expertise, perceived influencer trustworthiness, and peer reviews.

This study framework is valuable for understanding how Gen Z's perception of influencer attributes, such as credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness, alongside peer reviews, shapes their willingness to purchase. By analyzing these variables, the research sheds light on which factors most significantly drive purchase intention among Gen Z consumers, providing brands with insights to craft more targeted influencer marketing strategies that resonate with this tech-savvy, socially engaged generation. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of credible and trustworthy influencer partnerships, as these attributes contribute to building consumer trust and enhancing purchase motivation in a digitally-driven marketplace.

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic Demographic Data

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage

Gender	Female	83	54.6
	Male	69	45.4
Age	18	11	7.2
	19	23	15.1
	20	34	22.4
	21	55	36.2
	22	10	6.6
	23	7	4.6
	24	9	5.9
	25	3	2.0
Country	Indonesia	42	27.6
	Malaysia	92	60.5
	Nigeria	8	5.3
	India	10	6.6
Types of Influencers	Celebrity	23	15.1
	Expert	21	13.8
	Peer, Family	25	16.4
	KOLs (Key Opinion Leader)	30	19.7
	Social Media Influencer	53	34.9
Occupation	Employed	6	3.9
	Unemployed	3	2.0
	Student	143	94.1
Time Spent on Social Media	Less than 1 hour	15	9.9
	1-2 hour daily	55	36.2
	More than 3 hours	82	53.9
Total		152	100%

The demographic insights in Table 1 reveal that female participants represent a higher percentage (54.6%) compared to male participants (45.4%), indicating a notable gender balance in the survey. Among the respondents, those aged 21 years constitute the largest age group at 36.2%, highlighting their significance in influencing purchasing behaviors. The diversity of the participants is noteworthy, with respondents coming from four countries: Indonesia, Nigeria, India, and Malaysia, where Indonesia leads with the highest response rate at 60.5%.

In examining the types of influencers that impact purchase decisions, the results show that Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Social Media Influencers are the most selected, with 30 and 53 choices respectively, emphasizing their prominent role in shaping consumer preferences. Additionally, 16.4% of respondents identified peers and family members as key influencers, while 13.8% pointed to experts, and 15.1% mentioned celebrities and friends.

When considering occupational backgrounds, students make up a significant majority of the respondents at 94.1%, which may suggest that the insights garnered reflect the attitudes and behaviors of a younger demographic, likely more engaged with social media. Furthermore, the survey indicates that most participants (53.9%) spend over three hours daily on social media, illustrating the platform's central role in their daily lives and its potential influence on their purchasing intentions. This extensive engagement underscores the importance of targeted marketing strategies that resonate with this audience's preferences and habits.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results of Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

Group of Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items

1	Perceived Influencer Credibility (CRE)	0.834	2
2	Relevance Between Products and Influencers (RE)	0.845	2
3	Perceived Expertise of Influencers (EXP)	0.859	4
4	Trustworthiness of Influencers (TW)	0.885	4
5	Peers' Reviews (PEER)	0.836	2

According to Table 2 above, perceived influencer credibility, with a value of 0.834, is identified as the most trustworthy factor influencing Gen Z's purchase intentions. This suggests that influencers with high credibility—those who are viewed as honest, reliable, and authentic—have a substantial impact on consumers' trust and purchasing decisions. Following this, peer reviews, perceived influencer expertise, and the relevance between products and influencers are highlighted as equally significant, with each displaying values of 0.859 or higher. These findings imply that while credibility plays a foundational role, the specific expertise of the influencer, relevance to the product, and peer feedback are pivotal in reinforcing consumer confidence. Together, these factors provide a comprehensive view of what drives trust among Gen Z consumers, underscoring the importance of aligning brand messaging with authentic and knowledgeable voices that resonate with this audience.

