



**The Impact of Social Media Influencer on the Buying
Behaviour of Gen Z in India**

By

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Abstract

Generation Z has been the most targeted customer segment for marketers on digital platform due to their continual presence on internet and social media (Budac, 2015). In the Gen Z generation, online buying has become one of the hottest trends (Hinduan et al., 2020). Gen Z is particularly attracted to influencers that have attractive appearances, personal styles, and personalities. Influencers display their appeal to their followers by wearing fashionable or utilizing high-quality photos of themselves (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Generation Z members are "digital natives," having never lived in a society without the internet, computers, or mobile devices (Fromm and Read, 2018). Social media users perceive social media influencers as opinion leaders of digital era and consider them as a reliable source of information who have strong network of connections and ability to impact other's attitudes directly or indirectly toward making purchases (Tuten and Solomon, 2018).

With reference to India, where generation Z is a growing community with amassing 27 % out of total population of the country, few articles have been published talking on how social media platform is changing promotion of products and brands as more and more people are on social media and like to take recommendations there in. However, very little work in Indian Generation Z context has been done so far (Shaikh, 2022). This project work focuses on analysing how Generation Z perceives and behaves on social media platforms, considers influencers on social media, why they follow them, what is relationship between social influencers and Generation Z that brings them together, why Generation Z follows influencers on social media platform and various credibility traits of influencers that affect Gen Z to react to their recommendation regarding some products and brands on social media platform. A questionnaire survey containing 29 questions to

analyse behaviour of generation Z on social media platform, their attitude and behaviour towards social media influencers and their recommendation to buy products of different brands have been prepared and data collected & result analyzed to fulfill the objective of this research work. Result indicates that credibility traits considered under this project work i.e. knowledge, relatability, articulation, confidence and helpfulness plays a significant role in developing trust among Generation Z towards social media influencers and trust in social media influencers impacts buying behaviour of generation Z towards products and brands recommended and endorsed by influencers on social media platform.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

The model of advertising has been changing tremendously and social media is playing a crucial role in revolutionizing marketing strategy and to be adopted by companies to target different customer segments (Goyal, 2018). With an easy penetration of internet around the globe, social media users have been increasing year on year with a whopping number of 4.62 billion users worldwide in January 2022, almost above than 50 % population on this planet (Hirose,2022) and are expected to grow at an average rate of 3.7 % by 2025 (Oberlo, 2022). Active social media users currently in India is 755 million and is expected to grow to 1.17 billion within five years of span of time (Dixon, 2022) keeping in view of the expanding internet coverage at low rates in rural region of the country. People born between 1997 and 2012 are classified as generation Z who are technology savvy and born to live in digital world and spend time on social media exploring various products of different brands, giving feedback and reviews thus influencing brand value of products available on social media (Shaikh, 2022).

Generation Z accounts for 27 percent of the total population of India and they perceive brands from different aspects, creates brand awareness among other social media users by talking about it, follows market trends, shapes opinions towards a particular brand product and craves a brand to remain organic, relevant, and authentic (Shaikh, 2022).

Social media influencer plays an evitable role on social media among generation Z, providing entertaining content, suggesting products of different brands, creating value for its followers by talking on trending products on internet and other market places and developing trust and confidence among their followers (Wise, 2022). Generation Z generally follows one or more social media influencers and believes their recommendation while making purchase decision (Geysler, 2021). Many organizations in India have collaborated with social media influencers to promote its products and build brand through this social media platform and attract generation Z to believe in their

brand thus heading them to make purchase decision and create buzz on social media and improvising their brand value.

1.2 Gaps in literature reviewed

This research work is focused on understanding the traits of influencers available on social media platform that influences the buying behaviour of Generation Z residing in India. While going through different research papers and journals, it is found that very little research work has been done with regard to the topic selected for this project work and with special reference to Indian generation Z customers on analyzing impact of social media influencers on attitude and buying behaviour of generation Z. Hence, it becomes inevitable to understand the relationship between social media influencers and Generation Z and to investigate the impact of influencers on Gen Z attitude while making purchase decision and building trust towards the products of a particular brand and perception of Generation Z towards brand available on social media platform and those endorsed by social media influencers in India.

1.3 Research Justification & Rationale

With immense transformation of technological advancement and availability of smart phones along with low cost internet in the hands of generation Z consisting of 27 % (Shaikh, 2022) of total population of 1.4 billion (Worldometer,2022) in India brings an immense scope of evaluating a new segment of customers who spends time on social media and gets impacted by things going on social media platform while exploring products and making mind to buy on the basis of recommendations and suggestions of social media influencers (Lalwani et al., 2021) they follow and emerging trends in promotion of products and services and creating brand value with the help of social media influencers to attract generation Z customers. Social media influence has been increasing day by day and impact of social media influencers on attitude and buying behaviour of Gen Z is one of the most fascinating topics from strategy formulation point of marketers in order to capture this segment of customers while promoting its brand, increasing awareness among them, converting leads into customers and retaining Generation Z customers while building brand value and reputation of the company in

the market. It is very evident to look into credibility traits that generate trust among Generation Z customers towards influencers and products endorsed. Social media is prevalent everywhere and its usage as a marketing tool to promote brand and increase awareness about products to a new segment of customers, Gen Z through influencers is utmost an interesting topic to be considered to carry out research on the subject.

1.4 Objectives of Research work

This research work focuses on exploring the mindset of Generation Z who remains active on social media platforms, loves to explore authentic and relevant information shared on social media, remains interactive and believes in people they follow on social media in making buying decisions of products recommended by social media influencers (Williams, 2020). The major objective of this research work is to analyse impact of social media influencers on generation Z's buying behaviour towards products endorsed on social media platform in India. Keeping in view the literature reviewed and insight gained through relevant analysis, this project work will focus on understanding the behaviour of generation Z on social media platform along with understanding influencing characteristics of social media influencers that changes their behaviour and encourages them to make buying decision of products recommended by them.

1.5 Research Questions

Keeping in view the objectives of this research work as extracted out of literature gap and in align to theme of this research paper, broad research questions include –

1. What is behaviour of generation Z while using social medial platforms?
2. What is the relationship between social medial influencers and generation Z?
3. What is attitude and perception of generation Z towards products recommended by social media influencers on social media platform?
4. What are the traits of social media influencers that impact the buying behaviour of generation Z while making purchase decision online?

1.6 Research methods under Current Study

Research methodologies to design research work for this project follows onion research framework on the basis of which whole research work has been planned, designed and carried out (Saunders et al., 2007). Onion research framework has been addressed in detail in align with objectives of this research work in Chapter 3 of this report. This framework is useful and adaptable in different context of research works (Bryman, 2012).

1.7 Structure and Design of research project

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This relates to background about the research work, gaps in literature review seeking research on the topic selected for this project work, rationale and justification to select research objectives and questions related to research work and brief introduction to research methodologies to be adopted in the research work.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

Since, this research work focuses on analyzing the impact of social media influencers on buying behaviour of generation Z, various research papers, journals and articles have been analysed in-depth to grab better understanding to conduct research and devise questionnaire survey based on related literatures suiting current research objective and research questions under consideration. Credibility traits of influencers leading to purchase decision is theoretical framework conducted for this research work.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

Research onion as research framework to organize, design and prepare this project work has been analysed consisting of research philosophy to be considered, research approach to be adopted, research strategy to be devised, research choices to be made, time horizon to be selected and techniques and procedures to be formed to collect and analyse data (Saunders et al., 2007).

Chapter 4 – Findings and Analysis

Data collected using questionnaire survey is prepared keeping in view of the research objectives and research questions from respondents residing in different regions of India has been analysed using different statistical measures and findings have been discussed under this chapter keeping in view of the research objectives.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Based on findings derived from data collected, discussion on research questions, industry implications of findings, limitations on the basis of this research work have been presented in this chapter along with scope of further research needed in this segment.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion & Recommendation

A brief analysis of the entire thesis will be discussed in this section and also provided with recommendations for social media influencer industry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section aims to focus on the theoretical framework considered to carry out this research work. In the context of research objectives and research questions opted for this project work i.e., Generation Z, their characteristics, social media, social media influencer and credibility traits influencing buying decision, attitude and buying behaviour of generation Z on social media platform out of influence of social media influencer in India and other theories relevant for this research work has been presented. The objective of literature review is to analyse existing theoretical knowledge related to research work, identify gaps and develop theoretical framework and hypothesis for current research under consideration.

2.2 Generation Z

People who were born between 1997 - 2012 and live digitally are considered as generation Z, who has the potential to become the largest consumer community and companies who want to target this community and build brand value around them has to understand their attitude and digital expectations in terms of social presence and authenticity of brand (Meola, 2022). In comparison to earlier generations, Generation Z, which is increasingly reliant on technology, is more creative, self-assured, and communicative (Erdem, 2018).

Generation Z has five to six times the purchasing power of Generation X making the former a market category of great interest to marketers (Persson, 2019). This Generation was born at a time when social media had just begun to emerge, internet communication had advanced quickly, and technological growth was still occurring (Dabija et al., 2020).

They prefer to take buying decisions through recommendation of their friends or social media influencers whom they trust and follow-on social media (Priporas et al., 2017). Generation Z have become world citizen through cross cultural communication on social media network (Sparks and Honey, 2015). They are the first generation which has access to internet and social media networks from birth (Yadav and Rai, 2017).

2.3. Generation Z Characteristics

In the Gen Z generation, online buying has become one of the hottest trends (Hinduan et al., 2020). Gen Z is particularly attracted to influencers that have attractive appearances, personal styles, and personalities (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Generation Z members are "digital natives," having never lived in a society without the internet, computers, or mobile devices (Fromm & Read, 2018). These generations increasingly rely on social media from their friends and influencers to get input from peers while shopping and making purchases (Ordun, 2015). However, this influence does not apply to reading online reviews from people outside of their spheres of influence.

Generation Z exhibits the following four characteristics (Wood, 2013):

1. Innovation focused - They are aware of anything that enters the market and are eager to test it out before others.
2. Convenience - Generation Z wants to be at ease and have access to the products they desire without worrying about privacy concerns.
3. Safety - Generation Z participants live below the standard of living or go outside their comfort zones out of a need for safety.
4. Escapism – It refers to the desire to get away from the pressure and stress of today.

2.4 Generation Z Buying Behaviour

Advertisements with friendly "influencers," who are viewed as more honest and trustworthy than celebrities, are more appealing to Generation Z consumers (Park et al., 2019). The messages presented in any kind of advertising are met with skepticism by Generation Z and opinion leaders on social media are most likely to capture their

attention (Munsch, 2018). They exert huge pressure on retail brands as they get quickly fascinated about new brands trending on social media and recommendations of social media influencers. Hence it is very important for a brand to keep generation Z remain interested in their brands by offering value to gen Z (Priporas et al., 2017).

Before adopting a purchase attitude toward a product or service, Generation Z individuals strongly rely on influencers' feelings, opinions, and experiences about the product or service, and they are influenced by their discourse (Yaman,2021).

Gen Zers exhibit the following purchasing habits: (Bewicke,2022)

They frequently conduct research and analyse options before making a purchase decision since they tend to be "educated consumers."

They frequently have far less loyalty to particular brands and instead seek to compare prices.

Even more so than Millennials, they give brand ethics and corporate responsibility a high priority.

Despite being price conscious, Gen Zers are less focused on prices than other prior generations. To appeal to Gen Z's pocketbook, products and companies must demonstrate a balance of value, quality, and ethical behavior (Bewicke, 2022).

2.5 Generation Z Buying behaviour in India

Generation Z population residing in India spends almost eight hours a day on internet and plus like to view content in their local language (BL New Delhi Bureau, 2022).

Indian generation Z believes more in social media influencer than celebrities as influencers share their passions and knowledge around their life and are comfortable in being themselves_and it is very difficult for a company to build trust for their brand equivalent to the trust generation Z shows in an influencer they follow and believe in (Cameron,2022).

Generation Z accounts for 27 % population of the country who likes interacting with brands directly, exploring relevant and true information on internet, remains

in touch with trending items and seeking support from influencers in making buying decisions and places high importance to brand ethics and social responsibility (BrandWagon Online, 2022) & (Bewicke, 2022).

Indians love big brands and labels, but generation Z do not fall into prey of such things until they search relevant information about the product thoroughly and feel worth of it in terms of its pricing and quality available in the market (BI India Partner, 2021).

Generation Z prefer brands which fulfill their responsibility towards society and collaborate with domestic players and support social causes (BI India Partner, 2021).

Even when analyzing brand products, Indian Gen Z will seek honesty and authenticity (BrandWagon Online, 2022).

2.6 Influencer Marketing

Influence marketing is the creation and dissemination of marketing messages through opinion leaders and other influential individuals rather than the brand itself. As a result of the growth and broad use of social media, influencers have become the new digital celebrities, and their fan bases are made up of a diverse group of people with varying demographics, social statuses, and cultural traits (Aslan and Unlu, 2016). Through their active social media accounts, influencers can communicate their opinions and feelings about any good or service with their followers, and these exchanges might change the audience's perception of the item in question. As a result, brands can use influencers effectively in their social media marketing strategies because they have a huge audience and strong interaction power (Aslan and Unlu, 2016).

Influencer Marketing-focused platforms garnered more than \$800M in funding in 2021 alone, demonstrating the industry's rapid expansion (Geysler, 2021). The global pandemic's impact on consumers, which catalyzed social media consumption, the growing popularity of short video formats on websites like TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube, and the improvement of data collecting, which marketers leveraged for social media marketing, are all credited with this growth (Santora, 2022). In 2022, more than 75% of brand marketers plan to allocate money for influencer marketing (Geysler, 2021).

Today, influencer marketing is used by more than 90% of marketers as a component of their overall marketing plan (Lin, 2022).

2.7 Influencer Marketing in India

Influencer marketing is the process through which a brand works with an online influencer to promote one of its goods or services (Flatart,2019). Some partnerships between brands and influencers in the field of marketing rely more on brand recognition than anything else (Flatart,2019).

The influencer marketing sector expanded by 40% in 2021, and it is predicted to continue growing in 2022, with revenue rising from Indian Rupees (Rs.) 900 crore(equivalent to 10 billion euros) to Rs 1,200-1,300 crore (Maryam, 2022). By 2025, the sector for the emerging category is anticipated to increase by 25% yearly and reach Rs 2,200 crore (INCA India, 2021). 70 percent of influencer marketing comes from four categories: personal care (25 percent), food and drink (20 percent), fashion and jewellery (15 percent), and mobile and gadgets (10 percent) (INCA India, 2021). The usage of influencer marketing helps promote brands because SMIs are constantly looked up to as role models and impact audiences (Sudha and Sheena, 2017). Influencer marketing is becoming more and more popular in India, and it is predicted to grow quickly, especially in industries like consumer durables, mobile communications, travel and hospitality, and aviation (Maryam, 2022).

2.8 Social Media

Social media is used by 58.4% of the world's population. Utilization is 2 hours and 27 minutes per day on average (Chaffey, 2022). Social media assists consumers in making informed decisions about the associated risks and rewards. It aids the buyer in making knowledgeable choices regarding the benefits and disadvantages related to a certain product. Therefore, before making a purchasing decision, consumers use social media to lower the risk (Kulkarni and Mohapatra, 2021). By increasing brand exposure on social media, businesses may stimulate consumer interest in their products. Businesses can use social media to highlight good aspects of their brand or product (Thota ,2018).

By enabling users to consult opinion leaders, experts in the field, friends, and family, social media reduces perceived risk for customers (Voyer et al., 2015). Social media has made it possible for regular people to create their own brands by engaging with and sharing fascinating content (Digital marketing Institute, 2021). These modern influencers have a stronger sense of relatability than older celebs. After all, social media platforms are used in one way or another by nations all over the world (Digital marketing Institute, 2021).

2.9 Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers are ordinary people who create profile on social media and influence behaviour of social media users who are following them and are termed as social media influencers (Peltola, 2019). They have huge network of people on social media platform following them and their stories (De Veirman et al., 2017). People follow influencers based on their dependability, two times more than their prominence. People who can relate to an influencer tend to follow them (CEO Magazine, 2022).

They also represent a brand-new class of endorsers or opinion leaders who use social media to influence an audience's perceptions (Freberg et al., 2011). They have the capacity to change the mind of consumers, but they never take responsibility of the decisions made by users under their influence (Kadam et al., 2021). "A new sort of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience sentiments, attitudes and impact buying decision through blogs, tweets, and the usage of other social media," are social media influencers (Freberg et al., 2011).

Consumers are interested in knowing more about the products' information, which isn't always included on the official websites of companies. Influencers help such consumers by informing them about all the things they were unaware of and typically participate in influencer marketing (Rolson,2019).

In addition to being activists, influencers also possess the ability to set trends, a strong network of interpersonal relationships, and the ability to persuade others. To put it another way, influencers build a social network through taking part in social media events (Tuten and Solomon, 2018).

2.10 Social Media Influencers in India

For consumers, social media influencers are a reliable source for the most recent product information (Kumar et al.,2018). Most digital media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, to mention a few, have influencers who with their content and expertise on subject influences users (Trivedi ,2018; Kumar et al., 2018). The majority of influencers think that they can confidently turn influencing into a profession or source of income and that it can be a full-time professional option (CEO Magazine, 2022). Influencers on social media will advertise the products by posting interesting content to draw users to the platforms (Sharma and Ranga, 2014).

Given its ubiquity and audience, Instagram appears to be the platform of choice for the majority of influencers (Menon, 2022). That's not to say that alternative platforms aren't being investigated, either. According to recent research, Instagram has clearly prevailed. Along with YouTube, TikTok was one of the most popular social media influencer marketing platforms, but now that it has been banned, its competitors such as MX Takatak, Roposo, Moj are expected to gain ground (Menon, 2022). Nearly 60% of the influencers in India who participated in a poll revealed that they had the opportunity to work with fewer than 3 businesses each month. This demonstrates that the majority of them are still early in their influencer career (Menon, 2022). Fashion, lifestyle, and beauty were the most popular content genres during this time, followed by food. The amount of social media content produced by Indian influencers that was about fashion and lifestyle issues, respectively, was almost 25% and over 21% (Basuroy, 2022). Influencer success is mostly determined by their engagement score, which includes likes, comments, shares, and retweets (Arora et al., 2019; Wiedmann and von Mettenheim, 2020).

2.11 Credibility Traits of Social media influencers impacting buying behaviour

Influencers are seen as more credible when they exhibit honesty, integrity, and sincerity in their reliable and ethical behaviour (Buhlmann and Gisler, 2016). Five credibility traits that builds trust and ultimately leads to buying behaviour are listed below (Buhlmann and Gisler, 2016).

2.11.1 Knowledge

Knowledge is information that can be separated from views; speculation, assumptions, or other unverified facts because its applicability is supported by facts and evidence (Qamar et al., 2011). Followers are more inclined to take the influencer's advice if they believe them to be authorities or to be highly informed in their subjects (Gashi, 2017). Since influencers are knowledgeable about the products they promote, followers view them as more trustworthy and real. In this study, knowledge is defined as the in-depth perceptions that influencers share with their audience in order to communicate the brand (Moore et al., 2018).

2.11.2 Relatability

Relatability is the bond between influencers and their followers, wherein influencers share personal stories and experiences to foster empathy among their peers. One of the most difficult qualities for a person to fake is relatability. Accessibility, authenticity, believability, imitability, and intimacy are traits of relatability for influencers, which indicate that their followers are drawn to and identify with them because of their skill (Forbes, 2016).

2.11.3 Helpfulness

Influencers can be described as helpful when they offer advice and rational considerations that can persuade consumers to purchase a product (Forbes, 2016). Influencers who provide advice are considered as helpful while making product recommendations, thus offering benefits to both the brand and their followers (Moore et al., 2018).

