

The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behavior: A Comparative Analysis of Generation Z and Millennials Life Style

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Abstract

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of marketing strategies. One of the most trending research topics in the field of marketing is the impact of social media influencers on consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) and Millennials. These two generations have grown up with social media and are heavily influenced by the content they consume on these platforms. The primary objective of this research would be to examine and compare the effects of social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of Gen Z and Millennials. This could involve analyzing data from various sources, such as social media platforms, surveys, and sales figures. Additionally, the study could explore the types of influencers that are most effective in engaging these two generations, the specific content that resonates with them, and the role that trust and authenticity play in their decision-making processes. Furthermore, the research could delve into the psychological aspects of social media influencer marketing, such as the cognitive and emotional processes that underlie the formation of consumer preferences and attitudes. By understanding these mechanisms, marketers can develop more effective strategies to target Gen Z and Millennials, which are crucial demographics in today's market.

Keywords: *Social Media Influencer, Consumer Behavior, Customer Trust, Life Style, Gen Z and Millennials*

INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media influencers has transformed the way businesses market their products and services. Influencers have become a new communication tool with the developments in social media, and their impact on consumer behavior has become a topic of interest for researchers. This research model aims to investigate the relationship between social media influencers, customer trust, lifestyle, and customer purchase intention among Gen Z and Millennials. The model is based on the impact of social media influencer's credibility dimensions, including trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise, on consumer behavior, purchase intention, and attitude towards the brand. Previous studies have shown that social media influencers have a positive and significant influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

The phenomenon of influencers did not originate with the appearance of the Internet, they were already offline which is the case of influential people such as musicians, politicians or film artists who influenced people in their environment (Spry, Pappu & Cornwell, 2009). What really brought the Internet up again was experienced influencers in the field and not just public figures who are associated with brands. These influencers are now named digital influencers (Marketeer, 2018). This boom of influencers began at a time when companies, as mentioned above, recognized them as a way of reaching more loyal and more involved audiences, thus enabling better segmentation and the ability to direct moments of communication to the intended target. According to Oregon State University in their journal entitled *A Trained Palate*, states that humans need a long time to form a concept of taste on the tongue, where the process begins in childhood. In order for a person to recognize flavors, they must be familiarized with home-cooked food from a young age, and it is important that someone like a mother, father or an adult close to the child cooks. Because food cooked by a mother for example - for a child the mother

figure is very closely associated with the symbol of love - will be directly embedded into the food. Until when they grow up, when humans taste the same food that was cooked by their mother or someone close to them, it will form a concept that is closely related to nostalgia, a sense of comfort, and most importantly provides an identity of where the child comes from. With all its uniqueness, it is only a matter of time before the changes in the culinary landscape are driven by this growing number of Generation-Z. It is a challenge for every industry, including food, to understand their mindset and consumption patterns, especially consumption patterns that in the future will be closely related to technological developments and the influence of a rapidly changing modern culture. Through presence on social networks, such as Instagram and Facebook, it has become increasingly easy to share consumers' experiences and opinions with their friends and family, as well as to share the experiences of influencers (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Previous literature reveals a lack of understanding of the mechanisms by which influencer marketing content and influencers themselves affect consumer behavior. This study intends to fill this research gap. The main objective of this study is to analyze the customer perceptions of the opinion leaders in a specific social network, namely Instagram, and to understand how those perceptions affect purchase intent. Additionally, the study will examine the role of lifestyle and personal factors, such as age and economic circumstances, in shaping consumer behavior. The findings of this research model are expected to contribute to the enrichment of literature in the field of influencer marketing and provide insights for businesses to develop targeted strategies to better connect with their customers and influence their behavior.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a quantitative approach, was the survey by questionnaire (n= 200), with the aim of measuring and understanding the correlation due to the inter-variable consequences. The sample used was respondents from gen z and millenials also. As we know, Gen Z, is the generation born in 1997-2012. They are now 8-23 years old. Meanwhile, Millennials are the generation born in 1981-1996 (currently aged 24-39 years). We conducted sampling by purposive sampling, taking into account the age of the respondents, the income of the respondents and they are active users of social media (at least Tiktok and Instagram) with a minimum number of 2000 followers. Data analysis used, using Moderated Regression Analysis and hypothesis testing.(Ruiz-Roso et al., 2020)