Table 3. Results of Correlations Between Independent Variables

		TW	CRE	RE	EXP	PEER
TW	Pearson Correlation	1	0.834**	0.828**	0.880**	0.764**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
CRE	Pearson Correlation	0.834**	1	0.778**	0.843**	0.703**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
RE	Pearson Correlation	0.828**	0.778*	1	0.829**	0.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
EXP	Pearson Correlation	0.880**	0.843**	0.829**	1	0.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
PEER	Pearson Correlation	0.764**	0.703**	0.796**	0.761**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Note: TW (Trustworthiness of Influencer), CRE (Perceived Influencers' Credibility), PEER (Peers' Reviews), RE (Relevance Between Products and Influencers), EXP (Perceived Expertise)

The Pearson Correlation values between the independent variables, as shown in Table 3, indicate that each variable maintains an absolute level of independence. Since all significance (sig) values between the independent variables are 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold, we can conclude that there is no multicollinearity issue. This significance level confirms that the variables are sufficiently distinct and satisfy the assumptions for performing a valid multiple regression analysis. These low significance values strengthen the validity of the regression model, ensuring that the relationship between the independent variables does not interfere with or distort the results of the dependent variable. Consequently, the data satisfies the conditions necessary to provide reliable, interpretable insights into the factors impacting the dependent variable. This independence among variables allows for a more accurate assessment of each factor's unique effect.

Table 4. Results of Correlation Between Independent Variables and Dependent One

		CRE	TW	RE	EXP	PEER
Purchase Intention (PI)	Pearson Correlation	0.817	0.851	0.795	0.847	0.682
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

The results in Table 4 indicate a clear linear relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable, purchase intention, as evidenced by sig values of 0.000 (less than 0.05) and positive r coefficients. Ranking these variables from highest to lowest correlation with purchase intention, trustworthiness has the strongest positive correlation (r = 0.851), suggesting it plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intention. This is followed by influencer expertise, credibility, and relevance, each showing a progressively lower but still positive correlation. Notably, peer influence has a negative correlation (r = -0.851), indicating an inverse relationship with purchase intention. These results underscore the importance of trustworthiness, expertise, credibility, and relevance in positively influencing purchase intention, while peer influence demonstrates a different dynamic, potentially due to varying perceptions of peer recommendations. This ranking emphasizes the need for targeted strategies focusing on trustworthiness and expertise to maximize purchase intention impact.

Table 5. The Model Summary

	Coefficient	Table
R Square	0.789	Model Summary
Adjusted R Square	0.782	Model Summary
The Sig. Value of the F-Test	0.000	ANOVA

According to the data in Table 5, the R Square coefficient of 0.789 indicates that the five independent factors can explain 78.9% of the variance in the dependent variable, purchase intention. This substantial percentage reflects a strong relationship between the independent variables and purchase intention, highlighting the effectiveness of these factors in predicting consumer behavior. The remaining percentage, approximately 21.1%, accounts for other variables that were not included in the model and may influence purchase intention but were not considered in this analysis. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.782, which is slightly lower than the R Square coefficient, accounts for the number of predictors in the model and provides a more accurate representation of the model's explanatory power. This slight difference suggests that while the model is robust, there is still room for improvement by exploring additional variables that could enhance our understanding of the factors affecting purchase intention. The results underscore the importance of continuous research to identify these non-model variables and their potential impact.

Table 6. Regression Coefficients

	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.	VIF
1	TW	0.259	0.337	0.000	5.771
2	CRE	0.312	0.216	0.005	4.065
3	PEER	-0.130	-0.090	0.181	3.080
4	RE	0.263	0.183	0.023	4.432
5	EXP	0.236	0.285	0.003	5.974

Note: TW (Trustworthiness of Influencer), CRE (Perceived Influencers' Credibility), PEER (Peers' Reviews), RE (Relevance Between Products and Influencers), EXP (Perceived Expertise)
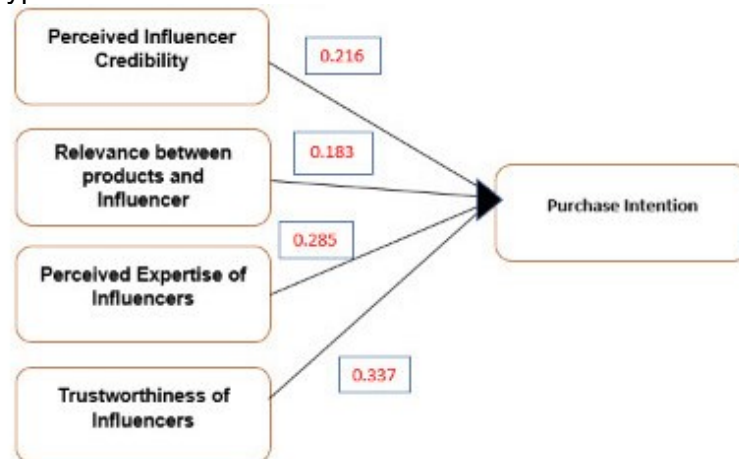
Table 6 presents the regression coefficients, showing the relationships between various factors related to influencers and Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions. The trustworthiness of the influencer shows a positive and significant relationship with Gen Z purchasing intention, as indicated by a standardized coefficient beta of 0.337 and a significance level of 0.000. This supports H4, confirming that influencer trustworthiness positively influences purchasing intention. Similarly, perceived influencers' credibility has a significant positive impact, with a standardized coefficient beta of 0.216 and a p-value of 0.005, validating H1 that influencer credibility positively affects purchasing intention.