2.11.4 Confidence

Influencers who are confident in themselves and their abilities trust their own words and have faith in their own abilities (Glucksman, 2017). As a result, their followers are more likely to buy the products they are endorsing because of the influencers' confidence (Glucksman, 2017).

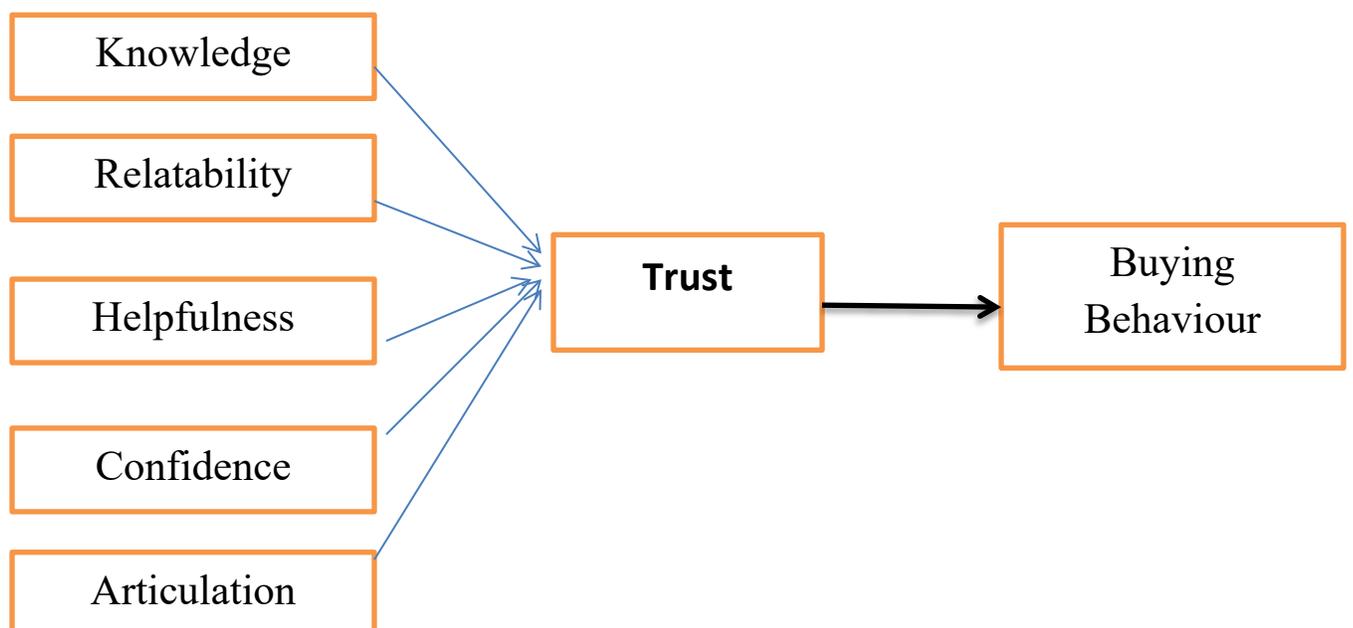
2.11.5 Articulation

The influencer's articulation is characterised by concise communication and information presentation to aid in the target audience's verbal and visual understanding of the product (Forbes, 2016). Technical abilities like video editing and presentation are linked to articulation. Influencers must, in particular, be able to communicate clearly, deliver appealing graphics, and engage their audience.

2.11.6 Trust

Trust, which relates to a person's willingness to be affected by another person's behaviour, has emerged as a crucial aspect for encouraging purchases and transactions in online contexts (Oliveira T., et al. 2017). Consumer perceptions of perplexity or vulnerability are frequently reduced by trust, which entails activities like providing personal information and making purchases (Zasuwa, 2018). In this work, competence, benevolence, and integrity have been conceptualised as a second order reflective construct. Trust is decided by the trustee's overall trust propensity as well as these traits (Chen and Dhillon, 2013).

Credibility Traits of Social media influencers impacting buying behaviour



Theoretical framework for research work on impact of social media influencers on buying behaviour

2.12 Conclusion

With a view to understand Generation Z and influence of social media influencers along with the characteristics they resemble to persuade their followers to initiate purchase decision with the help of previous research and articles related to the subject. With a framework set for current research work on the basis of literature reviewed, a gap existed in terms of having concrete research work on the topic selected under current study. Hence to cover the literature gap, a thorough study will be conducted more vigorously on the selected topic which will aim to fulfill the objectives in consideration along with giving a scope for further research in this field. After going through a lot of work done in this field and getting access to knowledge, this literature review has been considered as the base for conducting current research in hand and exploring this topic in reference to India. This research work will further necessitate scope for researchers in future to retrieve knowledge and further explore this segment.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

A general research plan known as methodology specifies how the research should be conducted. One approach to developing a research method is based on the theoretical "research onion" concept (Figure 1) (Saunders et al., 2019). The description of the main layers or phases that must be completed in order to create an effective technique is provided by the research onion (Raithatha, 2017). The research onion is a tool that facilitates the organisation of the study and the development of the research design by going through each layer of the research onion sequentially and the same methodology will be applied in this research work to fulfill the objectives considered herein.

3.2 Research Objectives & Hypothesis

Keeping in view of the literature gap, the objectives of this research work has been devised. Along with development of theoretical framework from the literature review which forms the base of this research work, the primary objective of this research work is-

- To analyse credibility traits of social media influencers that impacts buying behaviour of generation Z towards products and brands recommended by them.

In order to get in- depth analysis of major objective of this research work, other objectives included in this research work is –

- To analyse relationship between generation Z and Social media platform.
- To analyse the relationship between Generation Z and Social media influencers.

- To analyse perception and attitude of Generation Z towards products recommended by social media influencers on social media platform.

Theoretical framework are developed from literature review to fulfill research objectives and hypotheses considered is presented as below: -

H1: Knowledge of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

H2: Relatability of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

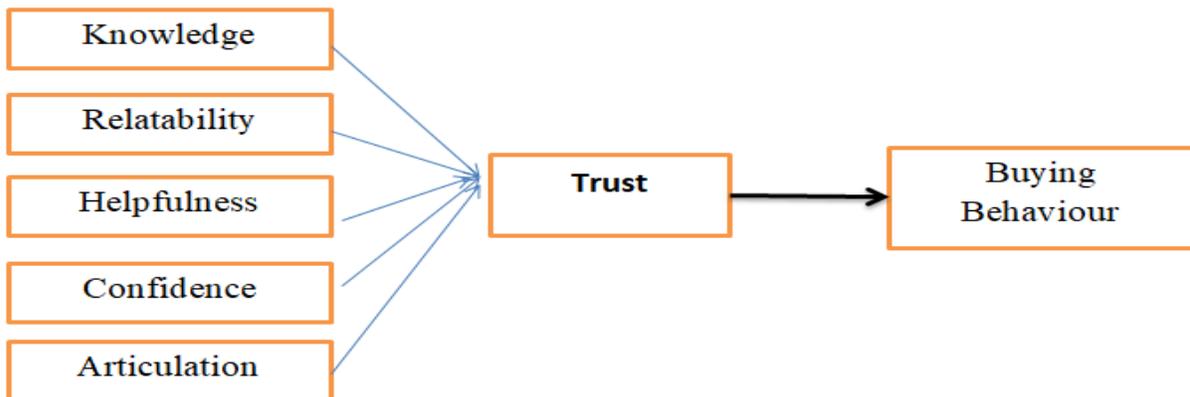
H3: Helpful nature of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

H4: Confidence of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

H5: Articulation of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

H6: Trust in Social media influencers impacts buying behaviour of Generation Z positively.

Credibility Traits of Social media influencers impacting buying behaviour



Theoretical framework for research work on impact of social media influencers on buying behaviour

3.3. Research Onion for research methodology and design

For this research work, research onion tool has been adopted in order to plan and design the research methodology process to conduct this research effectively and get the results thereof. There are six layers in research onion as depicted in diagram below starting from research philosophy, the outer most layer to techniques and procedures which is the inner most layer of the model.

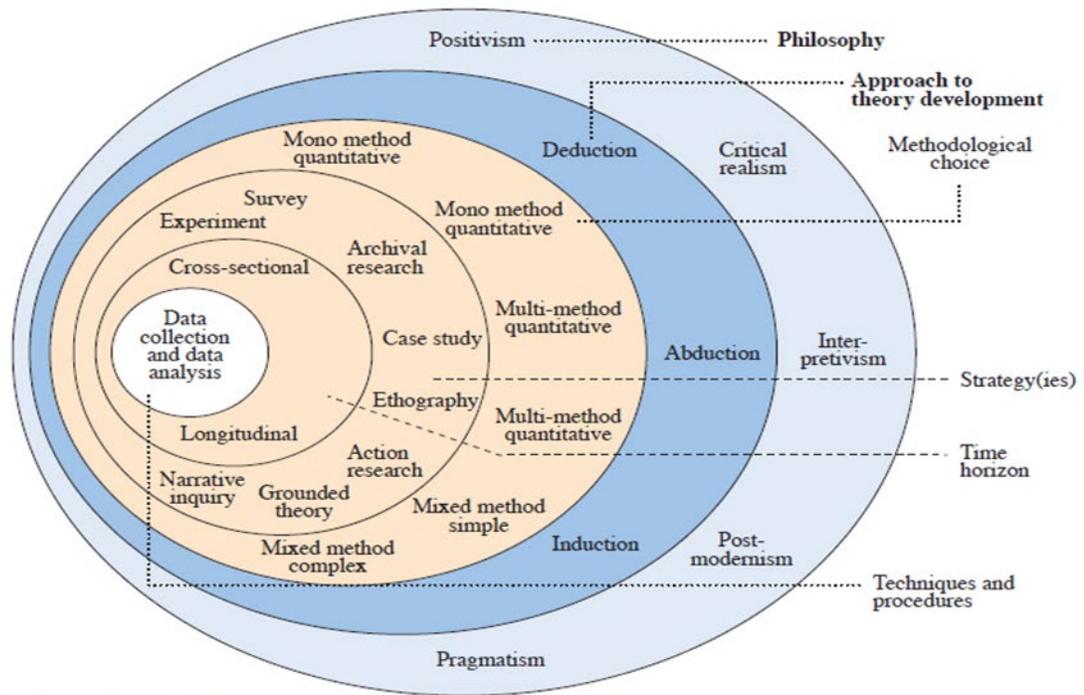


Figure 1. Research onion¹

These layers are divided into six main categories, including research philosophy, approach, strategy, and choices, as well as time horizons, techniques, and procedures (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.4 Research assumption & Philosophy

While conducting research, a researcher will unavoidably make a number of assumptions (Burrell and Morgan, 2016). Ontological assumptions are based on

actuality of the investigation, the characteristics of reality, and the nature of existence as understood by the researcher. Epistemological assumptions relate to human knowledge, such as what constitutes true knowledge, whether it is knowable, and how it can be acquired and transmitted by a researcher. Axiological assumptions are concerned with the degree to which the researcher's values impact the study process or what the research's primary objectives and value are (Saunders et al., 2019).

Together, these assumptions form the study's research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2011). According to (Saunders *et al.*, 2019), there are five research philosophies: (1) positivism; (2) critical realism; (3) interpretivism; (4) postmodernism; and (5) pragmatism.

For this research paper, epistemology is the underlying assumption upon which the whole research paper is based as it helps in evaluating information that can be proved. Under this assumption, acceptable knowledge is defined as done in this paper in the form of theoretical work made after reviewing literatures and provides information on the basis of testing which is done through hypotheses and research questions in this research work.

The quantitative research design predominates around the research work, which provides a broad context for the research and is in line with the research questions. In order to emphasize the impact of social media influencers on buying behaviour of generation Z based on theories and practical knowledge, this research will investigate the utility of influencers among gen Z. Additionally, it might add to the body of literature on business research. For this purpose, positivism philosophy has been considered for this research work. In order to confirm these theories, information, and observable facts, hypotheses are formed based on the theories, knowledge, and facts have been provided.

3.5 Research Approach

The use of theory is a part of research efforts. As a result, the research project design also depends on the research's intended concern about theory development or theory testing, which is linked to inductive, deductive, and abductive reasoning (Saunders et

al., 2019). (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021) Deductive approach has been considered for this research as this paper is based on developing a theoretical framework and hypotheses have been made and tested using data collected through questionnaire survey. Deductive approach is the best option for revealing social phenomena and supplying established theories pertinent to the principles of impact of social media influencers on Generation Z after problem discussion and research gap. The study is grounded on hypotheses and assumptions about the subject. As a result, the mentioned theories and information obtained from questionnaire survey are examined and organized to provide the conclusions.

3.6 Methodological choice

The research project is a mono-method quantitative study because it solely uses questionnaire survey approaches to collect data. Also, quantitative research helps in focusing on the objective of the research through numeric data collection and analysis using statistical tools. Data collected using questionnaire survey has been analysed using SPSS software where statistical tools has been used to test hypotheses, analyse and interpret data and get results thereof.

3.7 Research design Purpose

Research design seeks to provide either explanatory, descriptive, exploratory, or evaluative study or any combinations of these, but depends heavily on articulating research question(s) (Saunders et al., 2019).

Explanatory research is used to address concerns that were not adequately addressed in the prior study. It provides an answer to what and how questions. A scientific methodology is used in descriptive research, which entails watching and describing the behaviour of the thing being studied without interfering. Exploratory research is used to identify or explain a problem and provides the "why," "how," and "when" answers. Finally, evaluative research is a study that evaluates the subject of study and responds to inquiries such as "when," "where," "which," or "who" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

This study will fill in knowledge gaps that have been found from literature review and are addressed by research questions, theoretical framework developed, and hypotheses made. This analysis therefore examines explanatory research suitable for carrying out this study.

3.8 Research Strategy

It helps in collecting data for research purpose to fill the gap identified through literature review. There are different types of research strategy, which includes experiment, survey, case study archival research, ethnography, action research, grounded theory, and narrative enquiry (Sunders et al., 2019).

Survey strategy has been selected for this research work. This strategy is very useful in collecting responses through a structured questionnaire in line with research objective. Questions in the questionnaire survey made for this research work includes dichotomous, multi options and likert questions rating on a scale of 1 to 5. Data collected by the way of questionnaire remains quantitative in nature and statistical tools can be used to present research findings through graphs and pie charts and statistical test can be applied to prove hypotheses considered under this research work. This strategy serves to identify cause and effect relationship thus meeting the objective of this research work i.e., to find out how social media influencers impact buying behaviour of generation Z.

3.9 Time Horizon

Research onion describes two types of time horizons: cross-sectional and longitudinal. Cross-sectional studies, also known as transverse studies, are the kind of research investigations in which particular phenomena have been researched at a given time (Saunders et al.,2019). The key characteristics of longitudinal studies are their focus on researching changes and developments and the fact that they examine the same phenomenon over extended periods of time (Bell et al., 2019).

This study is based on cross sectional time horizon as it has been completed at a specific period of time and also in fulfillment of academic curriculum time period for which is definite. While conducting a research study, the time horizon has also been taken into account as a crucial component of the research plan. Cross-sectional design is most appropriate for this research activity since it is intended to finish the study (specific phenomena) during a period defined for the thesis (specific time).

3.10 Techniques & procedures

Techniques and procedures of research onion consist of samples taken, data collection and analysis method used for current research work (Saunders et al.,2016).

3.10.1 Population & Sample

This research work is conducted with reference to Indian Generation Z. Population of research includes all respondents of the area where research is conducted (Saunders et al., 2019). There is always a need to pick a sample from the general population and conduct relevant research because it is uncommonly possible to focus on all units within the geographical area (Bell et al., 2019). A sample of 200 respondents who fall in category of Generation Z from different parts of India has been selected on the basis of non-probability sampling. There are four types of non-probability sampling which are (i) quota sampling, (ii) purposive sampling, (iii) volunteer sampling, and (iv) haphazard sampling (Saunders et al., 2019). Out of four, non-probability sampling methods, purposive sampling technique has been used in this research work where only those samples have been considered and selected for filling up questionnaire and participate in survey who has been born between 1997 and 2012.

3.10.2 Data Collection & analysis method

A well-structured questionnaire survey has been prepared and sent to respondents to collect data for this research work. Questionnaires are the research tool used for data collection in survey strategy, and they are useful in economically acquiring standardized data from a respectable-sized sample and facilitating easy comparisons (Bell et al., 2019). Inferential and descriptive statistics has been used to quantitatively examine the

data obtained from the survey, and all findings have been presented using pictorial charts, tables, and statistical parameters. The questionnaire had been pilot tested to 5 respondents before the actual data collection. The collected data will be securely stored in a password protected laptop and all the data will be kept confidential and once the study is over all the collected data will be deleted.

3.11 Ethical consideration

Ethics is one of the most crucial parts while conducting a research based on objectivity rather than subjectivity. Some of the ethical principles that scientific researchers adhere to include are objectivity, honesty, morality, caution, transparency, respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, responsible publication, responsible management, respect for colleagues, social responsibility, anti-discrimination, integrity, credibility, and data protection (Zukauskas et al., 2018). When doing this research, huge consideration has been given to all ethical concerns that could rise during this research work. The readings used for this research have been thoroughly cited both in-text and in the reference listings, and opinions of respondents are carefully respected without being interfered with. The researcher hasn't come across any other problems that might have been regarded as unethical in this investigation.

3.12 Limitations to research

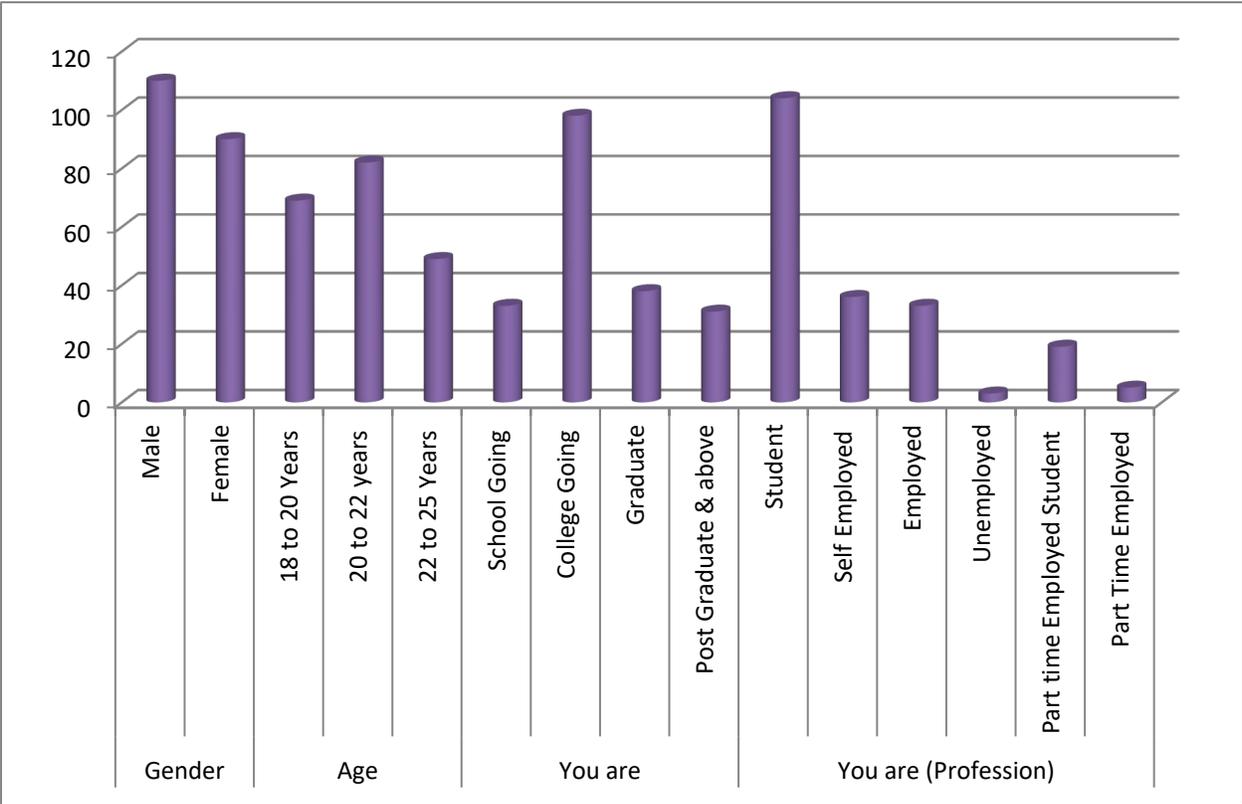
It was difficult to collect samples of respondents for this research work from diverse area and population residing in India. Hence respondents have been selected on convenience basis and a sample size of 200 respondents has been considered to undertake this project work. Due to limited time available to conduct this research work, it was difficult to conduct face to face interaction with all respondents and collect data. Thus, a questionnaire survey has been conducted to collect data from respondents in order to achieve objectives of this research work. Spatial limitation in terms of selecting respondents from a particular country and excluding other countries of world leads to restrict result of this research to apply globally.