The relevance between products and influencers is also found to have a positive and significant relationship, reflected by a standardized beta of 0.183 and a significance level of 0.023, thus supporting H2. This finding indicates that the alignment between product offerings and the influencers promoting them enhances Gen Z consumers' purchase intentions. The perceived expertise of the influencer is another significant factor, with a standardized coefficient beta of 0.285 and a significance level of 0.003, reinforcing H3 that expertise positively influences purchasing behavior.

In contrast, peers' reviews do not show a significant effect on purchasing intention, as indicated by a non-significant p-value of 0.181 and a negative standardized coefficient beta of -0.090. This suggests that, unlike the other factors, peers' reviews and recommendations (H5) do not significantly contribute to purchase intention in this context. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all variables are below 6, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in this regression model.

The summary of the research model, which illustrates the relationships between these variables, can be visualized in Figure 2. This model serves as a valuable tool for marketers aiming to tailor their influencer marketing strategies effectively to resonate with Gen Z consumers.

Figure 2. The Hypothesized Model

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the regression coefficients in Table 6 highlights the significant role that certain influencer attributes play in shaping Gen Z consumers' purchasing intentions. The positive and significant relationship between the trustworthiness of the influencer and purchase intention, as shown by the highest standardized coefficient beta (0.337), underscores its crucial role. This finding aligns with past research that suggests trustworthiness is a fundamental component of influencer effectiveness. For instance, studies by Lee and Eastin (2021) have established that audiences tend to engage more and make purchasing decisions when they perceive influencers as authentic and reliable. The outcome supports the H4 and reinforces that trustworthiness is a major factor for Gen Z consumers, who often rely on influencers they believe to be genuine and aligned with their values.

The significant effect of perceived influencer credibility on purchase intention, indicated by a standardized beta of 0.216 and a p-value of 0.005, is consistent with prior literature emphasizing credibility as a driving force in marketing. Research by Hovland et al. (1953)

and more recent works by Pellegrino (2024) emphasize that credibility forms the foundation for persuasive communication. This empirical evidence supports H1 and suggests that Gen Z consumers are discerning in their assessment of influencer content, looking for credibility to ensure that promotional messages align with their expectations for authenticity and value.

The finding that the relevance between products and influencers has a significant positive effect on purchasing intention, with a standardized beta of 0.183 and a significance level of 0.023, highlights the importance of strategic alignment between brands and influencers. This outcome supports H2 and is consistent with studies by Chan (2022) and Vrontis et al. (2021), who found that the contextual fit between an influencer's image and the product being promoted can significantly influence consumer behavior. For Gen Z, who value personalized and relatable experiences, the coherence between product offerings and the influencer's personal brand adds to their sense of connection and likelihood of making a purchase.

Perceived expertise was also found to be significant, with a standardized beta of 0.285 and a p-value of 0.003, supporting H3. This outcome is in line with research by Feng et al. (2021), which established that an influencer's expertise greatly enhances their persuasive power. The emphasis on expertise indicates that Gen Z consumers are not just swayed by popular figures but also by influencers who demonstrate knowledgeable and authoritative insights about the products they endorse. This trend may be attributed to Gen Z's reliance on well-informed decisions and their preference for content that combines entertainment with educational value.

Interestingly, peers' reviews did not show a significant impact on purchasing intention, with a negative standardized coefficient (-0.090) and a non-significant p-value (0.181). This result contradicts hypothesis H5 and challenges some previous studies that suggested peer influence, such as online reviews or recommendations from social circles, significantly affects consumer choices (Begho & Liu, 2024). The non-significant result may indicate that while peer feedback is often considered in decision-making, Gen Z consumers may place greater trust in influencers who resonate with their interests and values than in peer recommendations. This finding could reflect a shift in how this demographic prioritizes information, potentially due to their immersion in digital media and established trust networks built around influencers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the study, it is evident that four key factors significantly influence the purchasing intentions of Gen Z customers in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Nigeria. These factors are perceived influencer credibility, relevance between products and influencers, perceived expertise of influencers, and trustworthiness of influencers. Perceived influencer credibility emphasizes the importance of how credible influencers are perceived to be by their audience; influencers who are seen as trustworthy and knowledgeable tend to have a stronger impact on consumer decisions. Relevance between products and influencers highlights that the alignment between the influencer and the product they promote is crucial; when followers see a clear connection between an influencer's persona and the products they endorse, it enhances the likelihood of purchase intentions. The perceived expertise of influencers indicates that consumers are more inclined to trust those who display a high level of expertise in their respective fields, instilling confidence and increasing the likelihood of following their recommendations for purchases. Lastly, trustworthiness is a fundamental element in the relationship between influencers and their audience; when influencers demonstrate genuine concern for their followers and deliver honest opinions, it builds trust, which is a

strong predictor of purchasing behavior. The study's conclusions underline the importance of these factors in shaping Gen Z's purchasing intentions across different countries. By leveraging these insights, brands can enhance their engagement with this demographic, ultimately leading to increased purchase intentions and customer loyalty.

The implications of this study are significant for marketers, brands, and influencers seeking to engage effectively with Gen Z consumers. The findings indicate that building influencer campaigns around the qualities of trustworthiness, credibility, expertise, and relevance can greatly enhance their impact. Brands should prioritize collaborations with influencers who are perceived as genuine, knowledgeable, and aligned with the brand's image and values. This strategic alignment can foster a deeper sense of connection with Gen Z, who are known for their keen ability to discern authentic content from overly commercial messaging. Ensuring that influencer campaigns embody these key traits can contribute to stronger consumer trust and higher purchase intentions, ultimately driving sales and brand loyalty. Additionally, this approach can differentiate brands in highly competitive markets by focusing on the quality and credibility of their influencer partnerships rather than solely on reach or popularity metrics.

The study also has practical implications for influencers themselves. Influencers who wish to remain relevant and effective in influencing Gen Z purchasing behavior should focus on building and maintaining trust with their audience. This can be achieved by delivering honest, relatable content and positioning themselves as subject matter experts in their respective niches. Influencers should also seek out partnerships that align with their personal brand and values to ensure their endorsements resonate authentically with their followers. By strengthening their credibility and showcasing expertise, influencers can secure a more significant impact and create long-term value for both themselves and the brands they represent.

The study's results suggest several pathways for future research and strategic marketing practices. Brands are encouraged to engage in deeper audience analysis to understand the specific aspects of trustworthiness and credibility that resonate most with their target demographic. Additionally, as the study revealed that peers' reviews did not significantly impact purchase intentions, further investigation is warranted to explore why peer influence holds less sway for Gen Z compared to influencer attributes. This could provide insights into changing consumption patterns and how Gen Z navigates social proof and recommendations in the digital age. Brands could also explore multi-channel strategies that combine influencer content with other forms of engagement, such as interactive campaigns or co-created content, to maximize appeal and relevance. Future research could also examine the long-term impact of influencer traits on brand loyalty and customer retention to further develop sustainable marketing strategies tailored to Gen Z.

LIMITATION
This study has several notable limitations. First, the sample size for the survey was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The restricted number of respondents, largely due to time constraints, also suggests that the data collected may not fully capture the breadth of perspectives within the Gen Z population. As a result, the findings might be less applicable to other cultural or national contexts, especially beyond Indonesia, Malaysia, India, and Nigeria, which were the focus of this research.

Future studies could address these limitations by expanding the sample size to include a broader and more diverse demographic, which would improve the generalizability of the results. Additionally, future research might examine the personality traits of highly popular influencers to develop a more defined personality archetype. By analyzing

common personality characteristics, such as openness, extraversion, or agreeableness, researchers could gain a deeper understanding of which traits make certain influencers more effective in impacting purchase intention. This approach would offer brands and marketers valuable insights into selecting influencers who align with desired brand perceptions and can better engage target audiences.

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The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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