Chapter 4: Findings & Analysis

4.1 Data analysis of Demographic profile of Respondents

1.Gender	Male	110
	Female	90
2.Second question relates to the city of respondents which has been from different parts of India.		
3.Age	18 to 20 Years	69
	20 to 22 years	82
	22 to 25 Years	49
4.You are	School Going	33
	College Going	98
	Graduate	38
	Postgraduate & above	31
5.You are (Profession)	Student	104
	Self Employed	36
	Employed	33
	Unemployed	3
	Part time Employed Student	19
	Part Time Employed	5

Demographic profile of respondents considered for this research work consist of 110 males and 90 females from different parts of India out of which, 69 respondents are of age between 18 to 20 years, 82 fall in the category of 20 to 22 years and 49 respondents are in between 22 to 25 years. A good mix of respondents from diverse backgrounds have filled up questionnaire survey in which 33 respondents are in school going category, 98 are college students, 38 have done graduation and 31 respondents have completed post graduation and degree above post graduation. In terms of their employment, 104 respondents are students, 36 of them are self employed, 33 are in full employment, 19 respondents are doing studies along with part time job and 5 respondents are partly employed. Data on demographic profile of Gen Z respondents represent a good sample from various age group, profession, education and gender, thus making result of this research work worthful for every stakeholder of this area.

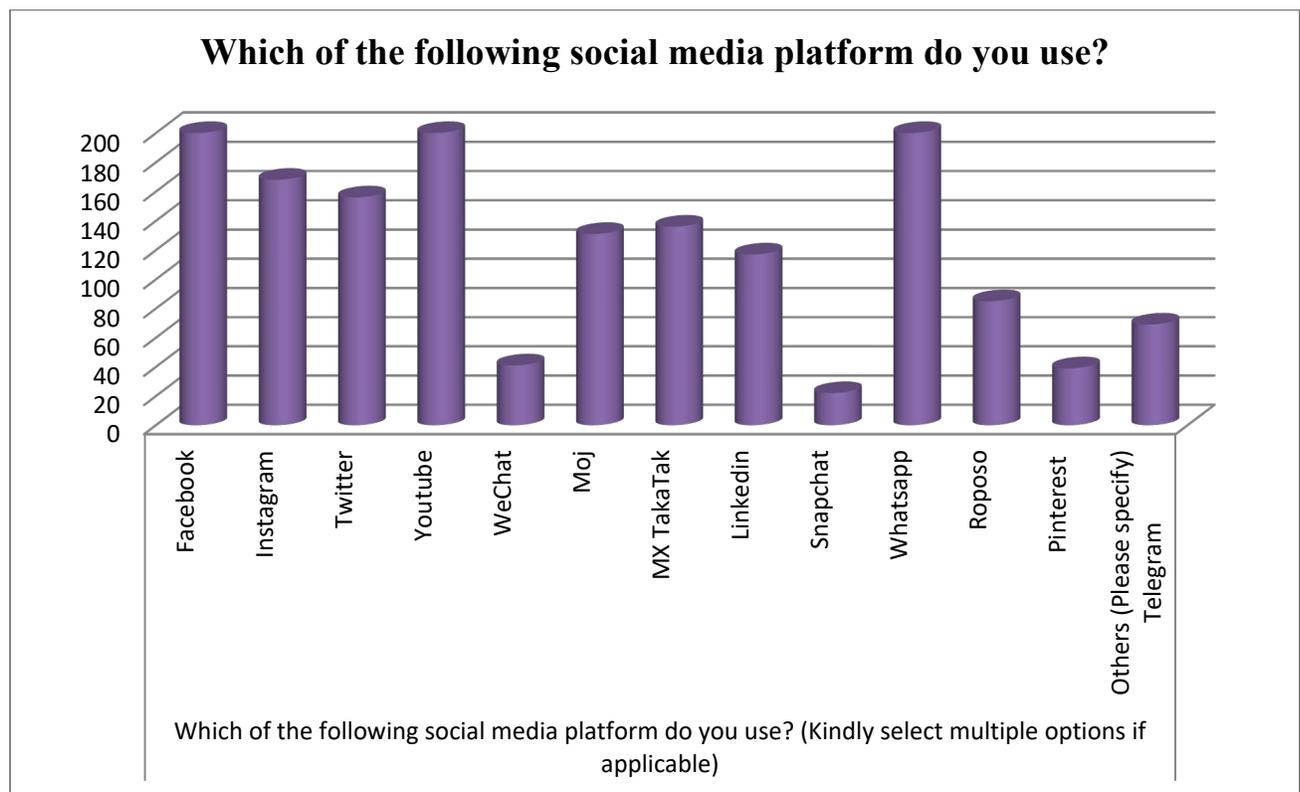


4.2. Data analysis of Gen Z Familiarity, Behaviour & Presence on Social Media Platform

6. Which of the following social media platform do you use? (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)	Facebook	200
	Instagram	168
	Twitter	156
	Youtube	200
	WeChat	41
	Moj	131
	MX TakaTak	136
	Linkedin	117
	Snapchat	22
	Whatsapp	200
	Roposo	85
	Pinterest	39
	Others (Please specify) Telegram	69

Since this question is related to multiple selections of options given in the question, out of 200 respondents, Facebook, Youtube and Whatsapp topped in usage and is being used by every respondent participated in the survey. Instagram is also popular and 168 respondents i.e. 84 % of respondents use Instagram thus making it second in India among generation Z. Twitter ranked third with 156 respondents using it. Among new social media platforms gaining popularity in India is MX Takatak and Moj which is being used by 136 and 131 respondents respectively keeping them on fourth and fifth position

respectively and pushing LinkedIn on sixth position with 117 respondents using it. Roposo with 85 users are on rank 7 in terms of uses by respondent. On question of any other social media platform other than provided in the option in the question, 69 respondents named Telegram as one of other social media platform being used by them putting it on rank 8. Wechat and Pinterest have very less users with 41 and 39 respectively with 9th and 10th ranking respectively. Snapchat is least used by Gen Z in India. Only 22 respondents are users of Snapchat as per results indicated by survey. Since this question was based on selecting multiple options and respondents selected all social media platforms provided in question and added one social media platform “Telegram” which is also being used by them indicating that all options of social media platforms provided in the question has been familiar to generation Z. The most popular platform overall is Facebook and TikTok and is listed as the fifth most-used platform in January 2022 as a result of the 142 percent year-over-year growth it experienced in 2021 due to its quick expansion (Chaffey, 2022).

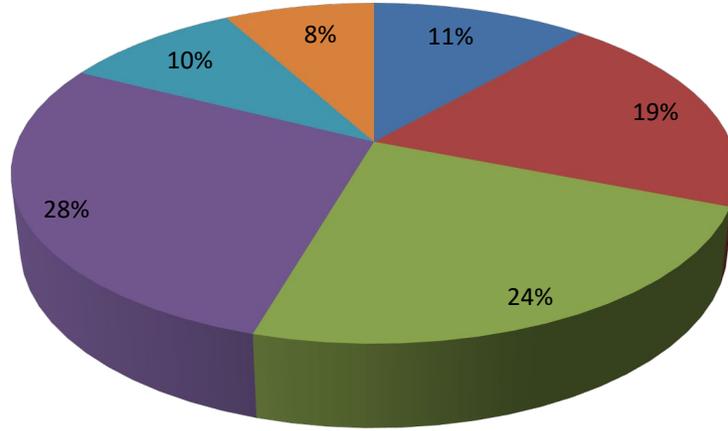


7. How much time do you normally spend in a day on social media?	Less than an hour	23
	1 to 2 hours	39
	2 to 3 hours	47
	3 to 4 hours	56
	4 to 5 hours	19
	More than 5 hours	16

28 % of respondents spend 3 to 4 hours on different social media platforms. Respondents spending in between 2 to 3 hours is 22.5 % i.e. 47 respondents out of 200 surveyed. There are 16 respondents who spend even more than 5 hours in a day and 19 spend in between 4 to 5 hours. Only 11.5 % of respondents spend less than an hour in a day on social media platform. Result indicates that most of the generation Z spend enough time on various social media platforms. Generation Z are present on social media platforms and they devote sufficient time on it ranging from less than 1 hour to more than 5 hours in a day, exhibiting their priority of utility of social media platform in their life on day to day basis. Generation Z population residing in India spends almost eight hours a day on internet and like to view content in their local language (BL New Delhi Bureau, 2022).

How much time do you normally spend in a day on social media?

■ Less than an hour ■ 1 to 2 hours ■ 2 to 3 hours ■ 3 to 4 hours ■ 4 to 5 hours ■ More than 5 hours

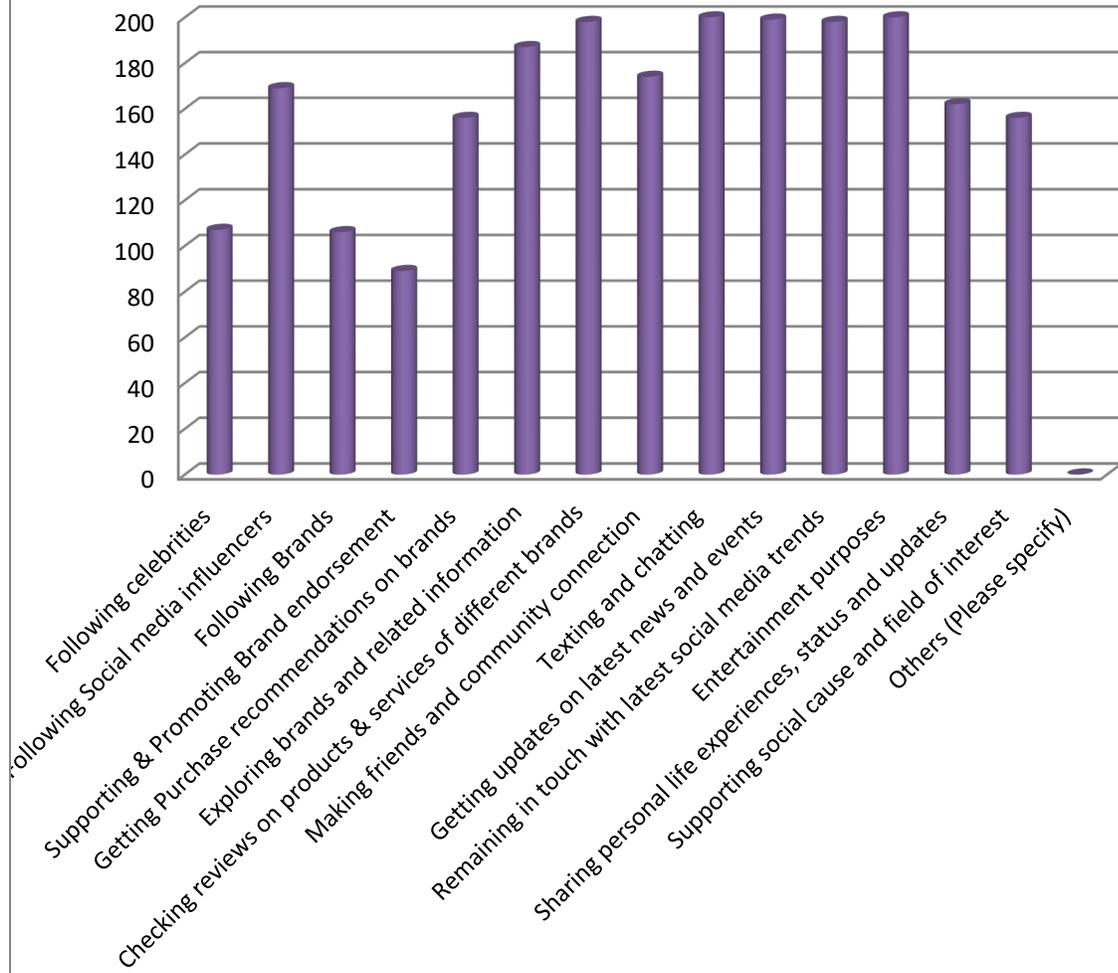


8. You use social media platform for - (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)	Following celebrities	107
	Following Social media influencers	169
	Following Brands	106
	Supporting & Promoting Brand endorsement	89
	Getting Purchase recommendations on brands	156
	Exploring brands and related information	187
	Checking reviews on products and services of different brands of interest	198
	Making friends and community connection	174
	Texting and chatting	200
	Getting updates on latest news and events	199
	Remaining in touch with latest social media trends	198
	Entertainment purposes	200
	Sharing personal life experiences, status and updates	162
	Supporting social cause and field of interest	156
	Others (Please specify)	0

On question of utility of social media platform, entertainment, texting & chatting is the major activity they perform while using it, as all 200 respondents marked these

activities, they do on social media platform thus keeping it on first rank of activities generation Z perform on social media. 99.5 % of respondents use it for getting updates on latest news and events which been ranked second. Along with that they use social media platforms for remaining in touch with social media trends and checking reviews of products and services of different brands of their interest as 99 % of respondents marked these variables, posting it on third rank of activities. Exploring different brands and information related to it has been ranked fourth and 93.5 % of respondents use social media for it. 87 % of respondents also use social media for making friends and community connection putting this activity at fifth rank. Generation Z uses social media for following social media influencers and 84.5 % of respondents use it for this purpose to rank at being sixth. 81 % of Generation Z also shares their personal life experiences on social media platform and puts this activity on seventh rank. Getting purchase recommendation on brand and supporting social cause and field of interest with 78 % of generation Z usage put this activity on eighth rank. Following celebrities and brands has been ranked ninth and tenth respectively as 53.5% and 53% of generation Z respondents also use social media to follow them respectively. 44.5 % of respondents also ticked supporting and promoting brand endorsement activities on social media thus putting it on eleventh rank in terms of activities conducted by generation Z on social media. Option of “others” has also been given in the question. None of the respondents responded any activity other than options provided in the question. Respondents selected multiples options from the question indicating their behaviour of usage of social media platform for different purposes as per their need and want and to satisfy themselves. They do lot of activities on social media platform and all the options given in the question have utility proposition for generation Z reflected from responses and their behaviour towards use of social media platform. For consumers, social media influencers are a reliable source for the most recent product information (Kumar et al.,2018).

You use social media platform for



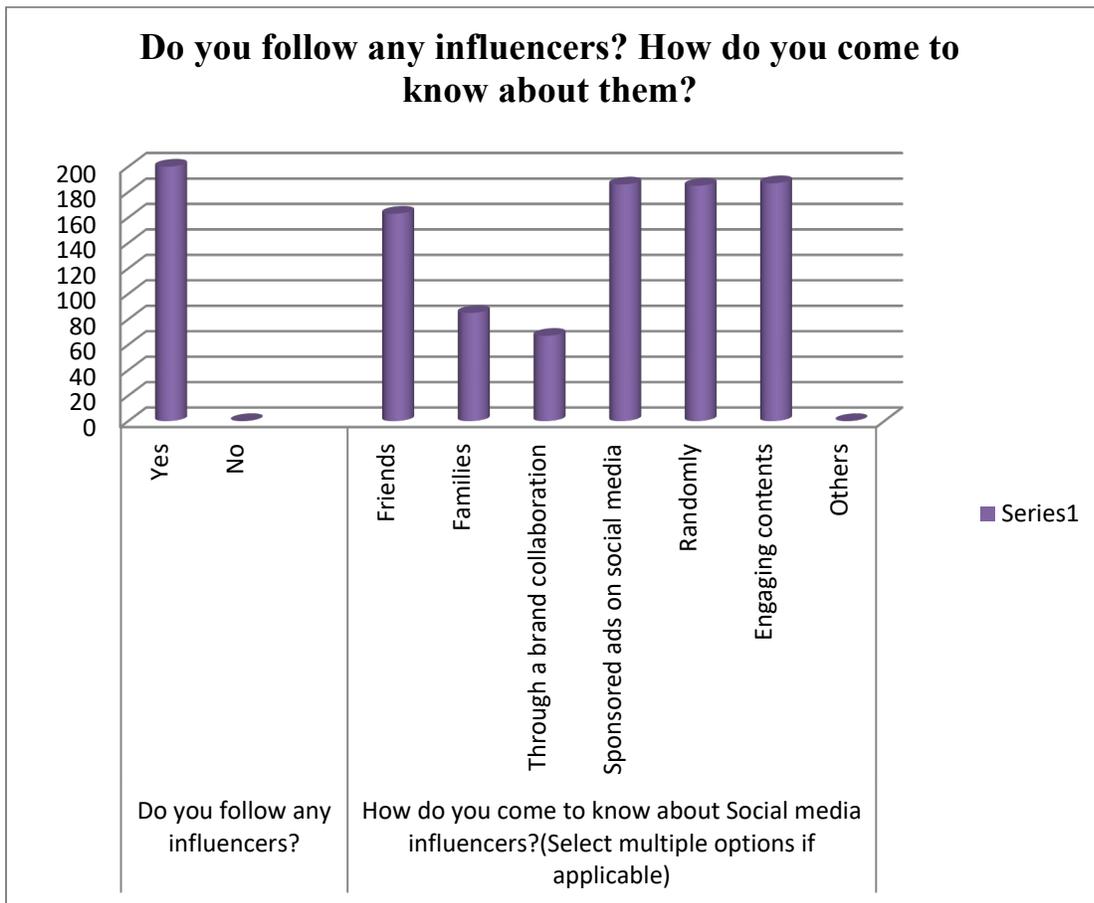
4.3. Generation Z familiarity, relationship & involvement with Social Media Influencers

9. Do you follow any influencers?	Yes	200
	No	0
10. How do you come to know about Social media influencers?(Select multiple options if applicable)	Friends	163
	Families	85
	Through a brand collaboration	67
	Sponsored ads on social media	186
	Randomly	185
	Engaging contents	187
	Others	0

On question of whether they follow any social media influencers or not, all 200 respondents are following social media influencers. None of them responded that they do not follow any influencers as it was written in the question to leave filling up questionnaire in case they do not follow any influencers and none of survey received was incomplete depicting all respondents to whom questionnaire survey has been sent follow influencers. Result indicates that they are familiar with social media influencers present on different social media platforms.

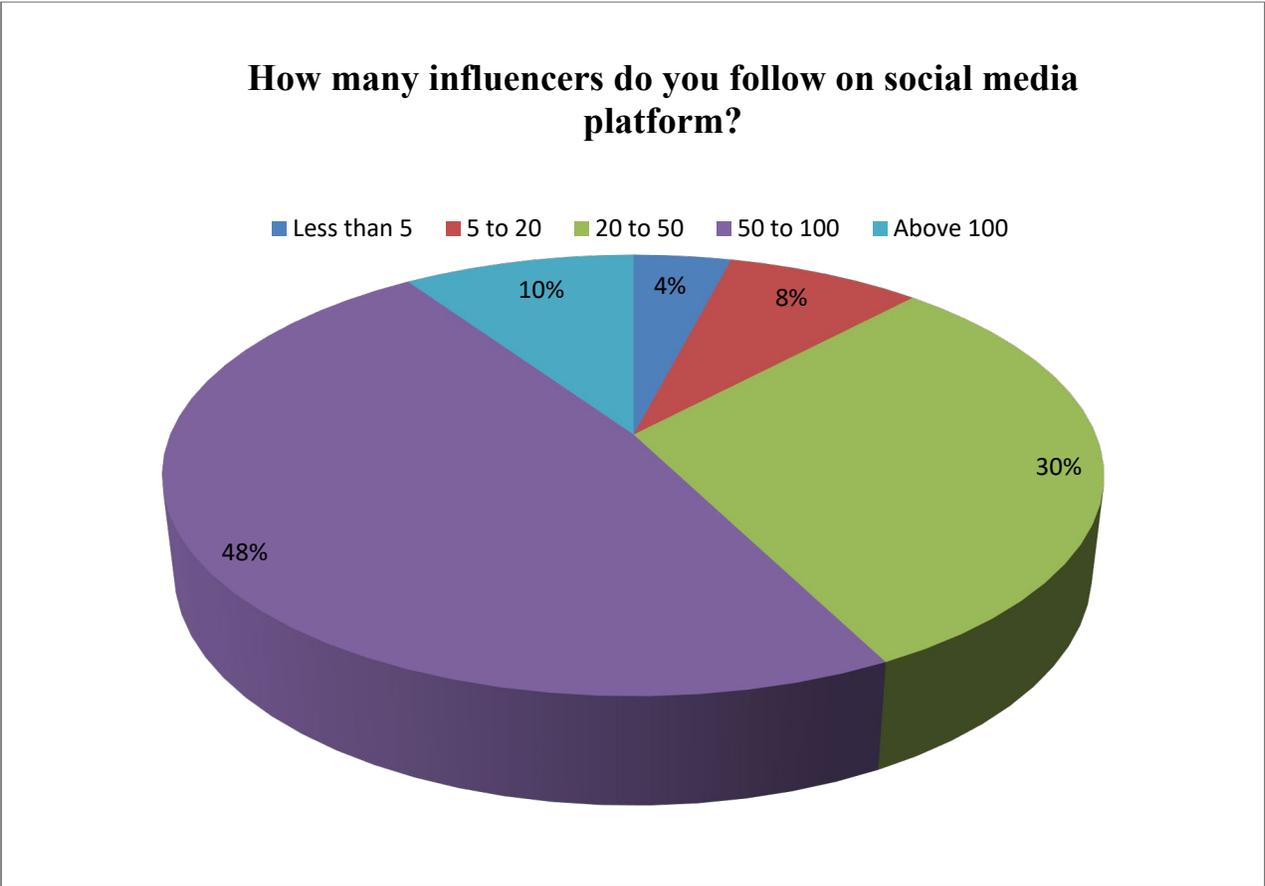
On question of references from where they come to know about social media influencers, 187 respondents said through engaging contents they found influencers and thus making engaging content ranked to be one as top referencing for knowing about social media influencers. 186 respondents also found them through sponsored ads on social media making it second on rank and 185 respondents on random basis putting randomly knowing influencers on third position. 163 respondents said their friends helped them to know about influencers and thus putting friend referencing on

fourth rank. 85 respondents marked on family referencing to gain information on influencers putting family referencing on fifth rank. 67 respondents also came to know about social media influencers through brand collaboration ranking this reference as sixth. Since there was an option of providing any other referencing from where they came to know about influencers to be mentioned by respondents, none of them provided any other references other than included in question. Respondents selected multiple options of referencing which indicates that all source of referencing mentioned in the question has a value proposition in getting to know about social media influencers for generation Z and they know about social media influencers on social media platform. By enabling users to consult opinion leaders, experts in the field, friends, and family, social media reduces perceived risk for customers (Voyer et al., 2015).



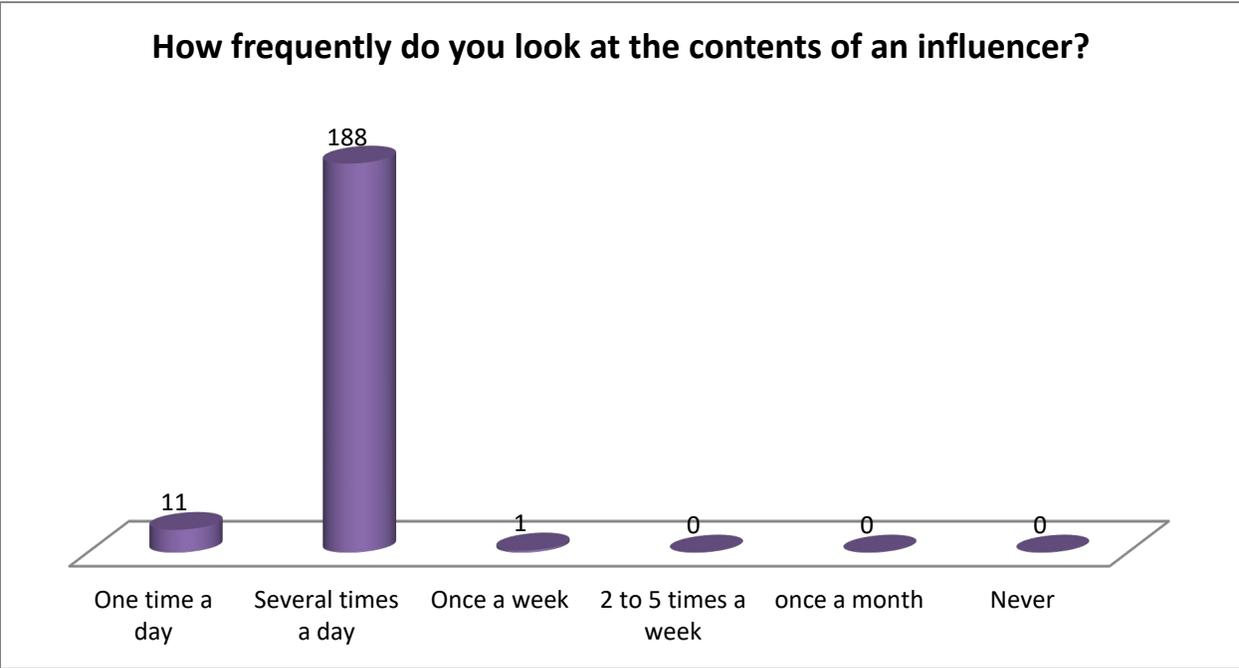
11. How many influencers do you follow on social media platform?	Less than 5	8
	5 to 20	16
	20 to 50	61
	50 to 100	96
	Above 100	19

96 respondents follow in between 50 to 100 influencers on social media platform and 61 respondents follow 20 to 50 influencers on regular basis on social media. There are 19 respondents who have been engaged with more than 100 influencers through their social media profiles. Only 8 respondents have been following less than five influencers and 16 respondents following 5 to 20 influencers from their social media profile. Result shows that all respondents are following influencers and have some relationship with them which encourage them to keep on following them.



12. How frequently do you look at the contents of an influencer?	One time a day	11
	Several times a day	188
	Once a week	1
	2 to 5 times a week	0
	once a month	0
	Never	0

94 % of respondents see contents posted by their influencers multiple times in a day reflecting their attachment, excitement, and curiosity towards influencers as well as contents posted by them. Only 5.5 % of respondents go through contents of their influencers once a day and half a percent once a week. None of respondents either marked going through contents of influencers they follow either 2 to 5 times a week or once a month or never they see contents posted by their influencers. Result indicates that generation Z not only follows influencers but also keeps an eye on contents posted by the influencers leading to an association and strong relationship between the two.

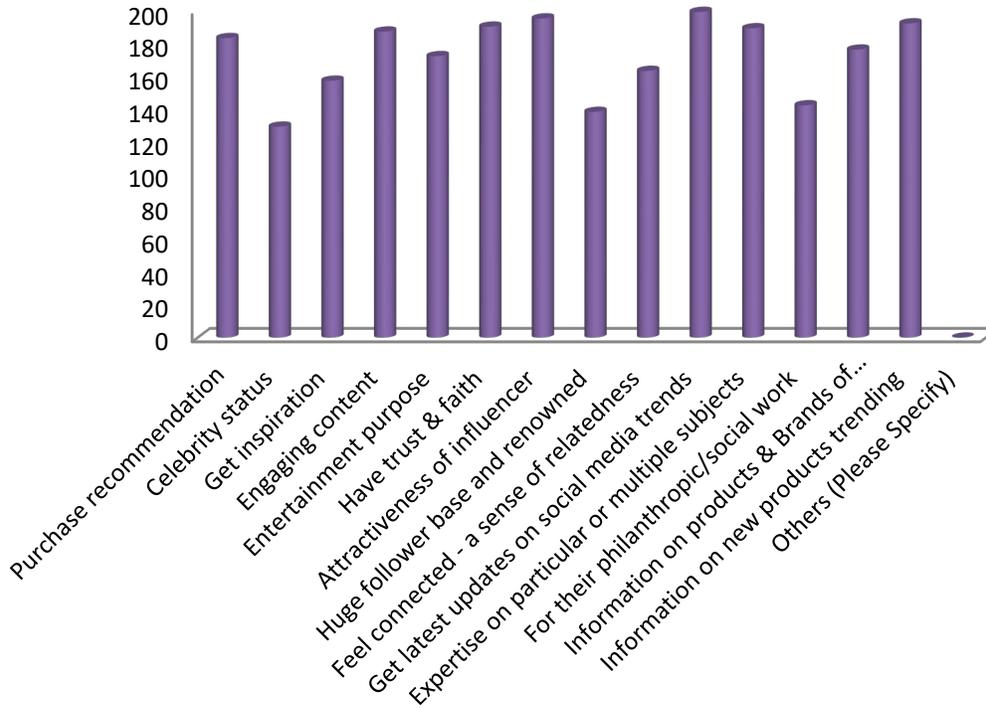


13. Why do you follow Social media influencers? (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)	Purchase recommendation	183
	Celebrity status	129
	Get inspiration	157
	Engaging content	187
	Entertainment purpose	172
	Have trust & faith	190
	Attractiveness of influencer	195
	Huge follower base and renowned	138
	Feel connected - a sense of relatedness	163
	Get latest updates on social media trends	199
	Expertise on particular or multiple subjects	189
	For their philanthropic/social work	142
	To get information on products & Brands of interest	176
	To get information on new products trending on social media	192
Others (Please Specify)	0	

On question of reasons for following social media influencers, multiple options from the question have been selected by respondents. 99.5 % of respondents selected to get latest updates on social media platform; they follow influencers and ranked it on first position. 97.5 % of respondents reasoned their attractiveness and ranked attractiveness of followers on second position. Getting information on new products and brands trending on social media constitutes third position as 96 % of respondents marked this option. Trust and faith on influencers is also one of the reasons given by respondents to follow them and 95 % of respondents marked this and put this variable on fourth position on reasons of following influencers. Their expertise on a particular subject or multiple subjects has been responded by 94.5% of respondents as a reason to follow them and attained fifth position. 93.5 % of respondents find content posted by influencers to be engaging to follow them and putting it on sixth position. Influencers are also useful in getting purchase recommendation and information on products and brands of interest with 91.1 % and 88 % of responses and ranked seventh and eighth

respectively to be reasons to follow them. Influencers are also followed for entertainment with 86 % of responses and there is a feeling of connection a sense of relatedness with influencers with 81.5 % of responses putting these factors on ninth and tenth rank. 78.5 % of respondents find influencers inspiring and a reason to remain in touch with them on social media platform, keeps this variable on eleventh position. They are followed by generation Z for their philanthropic or social work, huge follower base and are renowned and for their celebrity status and can be ranked twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth rank respectively on reasons for following social media influencers on social media platform. An option of providing other reasons has also been given to respondents but none of respondents gave any reason other than included in question. Result indicates that generation Z is engaged and involved with activities of social media influencers in one way or the other. There are many factors contributing to association and involvement of generation Z with social media influencers as indicated in the responses on the question asked. It aids the buyer in making knowledgeable choices regarding the benefits and disadvantages related to a certain product. Therefore, before making a purchasing decision, consumers use social media to lower the risk (Kulkarni and Mohapatra, 2021).

Why do you follow Social media influencers?

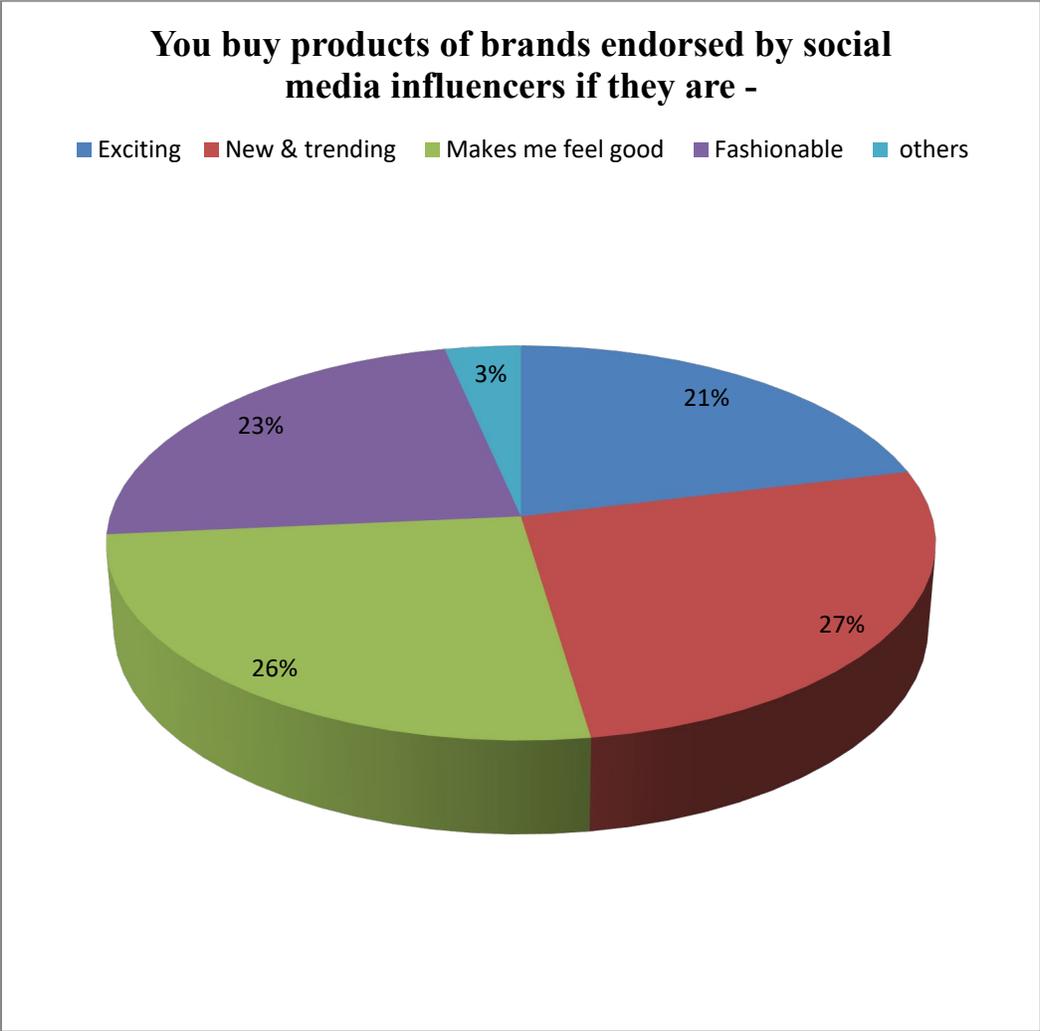


4.4. Generation Z attitude & perception towards product recommended by social media influencers

14. You buy products of brands endorsed by social media influencers if they are - (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)	Exciting	157
	New & trending	196
	Makes me feel good	192
	Fashionable	171
	others	25

On question of purchase of products of brands endorsed by social media influencers in which respondents have been asked to select multiple options as well as give other reasons which is not listed in the options of the question, 196 respondents said they buy such products because they are new and trending on social media platform ranking it at first position and 192 respondents also find such products and brands that make them feel good putting this at second rank. 171 responses came for fashion- ability of products endorsed by influencers and has been ranked third. 157 respondents also gave reason that excitement to own products promoted by influencers is also a reason for ranking it at fourth. 25 respondents also found some other reasons to buy products endorsed by media influencers. Utility of such products in their life (11 responses), owning it because their friends have bought it (9 responses) and status symbol (5 responses) are three other reasons found through the survey result that prompts generation Z to buy products of brands endorsed by social media influencers. Generation Z attitude is positive towards products and services of different brands endorsed by social media influencers on social media platform and there are multiple

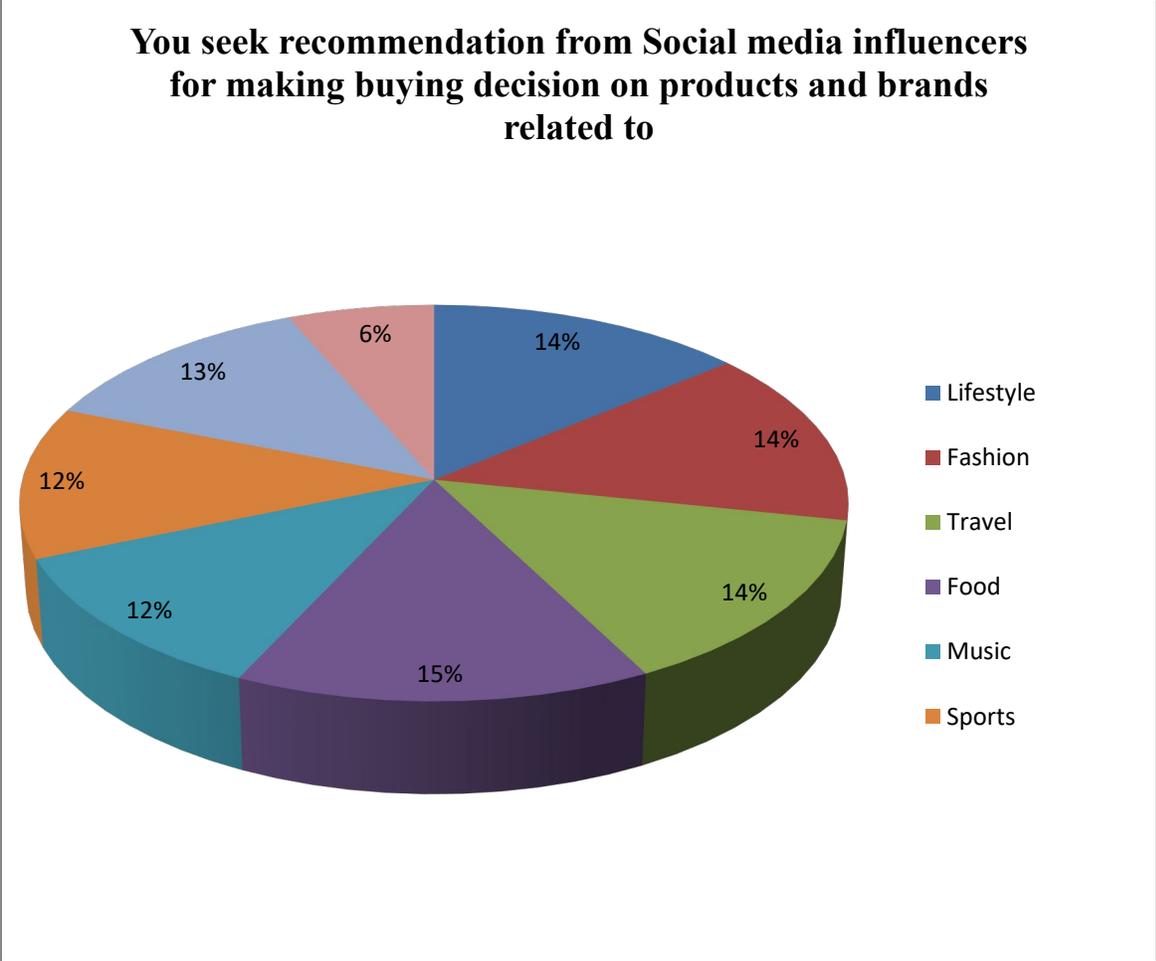
reasons they find to buy such products as visualized from the survey result. Social media influencers serves as an intermediate link in terms of sharing/ endorsing information on products and services available in market which suits the requirement of generation Z or attracts them and generation Z wants to remain associated with such products due to their inborn behaviour to remain digital at every façade of life.



15. You seek recommendation from Social media influencers for making buying decision on products and brands related to – (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)	Lifestyle	189
	Fashion	195
	Travel	192
	Food	198
	Music	159
	Sports	168
	Fitness	171
	Others (please specify)	87

In this question, respondents were asked to select multiple options and a choice of giving other reasons was also provided. 198 respondents take recommendation for food ranked at first, 195 for fashion ranking it at second, 192 for travel related products & services ranking at third, 189 for lifestyle products being at fourth, fitness has been ranked at fifth with 171 responses and sports related products at sixth with 168 responses and for music related products and services with 159 responses have been received putting it on seventh position. In case of others, 87 respondents seek recommendation from influencers on other products also, such as electronic products (22 responses), flat renting (26 responses), college and education (21), web series and movies to watch (18 responses). Result indicates that generation Z uses recommendation of social media influencers in every vertical of their life while assigning priority for products related to different needs and requirement. Generation Z perceives recommendation of social media influencers effective to fulfill their day to day requirements related to different products they consume. Also recommendation of social media influencers' impact buying behaviour attitude of generation Z as has been envisaged from results of survey. There is a positive association between social media

influencers and generation Z. Generation Z believes and has trust on influencers due to which recommendation of social media influencers play an important role in their life. They are regarded as opinion leaders due to the fact that they frequently excel in their fields, hold expertise & leadership positions, and have a particular focus on one or more niches, such as lifestyle, fashion, healthy living, food, and travel (De Veirman et al.,2017).



On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree kindly rate the following statements related to products recommended on social media platforms by influencers.

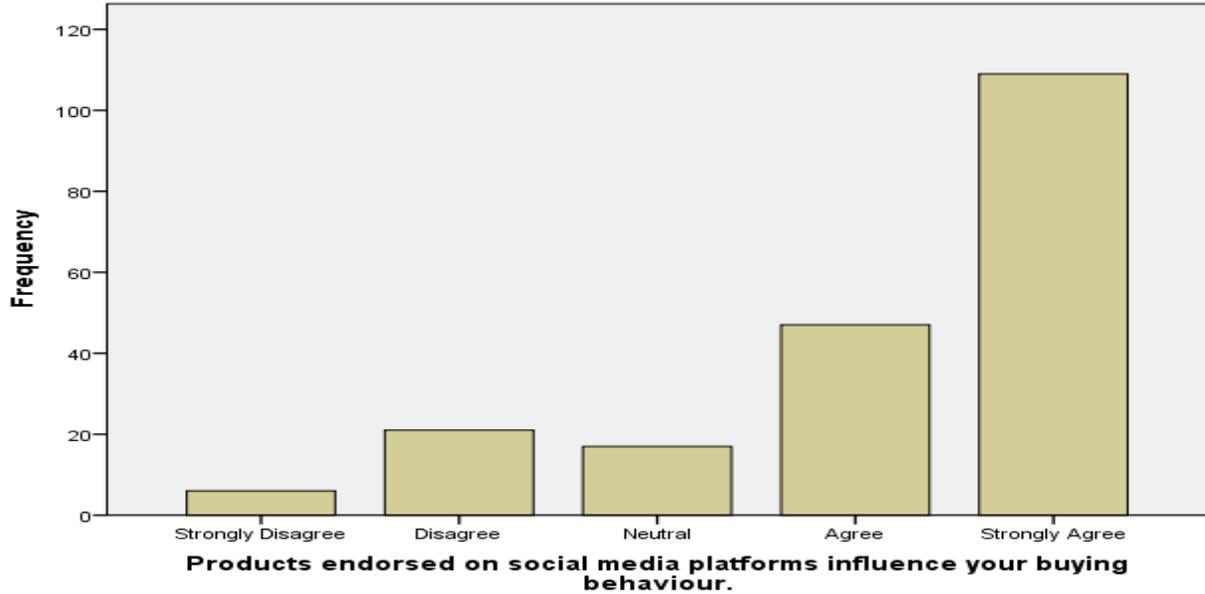
	1	2	3	4	5
16. Products endorsed on social media platforms influence your buying behaviour.					
17. Products recommended on social media platform help you to increase your awareness about product, knowledge and new trends.					
18. Products recommended on social media platform by influencers increase your confidence in the product.					
19. You buy products recommended by social media influencers.					
20. You are satisfied with the products bought through social media influencer recommendation.					
21. You refer products recommended on social media platform to your peers, family & friends.					
22. You are able to relate to products recommended by social media influencers.					
23. You follow advices on products given by influencers on social media platform.					

16. Products endorsed on social media platforms influence your buying behaviour.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	6	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	21	10.5	10.5	13.5
Neutral	17	8.5	8.5	22.0
Agree	47	23.5	23.5	45.5
Strongly Agree	109	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Out of 200 respondents, 109 respondents strongly agree and 47 respondents gave their consent as agree that their buying behaviour is influenced significantly by products endorsed on social media platforms. 17 respondents remain neutral to the statement and only 27 respondents either disagree or strongly disagree that products promoted on social media platform impacts their buying behaviour. 79 % of respondents' buying decision is influenced by products being displayed on social media platform which indicates that generation Z buying behaviour has been highly influenced by products on social media platforms. Hence, Companies must collaborate with social media influencers to not only promote their products and brands but also to increase sales and reach among generation Z which is about 27 % population of the country (Shaikh, 2022). Social media assists consumers in making informed decisions about the associated risks and rewards (Kulkarni and Mohapatra,2021).

Products endorsed on social media platforms influence your buying behaviour.



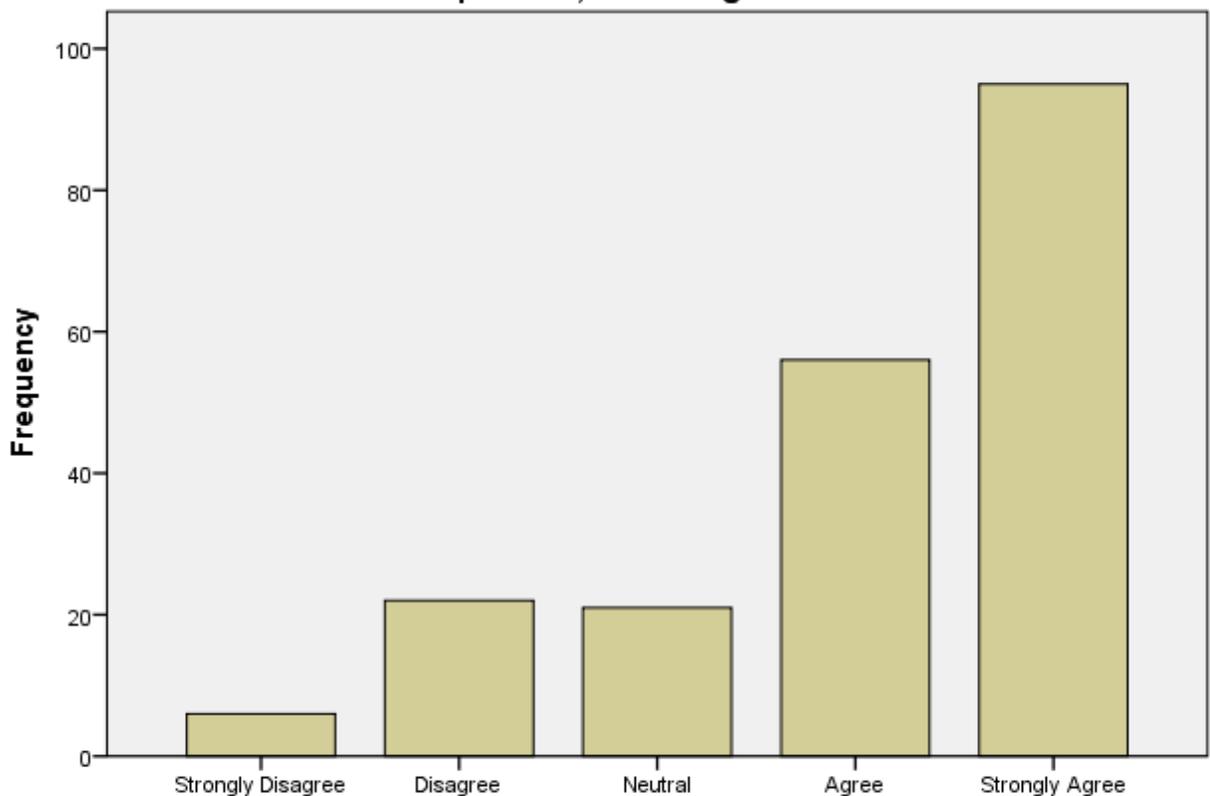
17. Products recommended on social media platform help you to increase your awareness about product, knowledge and new trends.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	22	11.0	11.0	14.0
Neutral	21	10.5	10.5	24.5
Agree	56	28.0	28.0	52.5
Strongly Agree	95	47.5	47.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

75.5 % of respondents strongly agree or agree that there is an enhancement on awareness about products, knowledge and new trends on social media due to products getting recommended on social media platform through influencers. However, 3 % of respondents strongly disagree and 11 % of respondents disagree with it and find no role of recommendation of influencers in increasing their awareness level or product knowledge or recent media trends. 10.5% of respondents remain mum to the statement

and responded neutrally. More than three fourth of respondents find role of social media influencers effective on enhancing their knowledge and awareness level on trending products of different brands. Hence, companies launching new products must promote their products on social media platforms to increase awareness and knowledge of customers about such products and it will also help them to trend their products online. Even existing products should be promoted in order to increase level of understanding of utility of such products among generation Z customers thus popularizing their brands and getting extra sales of such products through use of social media platform (Munsch, 2018).

Products recommended on social media platform help you to increase your awareness about product, knowledge and new trends.



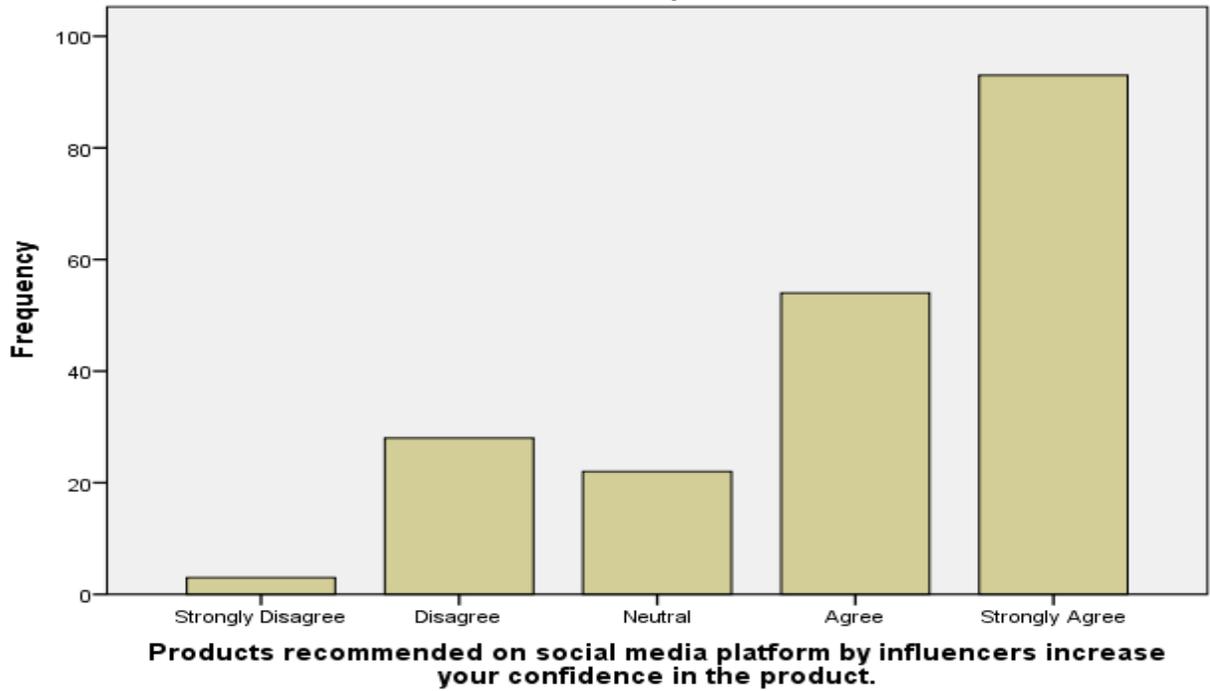
Products recommended on social media platform help you to increase your awareness about product, knowledge and new trends.

18. Products recommended on social media platform by influencers increase your confidence in the product.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
Disagree	28	14.0	14.0	15.5
Neutral	22	11.0	11.0	26.5
Agree	54	27.0	27.0	53.5
Strongly Agree	93	46.5	46.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

46.5% of respondents strongly agree that their confidence increases on products recommended on social media platform and 27 % of respondents agree with it. 11 % of respondents remained neutral with increase in confidence on products being recommended. And 15.5 % of respondents either showed their disagreement or strong disagreement with increase in confidence in the products being recommended on social media platforms by influencers. Recommended products help in increasing confidence in such products among generation Z. Hence to win the confidence of customers, companies should use different means on social media along with influencers to persuade them to recommend their products. Social media influencers should keep on recommending products and brands having utility or being in trend to increase confidence of their followers so as to keep them intact in their followers list (Glucksman, 2017).

Products recommended on social media platform by influencers increase your confidence in the product.

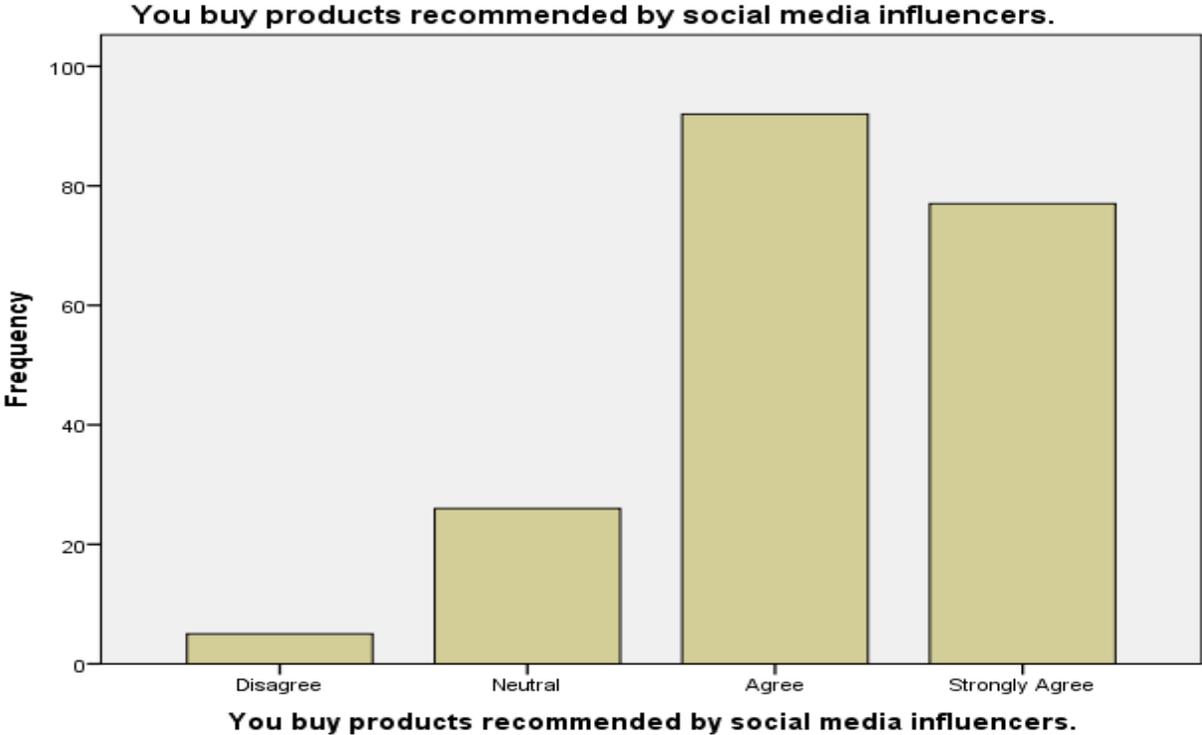


19. You buy products recommended by social media influencers.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Neutral	26	13.0	13.0	15.5
Valid Agree	92	46.0	46.0	61.5
Strongly Agree	77	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

38.5 % of respondent strongly agree that they buy products recommended by social media influencers and 46 % of respondents agree that recommendation of social media

influencers impact their buying decision of products and services of different brands. Only 2.5 % of respondents disagree that recommendation of influencers does not matter for them while making buying decision. None of the respondents strongly condemn this statement and 13 % of respondents remained undecided and responded neutrally to it. 84.5 % of respondents find recommendation of social media influencers crucial in their buying decision and they buy products on the basis of recommendation of social media influencers. Social media influencers must recommend qualitative & value to money products to their followers and target audience, and they should not deceit their target audiences and followers by trapping them in wrong and nuisance products and brands (Jiménez and Sánchez, 2019).

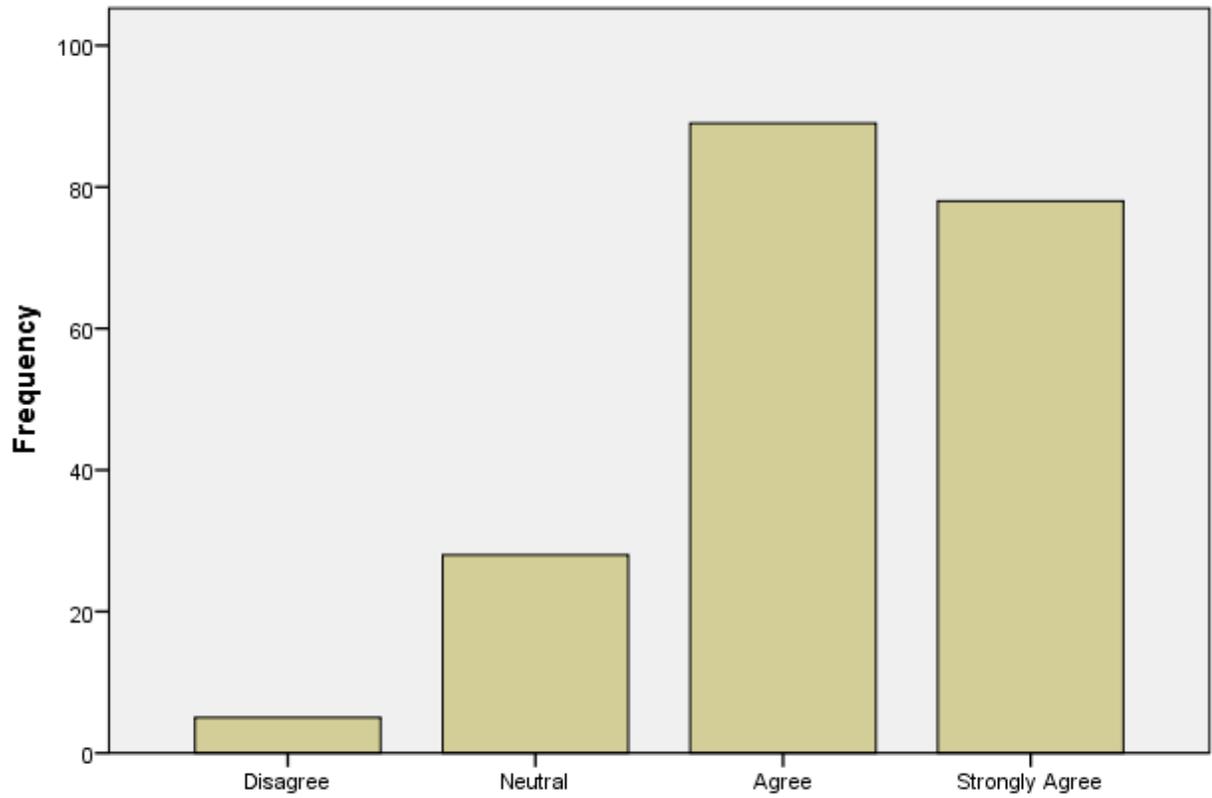


20. You are satisfied with the products bought through social media influencer recommendation.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Neutral	28	14.0	14.0	16.5
Valid Agree	89	44.5	44.5	61.0
Strongly Agree	78	39.0	39.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Only 2.5 % of respondents disagree and none of respondents strongly disagree to the statement and responded that they are not happy and satisfied with the products they bought on recommendation of social media influencers. 14 % of respondents remain undecided to the statement and remained neutral to it. 83.5 % of respondents out of which 39 % strongly agree and 44.5 % of respondents agree that their satisfaction level products recommended by influencers is optimal and they are happy and satisfied after purchase decision made. Result indicates that recommendation of influencers on social media gives a boost to Generation Z purchase decision and strong satisfaction level post purchase. Social media influencers have strong hold among generation Z, and they have strong tendency to persuade them to buy products recommended by them to generation Z. Companies should focus on building long term relationship with generation Z and making them loyal towards their brands which can be achieved by making social media influencers as an intermediary to persuade generation Z to opt products of their brands (Pop et al., 2021).

You are satisfied with the products bought through social media influencer recommendation.



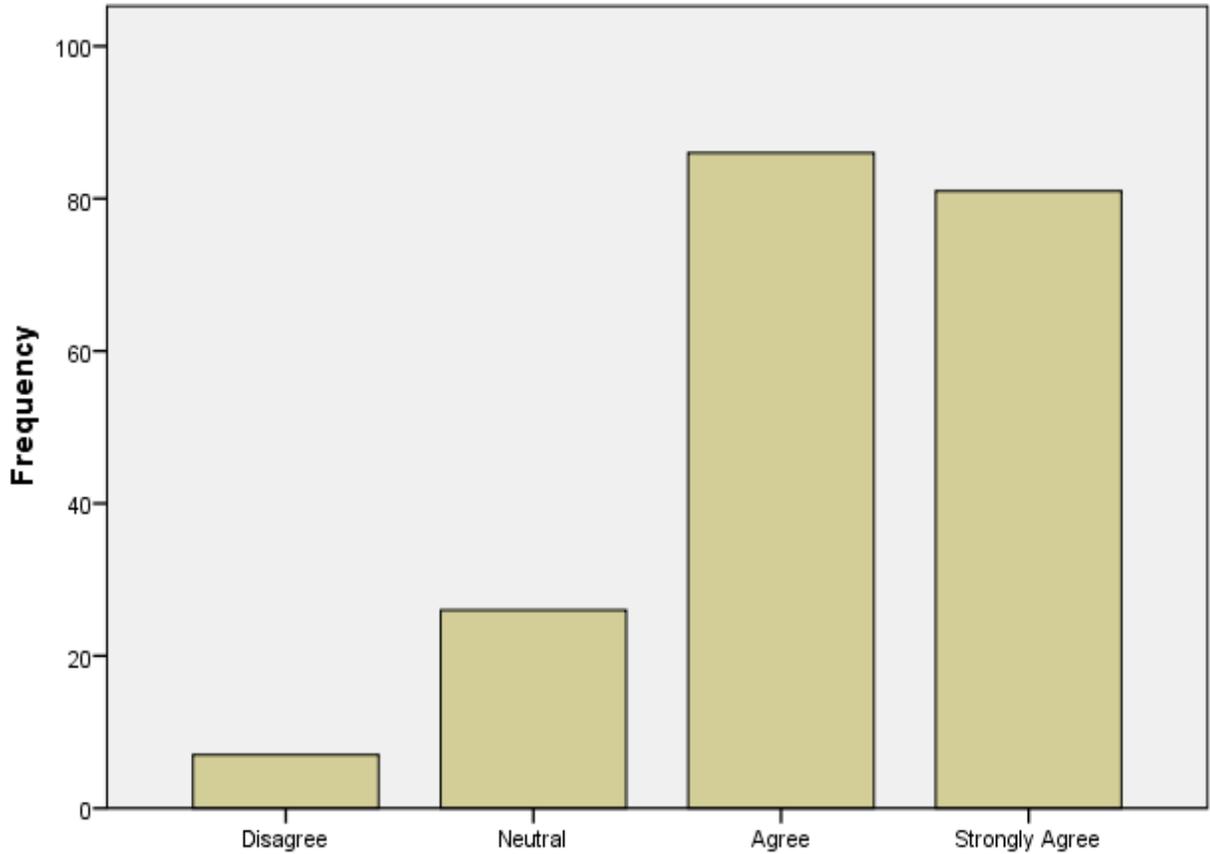
You are satisfied with the products bought through social media influencer recommendation.

21. You refer products recommended on social media platform to your peers, family & friends.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	7	3.5	3.5	3.5
Neutral	26	13.0	13.0	16.5
Valid Agree	86	43.0	43.0	59.5
Strongly Agree	81	40.5	40.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

40.5 % of respondents strongly agree and 43 % agree that they recommend products about which they come to know on social media platform through social media influencers to their relatives, family members, friends, and other peer mates. 13 % of respondents chose to remain neutral with regard to it. None of respondents strongly disagree to it and barely 3.5 % of respondents disagree that they do not recommend such products to their close ones. Result shows that products promoted and endorsed on social media does not remain in reach with generation Z but they also share and recommend such products to other generation people from their family relatives, colleagues, friends and others close to them. Social media influencers should keep pushing generation Z to recommend endorsed products to their closed ones to increase level of reach of those products and brands along with a chance to increase in their follower base (Voyer et al., 2015). Companies should also ask their social media collaborating partners to persuade their followers to recommend those products to their relatives, family members, colleagues or peers. In order to achieve greater success in it, companies should offer referral discounts and offers to such customers.

You refer products recommended on social media platform to your peers, family & friends.



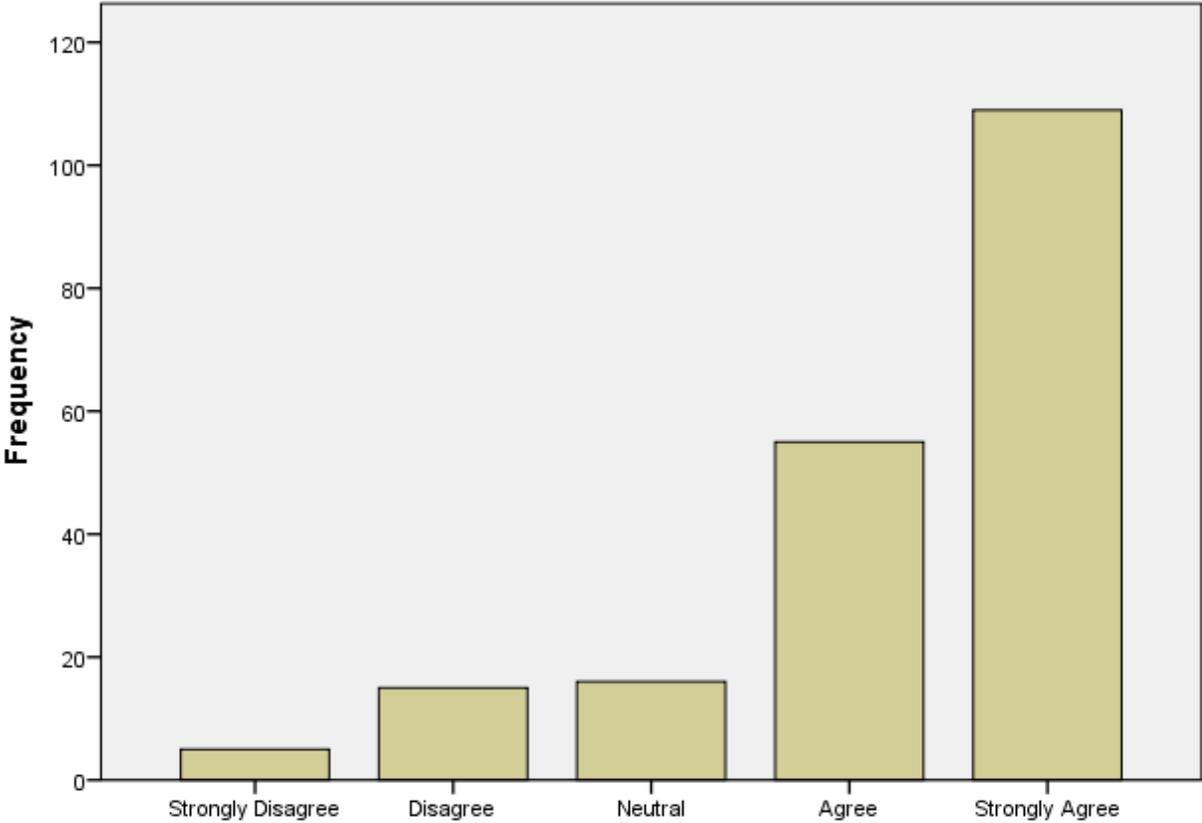
You refer products recommended on social media platform to your peers, family & friends.

22. You are able to relate to products recommended by social media influencers.

.	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Disagree	15	7.5	7.5	10.0
Neutral	16	8.0	8.0	18.0
Agree	55	27.5	27.5	45.5
Strongly Agree	109	54.5	54.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

54.5% of respondents strongly agree that products recommended by social media influencers create relatedness and they are able to connect to such products. 27.5 % of respondents agree to the statement. 8 % of respondents neither agree nor disagree and remain neutral to the statement. Only 7.5 % of respondents condemn to the statement by either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that there is any relationship they are able to generate with the products endorsed or recommended by influencers. 82 % of respondents are able to relate to products recommended by social media influencers which indicate that generation Z, not only relate to social media influencers but also with the products influencers endorse on social media platform (Forbes , 2016). Products endorsed or recommended by social media platform by social media influencers must be of such nature or need satisfying value that encourages generation to relate to them to increase presence as well as win loyalty of generation Z.

You are able to relate to products recommended by social media influencers.



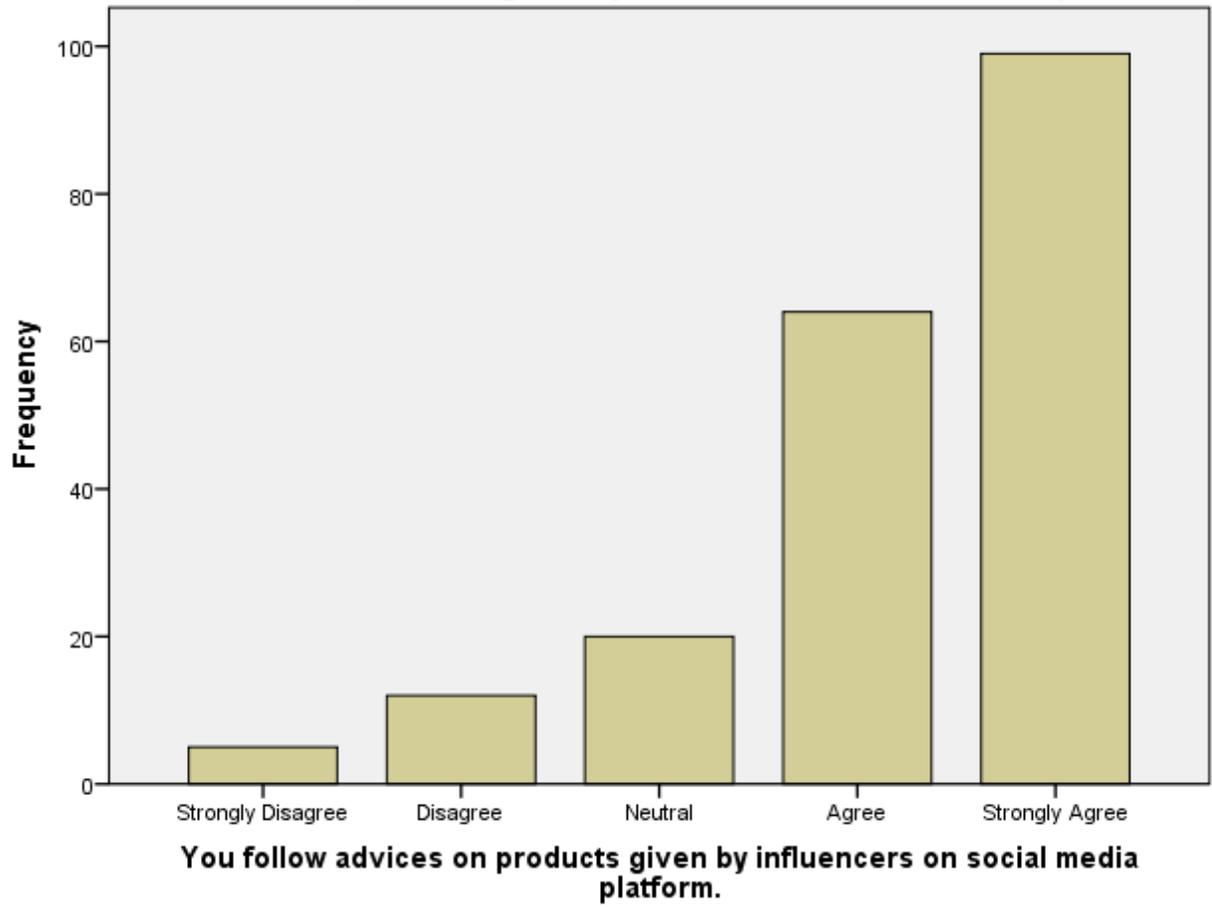
You are able to relate to products recommended by social media influencers.

23. You follow advices on products given by influencers on social media platform.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Disagree	12	6.0	6.0	8.5
Neutral	20	10.0	10.0	18.5
Agree	64	32.0	32.0	50.5
Strongly Agree	99	49.5	49.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

49.5 % of respondents strongly agree and 32 % agreed that they listen to advice given by social media influencers on products and brands while considering products and brands for making purchase. 6 % of respondents disagree and 2.5 % of respondents strongly disagree that they follow advice of influencers on different products and brands while making purchase. 10 % of respondents remain unclarified and responded neutrally. Result shows that generation Z likes to follow advices of social media influencers on products of different brands while initiating purchase. Social media influencers must provide valuable advice and avoid fake endorsement and disseminating wrong information or advice on products they endorse, recommend or advice to their followers just for sake of money, else it will rapture their image and fan following base (Cameron, 2022).

You follow advices on products given by influencers on social media platform.



4.5. Traits of social media influencers that impact buying behaviour of generation Z while making purchase decision online

On a scale of 1 to 5, from strongly agree being 5 & strongly disagree being 1; rate credibility traits of social media influencers that impacts your buying behaviour.

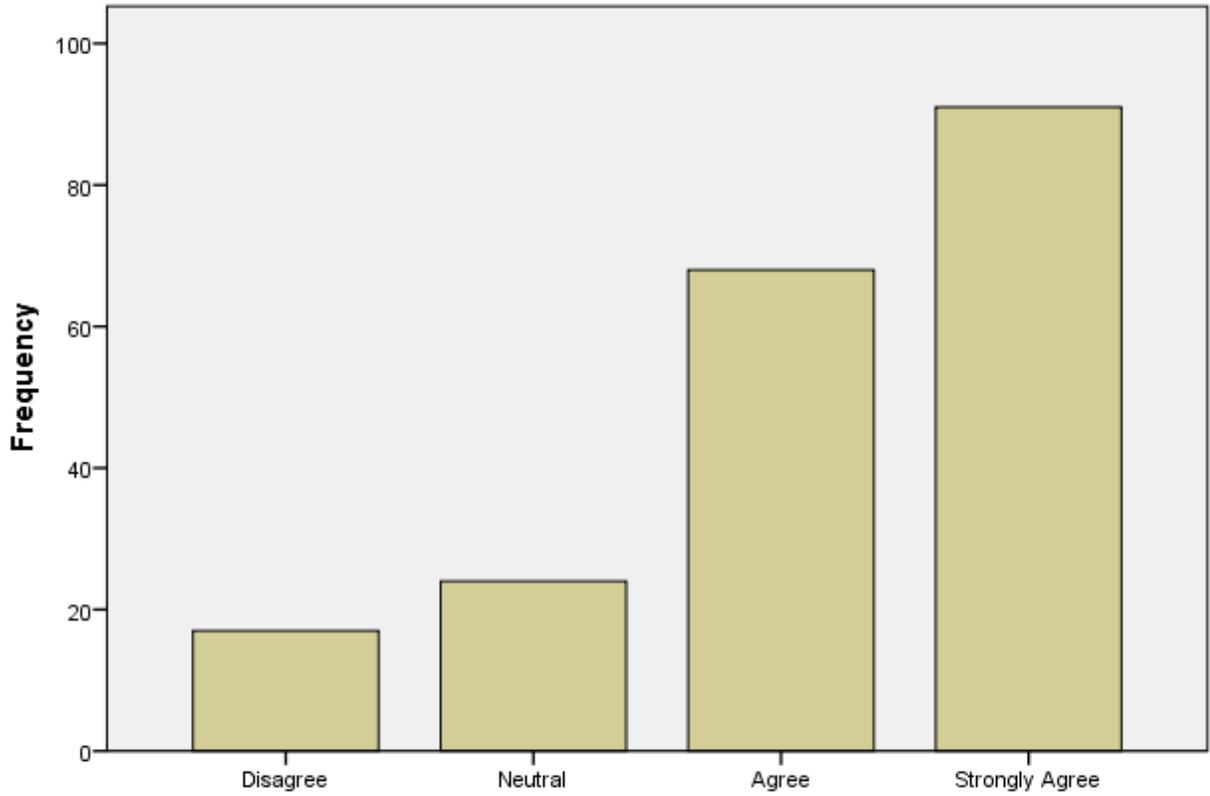
	1	2	3	4	5
24. Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.					
25. Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.					
26. Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.					
27. Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.					
28. Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.					
29. Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.					

24. Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	17	8.5	8.5	8.5
Neutral	24	12.0	12.0	20.5
Valid Agree	68	34.0	34.0	54.5
Strongly Agree	91	45.5	45.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

79.5 % of respondents either strongly agree or agree that social media influencers have expertise on products and brands they endorse and possess necessary skills, knowledge, and information on such products and brands. None of the respondents strongly disagree to this statement regarding knowledge and expertise they possess on products they endorse on social media platform. Only 8.5 % of respondents disagree that they possess necessary knowledge and expertise in their fields and brands they endorse. 12 % of respondents remained neutral on question of social media influencers' knowledge and expertise. Generation Z believes that influencers are subject matter experts and have sound knowledge which helps to decide over selection of range of products of different brands available on social media platform and thus assisting and guiding them to make best possible selection of products while making purchase decision. Social media influencers should keep on collecting as much information as possible on products and services they endorse and avail it to their followers to make best use of such information collected and shared by them in order to remain valuable and effective among generation Z (Moore et al., 2018).

Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.



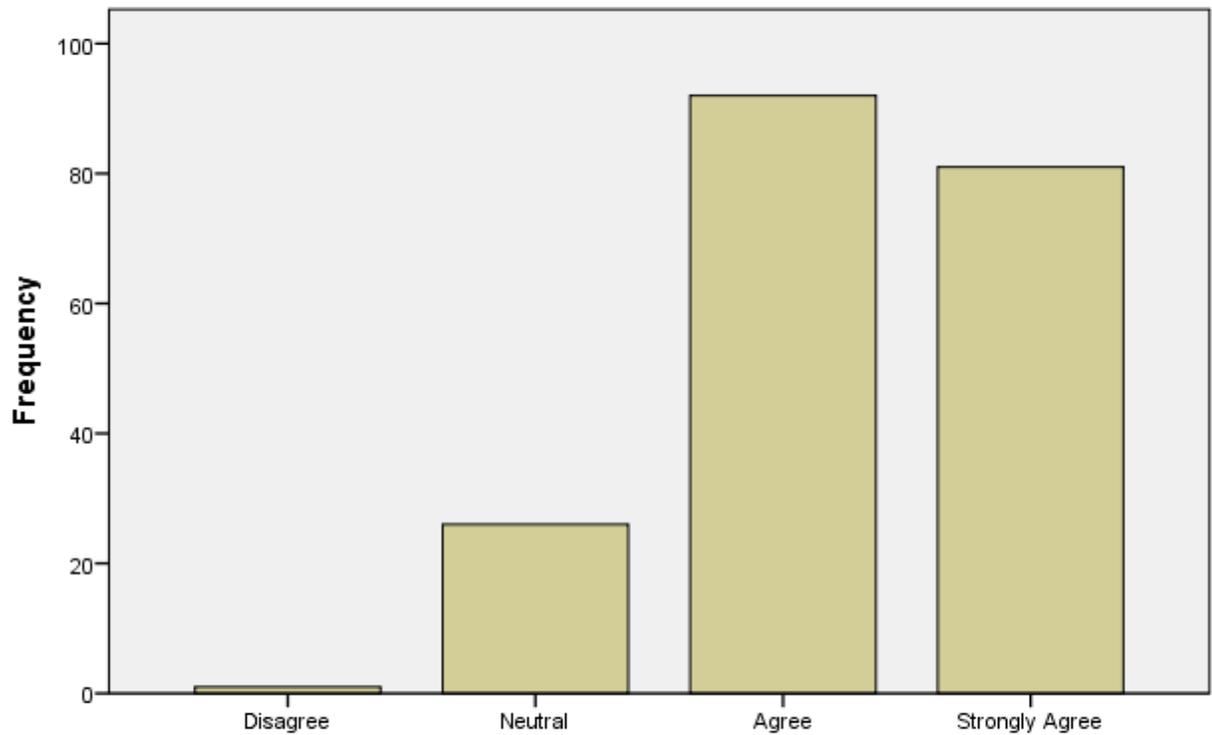
Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.

25. Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	.5	.5	.5
Neutral	26	13.0	13.0	13.5
Valid Agree	92	46.0	46.0	59.5
Strongly Agree	81	40.5	40.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Out of 200 respondents, 81 respondents strongly agree that social media influencers share common interest, demography, behaviour and personal identity and experiences that bring them together on a common platform thus matching their wavelength and features which creates relatedness between influencers and generation Z. 92 respondents agree that they experience some relatedness with influencers which creates a sympathetic relationship between the two thus encouraging them to generate trust on influencers. Only 1 respondent disagree to the statement and 26 respondents remained neutral on relatedness characteristics of social media influencers. None of the respondents strongly disagree to it. 86.5 % of respondents find some relationship with social media influencers in terms of common interest, behaviour, past experiences, demographics and others that connect them on a common platform and facilitate having strong sympathetic relationship between them. Social media influencers must possess some commonness among their target audience in order to win their trust and generate sympathetic relationship so as to create relatedness with their followers in terms of demographics, personal accounts, behaviour, experiences and common intent (Forbes , 2016).

Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.



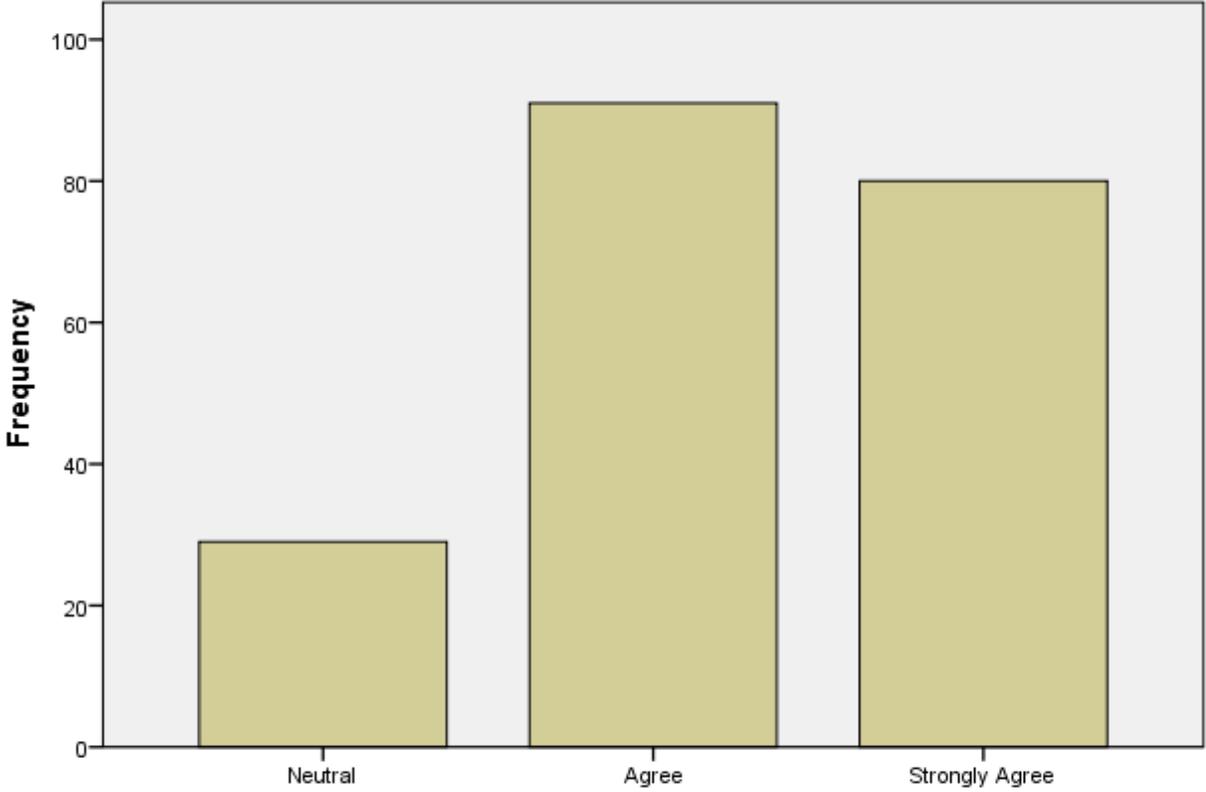
Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.

26. Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neutral	29	14.5	14.5	14.5
Valid Agree	91	45.5	45.5	60.0
Valid Strongly Agree	80	40.0	40.0	100.0
Valid Total	200	100.0	100.0	

None of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree that social media influencers are not helpful while guiding and fostering practical experiences and thoughts when they persuade to convince their target audience and followers to make decisions on a particular product. 85.5 % of respondents gave consent either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they remain helpful in guiding and supporting them while deciding over a product to buy. 14.5 % of respondents remained mum and neutral on helpfulness traits of social media influencers. Social media influencers in the eyes of generation Z help them in making sound buying decision on a product through adequate guidance, sharing fruitful thoughts and experiences and persuade them to buy products and brands they endorse and recommend. Social media influencers should remain helpful to generation Z (their target audience and followers) by all means whether it be providing them useful information on utility of products, recent trends emerging on social media platform, sharing reviews and experience of usage of products when it comes to convincing them to buy products recommended and endorsed by them for their target audience (Martikainen and Pitkanen,2019).

Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.



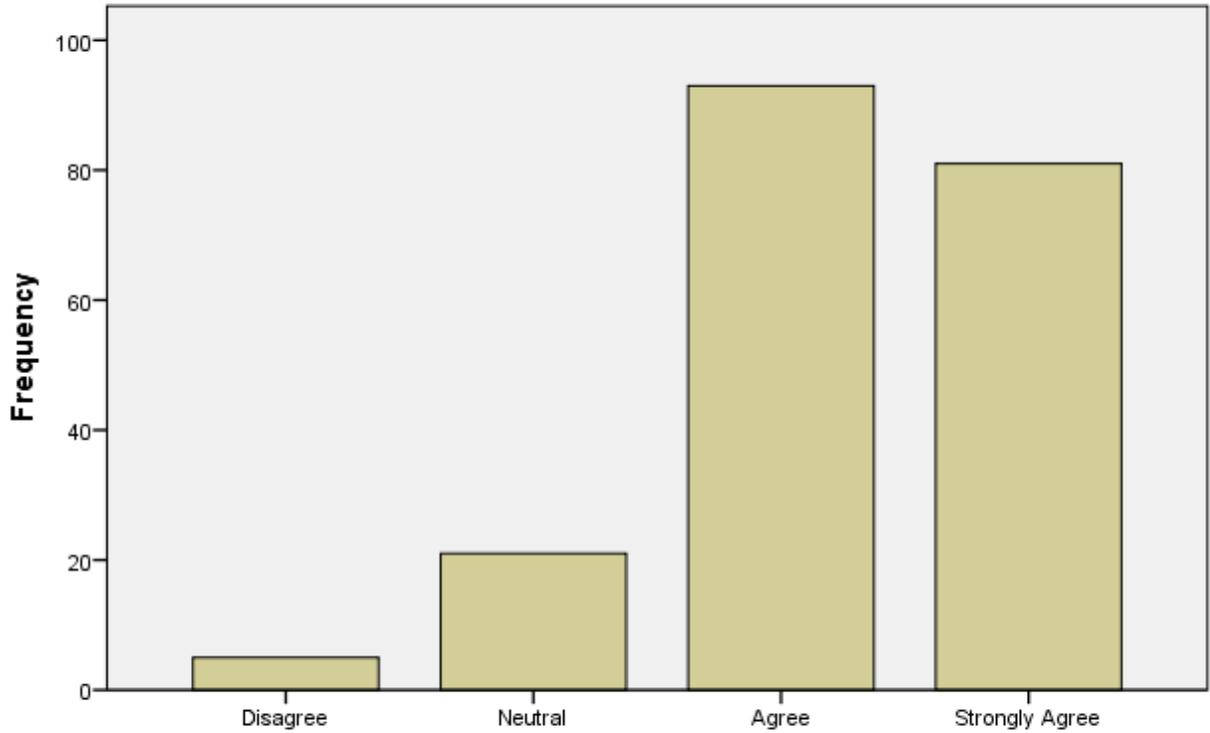
Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.

27. Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Neutral	21	10.5	10.5	13.0
Valid Agree	93	46.5	46.5	59.5
Strongly Agree	81	40.5	40.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

86.5 % of respondents either strongly agree or gave their consent by agreeing that social media influencers remain confident while endorsing a particular brand or products of different brands. They speak making eye contact, shows positive body posture and gestures, speak with assertiveness and make all possible ways to engage their followers and target audience with them so as to win their trust and thus effectively promoting and endorsing brands. 2.5 % of respondents disagree and find influencers' confidence not as effective as it should while endorsing brands to generation Z. 10.5 % of respondents are neutral in evaluating confidence level of influencers while promoting brands on social media platform. Result indicates that social media influencers have been successful in expressing their confidence level by sitting straight, maintaining positive gesture and posture, talking making eye to eye contact while delivering information and endorsing products to generation Z. Social media influencers must deliver themselves with utmost confidence showing positive attitude and behaviour to generation Z on social media platform, if they want to connect develop trust with gen Z (Glucksman, 2017).

Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.



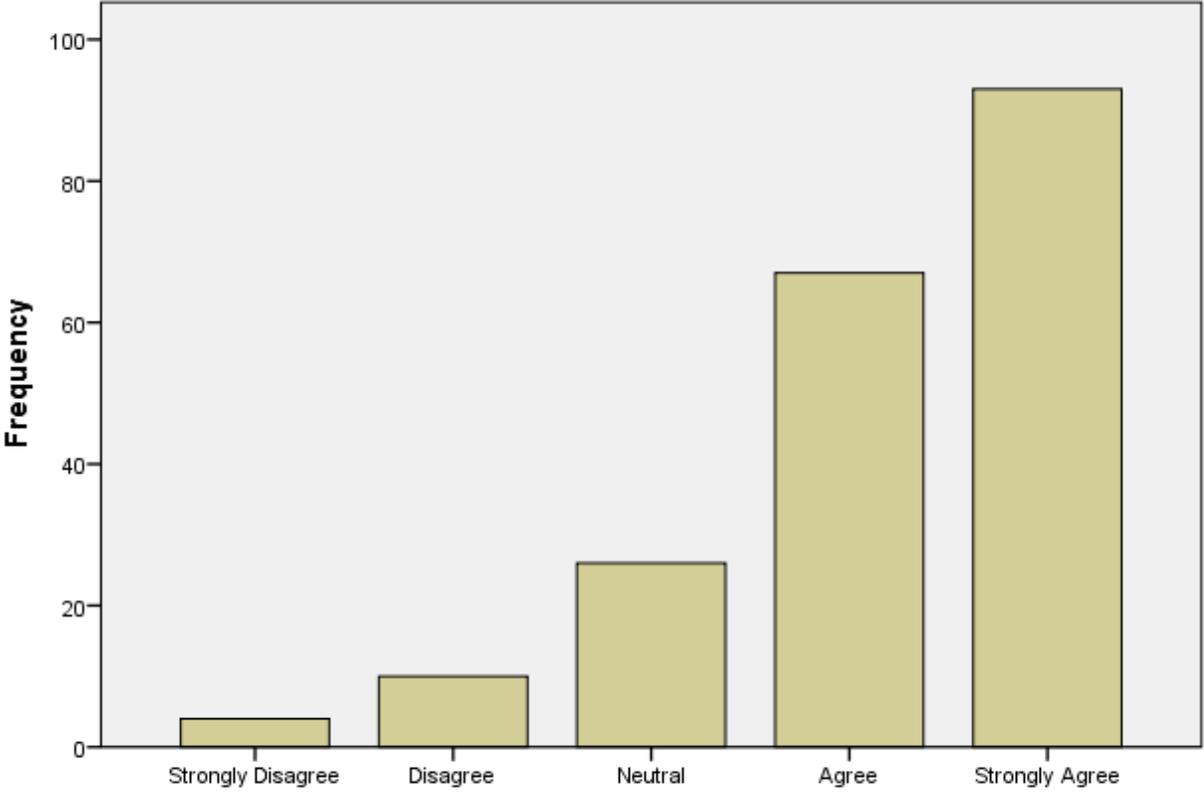
Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.

28. Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	2.0	2.0	2.0
Disagree	10	5.0	5.0	7.0
Neutral	26	13.0	13.0	20.0
Agree	67	33.5	33.5	53.5
Strongly Agree	93	46.5	46.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

80 % of respondents either agree or strongly agree that contents presented by social media influencers either verbally or visually are easy to understand, simple, neat and clean and pleasant in viewing. 7 % of respondents find visual and verbal presentation of information by social media influencers as vague, unsatisfactory and it does not offer a pleasant viewing experience by either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to the statement. 13 % of respondents neither agree nor disagree with the articulation of content of social media influencers and responds neutrally. Generation Z respondents find content of influencers' nice and pleasant whether delivered verbally or along with visuals and find articulation of message by social media influencers effective in connecting generation Z with them. Social media influencers must articulate their message related to endorsement of products in a way that gives sound, satisfactory, happy feeling experience to generation Z while viewing such contents (Martikainen and Pitkanen,2019).

Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.



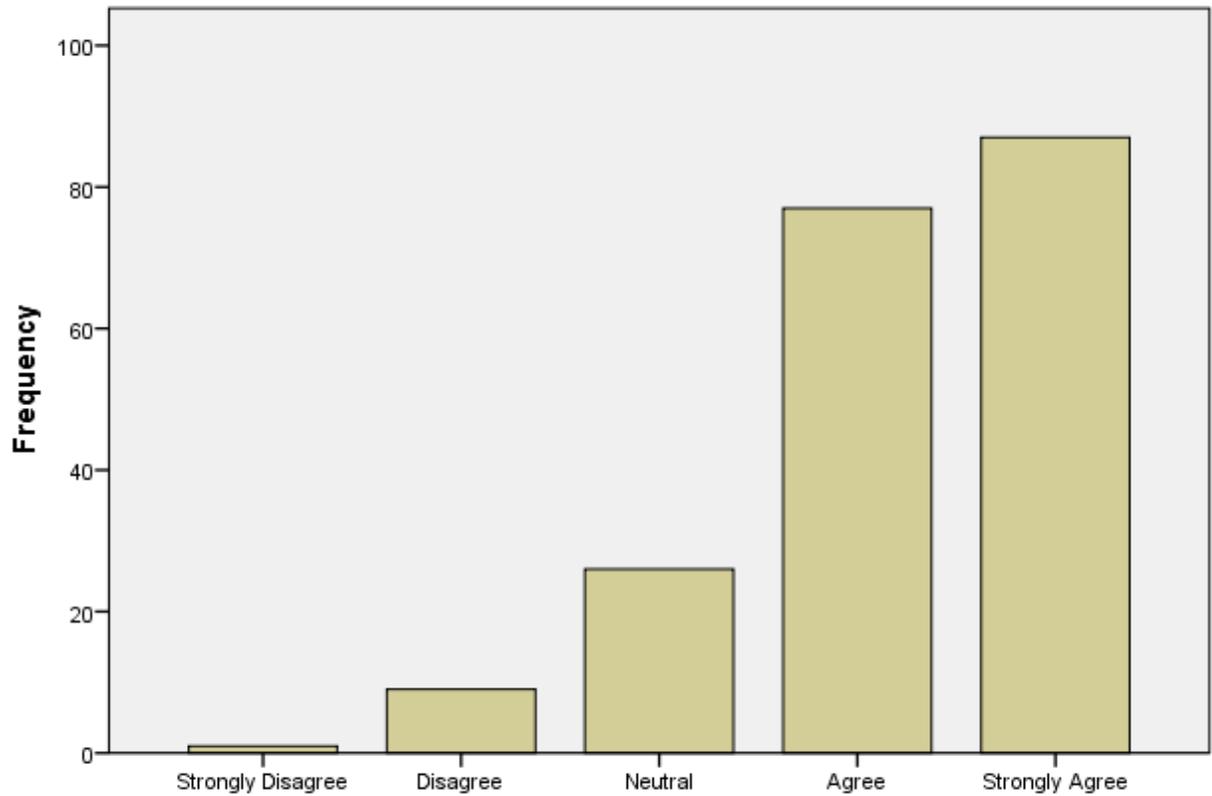
Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.

29. Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	1	.5	.5	.5
Disagree	9	4.5	4.5	5.0
Neutral	26	13.0	13.0	18.0
Agree	77	38.5	38.5	56.5
Strongly Agree	87	43.5	43.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

87 respondents strongly agree that they trust words of social media influencers because they find them honest, competent and generous, 77 respondents agree to this statement. Only 1 respondent strongly disagree and 9 respondents disagree that they do not trust social media influencers and do not find them honest, caring or competent in what they do. 13 % of respondents remain mum on having trust on social media influencers and remained neutral to it. Result indicates that generation Z considers social media influencers to be authentic, truthful, and competent which helps in shaping trust between them. Social media influencers must be honest, truthful, benevolent and competent to win trust of generation Z on social media platform (Zasuwa, 2018).

Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.



Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

4.6 Hypotheses testing using regression analysis (IBM SPSS, 2020)

1. H1: Knowledge of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.688 ^a	.128	.124	.81275

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.

R in the table indicates correlation between dependent (Trust) and independent variable (Knowledge) considered in this analysis which is 0.688 indicating a strong predictive measure for evaluating the result considered under the study. R^2 explains the variability that can be explained by independent variable for dependent variable which is 0.128 indicating that knowledge of social media influencers can explain trust on social influencers to an extent of 12.8% (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.208	1	19.208	29.079	.000 ^b
Residual	130.792	198	.661		
Total	150.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.

Since value of F at F (1, 198) = 29.079, $p < .0005$, result from Anova table indicates that Knowledge of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

2. H2: Relatability of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.718 ^a	.175	.170	.79073

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.

R in the table indicates correlation between dependent (Trust) and independent variable (Relatability) considered in this analysis which is 0.718 indicating a strong predictive measure for evaluating the result considered under the study. R^2 explains the variability that can be explained by independent variable for dependent variable which is 0.175 indicating that relatability of social media influencers can explain trust on social influencers to an extent of 17.5% (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	26.199	1	26.199	41.902	.000 ^b
Residual	123.801	198	.625		
Total	150.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.

Since value of F at $F(1, 198) = 41.902$, $p < .0005$, result from Anova table indicates that Relatability of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

3. H3: Helpful nature of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.701 ^a	.165	.161	.79516

a. Predictors: (Constant), Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.

R in the table indicates correlation between dependent (Trust) and independent variable (Helpfulness) considered in this analysis which is 0.701 indicating a strong predictive measure for evaluating the result considered under the study. R^2 explains the variability that can be explained by independent variable for dependent variable which is 0.165 indicating that helpfulness of social media influencers can explain trust on social influencers to an extent of 16.5% (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.808	1	24.808	39.236	.000 ^b
	Residual	125.192	198	.632		
	Total	150.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.

Since value of F at F (1, 198) = 39.236, $p < .0005$, result from Anova table indicates that helpful nature of social media influencers develop trust among generation Z (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

4. H4: Confidence of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.742 ^a	.059	.054	.84454

a. Predictors: (Constant), Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.

R in the table indicates correlation between dependent (Trust) and independent variable (Confidence) considered in this analysis which is 0.742 indicating a strong predictive measure for evaluating the result considered under the study. R^2 explains the variability that can be explained by independent variable for dependent variable which is 0.059

indicating that confidence of social media influencers can explain trust on social influencers to an extent of 5.9% (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.776	1	8.776	12.305	.000 ^b
	Residual	141.224	198	.713		
	Total	150.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.

Since value of F at F (1, 198) = 12.305, $p < .0005$, result from Anova table indicates that confidence of social media influencers develop trust among generation Z (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

5. H5: Articulation of social media influencers develops trust among generation Z.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.699 ^a	.483	.481	.62573

a. Predictors: (Constant), Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.

R in the table indicates correlation between dependent (Trust) and independent variable (Articulation) considered in this analysis which is 0.699 indicating a strong predictive measure for evaluating the result considered under the study. R^2 explains the variability that can be explained by independent variable for dependent variable which is 0.483 indicating that articulation of social media influencers can explain trust on social influencers to an extent of 48.3% (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	72.477	1	72.477	185.110	.000 ^b
	Residual	77.523	198	.392		
	Total	150.000	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.

Since value of F at $F(1, 198) = 185.110$, $p < .0005$, result from Anova table indicates that Articulation of social media influencers develop trust among generation Z (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

6. H6: Trust in Social media influencers impacts buying behaviour of Generation Z positively.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.748 ^a	.201	.197	.67996

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

R in the table indicates correlation between dependent (Buying behaviour) and independent variable (Trust) considered in this analysis which is 0.748 indicating a strong predictive measure for evaluating the result considered under the study. R^2 explains the variability that can be explained by independent variable for dependent variable which is 0.201 indicating that articulation of social media influencers can explain trust on social influencers to an extent of 20.1% (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.050	1	23.050	49.853	.000 ^b
	Residual	91.545	198	.462		
	Total	114.595	199			

a. Dependent Variable: You buy products recommended by social media influencers.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.

Since value of F at $F(1, 198) = 49.853$, $p < .0005$, result from Anova table indicates that Trust in Social media influencers impacts buying behaviour of Generation Z positively (Laerd Statistics, 2022).

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Discussion based on Research Questions

1. What is the behaviour of generation Z while using social medial platforms?

Three questions (question 6, 7 & 8) have been included in the questionnaire survey to find the behaviour and presence of generation Z on social media platform. Generation Z are present on social media platforms and they devote sufficient time on it ranging from less than 1 hour to more than 5 hours in a day, exhibiting their priority of utility of social media platform in their life on day to day basis. They are familiar with almost all social media platforms available on internet. Generation Z are using different social media platforms for range of activities from texting and chatting to sharing their personal life experiences, following social media influencers, brands and celebrities, getting purchase recommendation from influencers exploring news and events, new trends on social media, getting information and checking review on new products and different brands, remaining in touch with latest trends in social media, supporting social cause and events, making friends and community connection and so on.

2. What is the relationship between social medial influencers and generation Z?

Five questions ranging from question 9 to 13 have been devised to analyse Generation Z familiarity, relationship & involvement with social media influencers. Generation Z follow many social media influencers ranging from five to more than hundred on different social media platforms to get latest updates on social media platform, information on new products and brands trending on social media, purchase

recommendation and many other activities. They came to know about social media influencers through engaging contents, sponsored ads on social media, friends & family referencing and also through brand collaboration. Generation Z connects with social media influencers due to their inspiring nature attractiveness, trust and faith on them, engaging content they keep on posting, brands they are associated with, social and philanthropic work, huge follower base, fame, their celebrity status and for entertainment purpose.

3. What is the attitude and perception of generation Z towards products recommended by social media influencers on social media platform?

Ten questions ranging from question 14 to 23 have been devised to analyse Generation Z attitude & perception towards product recommended by social media influencers. Generation Z attitude is positive towards products and services of different brands endorsed by social media influencers and they buy it since they find them new and trending, make them feel good, creates excitement, remains fashionable, gives them a status symbol, their friends are having it and also for utility of such products in their life. Generation Z use social media influencers' recommendation, suggestion and advise for products related to each and every category from lifestyle, fashion, travel, food, music, sports and fitness to electronic products, flat renting, college and education web series and deciding over which movies to watch. Generation Z buying behaviour has been highly influenced by products on social media platforms. They find role of social media influencers effective on enhancing their knowledge and awareness level on trending products of different brands. Products recommended by social media influencers boost up confidence of generation Z, and they follow advice and recommendation of social media influencers to make buying decision and are also satisfied with their purchase decision. They find a sense of relatedness with the products endorsed and refer the same to their colleagues, family members, peers and others.

4. What are traits of social media influencers that impact buying behaviour of generation Z while making purchase decision online?

Five traits of social media influencers have been identified through literature review and has been tested using regression analysis (ANOVA Test). These traits among social media influencers help in building trust and trust in turn impacts buying behaviour of generation Z for products and brands endorsed by them. These traits have been evaluated through ANOVA test which proved that traits of social media influencers considered i.e. knowledge, confidence; relatability, helpfulness and articulation help in developing trust among generation Z towards social media influencers. Trust developed among social media influencers impact buying behaviour of generation Z towards products and brands endorsed by social media influencers. These five traits in personality and behaviour of social media influencers will help them to grow easily and quickly in terms of getting more and more followers who will be seeking their advice and recommendation to make buying decision as well as build long term pertinent relationship with generation Z.

5.2 Industry Implications of Research work

- Companies must plan for allocating a fixed percentage of their marketing cost to be invested to make presence on internet through different social media platforms thus targeting generation Z customers to create a strong brand image and reputation of products and services and develop long term relationship.
- Companies must collaborate with social media influencers to not only endorse their products and brands but also to increase sales and reach among generation Z which is about 27 % population of the country (Shaikh, 2022).
- Companies launching new products must promote their products on social media platforms to increase awareness and knowledge of customers about such products and it will also help them to trend their products online and increase their market share, brand image and ultimately profitability of the companies.
- Even existing products should be promoted in order to increase level of understanding of utility of such products among generation Z customers thus popularizing their brands and getting extra sales of such products through use of social media platform.

- In order to win the confidence of customers, companies should use different means on social media along with influencers to persuade them to recommend their products.
- Companies should focus on building long term relationship with generation Z and making them loyal towards their brands which can be achieved by making social media influencers as an intermediary to persuade generation Z to opt products of their brands.
- Companies should also ask their social media collaborating partners to persuade their followers to recommend those products to their relatives, family members, colleagues or peers. In order to achieve greater success in it, companies should offer referral discounts and offers to such customers.
- It is necessary for companies to remain in touch with social media trends and should not avoid taking necessary steps to remain top trending brands in product segments they deal in.
- Companies should understand the power of internet and a new world being developed on internet should be core focus to target people searching products and services via recommendations and endorsement done on different social media platforms, search engines and at other popular websites and apps.

5.3 Limitations of Study & Scope for further Study

It was difficult to collect samples of respondents for this research work from diverse area and population residing in India. Hence respondents have been selected on convenience basis and a sample size of 200 respondents has been considered to undertake this project work. Due to limited time available to conduct this research work, it was difficult to conduct face to face interaction with all respondents and collect data. Thus, a questionnaire survey has been conducted to collect data from respondents in order to achieve objectives of this research work. Spatial limitation in terms of selecting respondents from a particular country and excluding other countries of world leads to restrict result of this research to apply globally. This research paper is limited to

understanding impact of social media influencers on buying behaviour towards products endorsed by them on the basis of credibility traits of influencers that leads to trust generation and furthers it toward purchase behaviour of endorsed products. There can be other factors and influencers' traits that can lead generation Z to move to purchase decision of products endorsed by influencers on social media platform. This proposition also leaves a scope for other researchers to conduct research in devising other influencer traits that can impact buying decision of generation Z which has not been considered in this report. In future, researchers can increase number of respondents and use probability sampling technique to decide over number of samples and get more vigor insights on this topic.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Facebook, Youtube and Whatsapp topped while Instagram and Twitter ranked second and third respectively in usage in India among generation Z. Almost half of generation Z spends about 2 to 4 hours on social media platforms on daily basis. Entertainment, texting & chatting has been ranked top, getting updates on latest news and events ranked second, remaining in touch with social media trends and checking reviews of products and services of different brands of their interest ranked third and Exploring different brands and information ranked fourth in type of activities generation Z does on social media platform. 84.5 % of generation Z uses social media for following influencers, their recommendation and advice. Engaging content, sponsored ads and randomly surfing on social media platform are three major sources ranked first to third respectively from where generation Z comes to know about social media influencers. 48 % of generation Z follows 50 to 100 social media influencers. Almost 90 % of this generation see contents of influencers they are following multiples times in a day.

On reasons to get engaged with social media influencers, getting latest update on social media platforms have been ranked top. Attractiveness of influencers, getting information and recommendation on products & brands and trust have been considered other reasons to follow social media influencers ranking being second, third and fourth respectively. Generation Z buy products endorsed by social media influencers due to its

new trending nature, makes them feel good and to remain fashionable ranked as first to third respectively. Food, fashion and travel have been ranked first to third for seeking recommendation and advice of social media influencers by generation Z to select products in these categories. Generation Z seeks recommendation for flat renting, college and education web series and movies to watch. These options have not been provided in the question.

Generation Z buying behaviour has been highly influenced by products on social media platforms. Social media influencers have been effective on enhancing their knowledge and awareness level on trending products of different brands. Products recommended by social media influencers increase confidence of generation Z. Recommendation and advice of social media influencers plays a pivotal role in buying decision of generation Z. They are happy and satisfied with products they buy under the recommendation of influencers and also refer it to their friends, family members, colleagues, relatives and others. Generation Z is able to relate with products endorsed by social media influencers.

Generation Z believes they possess sufficient knowledge regarding products and brands they endorse. Social media influencers share common interest, demography, behaviour and personal identity and experiences that bring them together on a common platform thus matching their wavelength and features which creates relatedness between influencers and generation Z. They are helpful and provide adequate product guidance, fruitful thoughts and share experiences while convincing generation to buy products they endorse. Social media influencers express high confidence level by sitting straight, maintaining positive gesture and posture, talking making eye to eye contact while presenting sponsored content to generation Z. They share neat and clean, easy, simple, visually relaxing, and pleasant content to generation Z thus winning gen Z trust level. According to generation Z, social media influencers are expert, competent, honest, trustworthy and benevolent while endorsing products and brands (Buhlmann and Gisler, 2016).

Five major traits identified for social media influencers to win trust of generation Z relates to knowledge, helpfulness, relatedness, confidence, and articulation. These five

traits must be embedded in every social media influencer if they want to gain trust and maintain strong and sympathetic relationship with generation Z and encourage them to purchase products endorsed, recommended and advised by social media influencers (Buhlmann and Gisler,2016).

6.1. Recommendations

- Social media influencers must recommend qualitative & value to money products to their followers and target audience, and they should not deceit their target audiences and followers by trapping them in wrong and nuisance products and brands.
- Social media influencers must provide valuable advice and avoid fake endorsement and disseminating wrong information or advice on products they endorse, recommend or advice to their followers just for sake of money, else it will rapture their image and fan following base.
- Social media influencers should keep on collecting as much information as possible on products and services they endorse and avail it to their followers to make best use of such information collected and shared by them in order to remain valuable and effective among generation Z.
- Social media influencers must possess some commonness among their target audience in order to win their trust and generate sympathetic relationship so as to create relatedness with their followers in terms of demographics, personal accounts, behaviour, experiences and common intent.
- Social media influencers should remain helpful to generation Z (their target audience and followers) by all means whether it be providing them useful information on utility of products, recent trends emerging on social media

platform, sharing reviews and experience of usage of products when it comes to convince them to buy products recommended and endorsed by them for their target audience.

- Social media influencers must present themselves with utmost confidence showing positive attitude and behaviour to generation Z on social media platform, if they want to connect and develop trust with gen Z.
- Social media influencers must articulate their message related to endorsement of products in a way that gives sound, satisfactory, happy feeling experience to generation Z while viewing such contents.
- Social media influencers must be honest, truthful, benevolent, and competent to win trust of generation Z on social media platform.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Questionnaire Survey on

Impact of Social Media Influencers on Buying Behaviour of Generation Z in India

Demographic Profile

1. Gender – Male () Female ()

2. City - _____

3. Age - 18 to 20 Years () 20 to 22 years () 22 to 25 Years ()

4. You are – School Going () College Going () Graduate () Post Graduate & above ()

5. You are (Profession) – Student () Self Employed () Employed () Unemployed () Part time Employed Student () Part Time Employed ().

Gen Z Behaviour & Presence on Social Media Platform

6. Which of the following social media platform do you use? (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)

Facebook () Instagram () Twitter () Youtube () WeChat () Moj () MX TakaTak ()

Linkedin () Snapchat () Whatsapp () Roposo () Pinterest () Others (Please specify) _____

7. How much time do you normally spend in a day on social media?

Less than an hour () 1 to 2 hours () 2 to 3 hours () 3 to 4 hours () 4 to 5 hours ()
More than 5 hours ()

8. You use social media platform for - (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)

Following celebrities ()

Following Social media influencers ()

Following Brands ()

Supporting & Promoting Brand endorsement ()

Getting Purchase recommendations on brands ()

Exploring brands and related information ()

Checking reviews on products and services of different brands of interest ()

Making friends and community connection ()

Texting and chatting ()

Getting updates on latest news and events ()

Remaining in touch with latest social media trends ()

Entertainment purposes ()

Sharing personal life experiences, status and updates ()

Supporting social cause and field of interest ()

Others (Please specify) _____

Generation Z familiarity, relationship & involvement with Social Media Influencers

9. Do you follow any influencers?

a. Yes () b. No () (If your answer is no, please submit the questionnaire)

10. How do you come to know about Social media influencers? (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)

Friends () Families () Through a brand collaboration () Sponsored ads on social media () Randomly () Engaging contents () Others ()

11. How many influencers do you follow on social media platform?

Less than 5 () 5 to 20 () 20 to 50 () 50 to 100 () Above 100 ()

12. How frequently do you look at the contents of an influencer?

One time a day () Several times a day () Once a week () 2 to 5 times a week () once a month () Never ()

13. Why do you follow Social media influencers? (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)

Purchase recommendation ()

To get information on products & Brands of interest ()

To get information on new products and brands trending on social media ()

Engaging content ()

Huge follower base and renowned ()

Celebrity status ()

Attractiveness of influencer ()

Get inspiration ()

Feel connected - a sense of relatedness ()

Get latest updates on social media trends ()

Entertainment purpose ()

Expertise on particular or multiple subjects ()

Have trust & faith ()

For their philanthropic/social work ()

Others (Please Specify) _____

Generation Z attitude & perception towards product recommended by social media influencers

14. You buy products and brands endorsed by social media influencers if they are - (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)

Exciting () New & trending () Solution to a problem () Makes me feel good ()

Fashionable () others Please specify _____

15. You seek recommendation from Social media influencers for making buying decision on products and brands related to – (Kindly select multiple options if applicable)

Lifestyle () Fashion () Travel () Food () Music () Sports () Fitness () Others (please specify) _____

On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree kindly rate the following statements related to products recommended on social media platforms by influencers.

	1	2	3	4	5
16. Products endorsed on social media platforms influence your buying behaviour.					

17. Products recommended on social media platform help you to increase your awareness about product, knowledge and new trends.					
18. Products recommended on social media platform by influencers increase your confidence in the product.					
19. You buy products recommended by social media influencers.					
20. You are satisfied with the products bought through social media influencer recommendation.					
21. You refer products recommended on social media platform to your peers, family & friends.					
22. You are able to relate to products recommended by social media influencers.					
23. You follow advices on products given by influencers on social media platform.					

Traits of social media influencers that impact buying behaviour of generation Z while making purchase decision online

On a scale of 1 to 5, from strongly agree being 5 & strongly disagree being 1; rate credibility traits of social media influencers that impacts your buying behaviour.

	1	2	3	4	5
24. Knowledge: They are experts and have significant knowledge in their fields and brands they endorse.					
25. Relatability: They share similar interest, demographics, behaviour, personal accounts and experiences that build a sympathetic relationship with their target audience.					
26. Helpfulness: They remain helpful when giving guidance and practical thoughts that can convince buying decisions on a product.					

<p>27. Confidence: They demonstrate confidence while endorsing a brand through action and positive body language through eye contact, sitting straight, speak with certainty, and engage with their followers.</p>					
<p>28. Articulation: They present information clearly and fluidly, both visually and verbally giving followers a pleasant viewing experience.</p>					
<p>29. Trust: You trust social media influencers because they are competent, benevolent and honest.</p>					