The social network under study, Instagram and Tiktok, appears in the context of web 2.0 and constitutes as a digital platform launched in 2010, which allows its users share photos and videos with other users through an application (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). This social network allows its users to share their daily life instantly with family and friends through the use of videos and photos (Hu *et al.*, 2014). Instagram and Tiktok were been the platform where it is possible to verify a greater number of digital influencers. Thus, it is in this social network that we can observe a greater communication of brands through opinion leaders (Sammis *et al.*, 2016). This social network has become popular as an instrument of influence marketing as this communication is done through photos or videos which help to absorb the information that is transmitted to the consumer.

Measures

The established scale items employed in this study included measures including influencer trust and buy intention on social media, e-experience, influencer trust, and source and message credibility (Esch et al., 2018); influencer trust (Cosenza et al., 2014). Initially, though, two filter questions were used to weed out people who don't use Tiktok or Instagram or who don't follow food and drink influencers.

Data Processing

IBM SPSS Statistics 24 assisted in the data processing. Out of the 220 replies received via the questionnaire, only 142 were deemed valid for the research. Malhotra and Briks (2006) reported that 110 responses were eliminated from the study due to their non-compliance with the questionnaire or lack of membership in the study's population.

Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) Analysis

To look into the connections between each variable and the independent, dependent, and moderating variables, a number of linear regression approaches were used. The interaction test and the absolute difference value test are likely to reveal high multicollinearity between the independent variables, which goes against the conventional wisdom of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The residual test is a different method designed to get around this multicollinearity.

1. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression equation's findings can be used to understand each variable in the manner described below:

- a. a. A positive constant value of 0.584 indicates that the customer's purchase intention is equal to 0.584 if the variables assessing their e-experience and social media influencer stay constant or are equal to 0.
- b. b. The social media influencer variable has a positive regression coefficient of 0.472, meaning that if the value of X1 (social media influencer) varies, customer purchase intention will vary by 0.472, providing the customer e-experience variable stays constant. As a result, a brand's social media influencer will boost customer loyalty.
- c. The customer e-experience variable has a positive regression coefficient of 0.303, meaning that a change in the value of X2 (customer e-experience) will result in a 0.303 variation in the customer's buy intention, assuming the social media influencer variable remains constant. Consequently, the better the customer experience is, the more loyal the clientele will be.

Coefficient data analysis:

1. The social media influencer variable (X_1) has a considerable impact on the customer purchase intention variable, according to the significant value of the variable (X_1), which is equivalent to $0.000 < 0.05$ (Y).
2. It is well-known that the customer e-experience variable (X_2) has a considerable impact on the customer purchase intention variable (Y), as indicated by its significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$ (Y).

2. Moderated Regression Analysis Results

Data analysis:

1. It can be deduced that influencer trust can moderate the effect of social media on consumer purchase intention, since the interaction variable between the two has a significant value of $0.001 < 0.05$.
2. Based on the significant value of $0.001 < 0.05$ for the interaction between consumer e-experience and influencer trust, it can be deduced that the latter can moderate the effect of the former on customer purchase intention.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study discovered that, out of 110 questionnaires that were issued, the majority of respondents were female based on the data gathered based on the characteristics of the respondents. Of the 56 responses, the majority were between the ages of 20 and 30. The majority of them had then graduated from high school, according to their most recent educational records,

which included 59 individuals. This clearly shows that the majority of respondents, who were discovered in numerous F&B stations and popular coffee shops, are male members of the millennial generation who have completed their high school education.

This study attempts to explore the relationship between customer satisfaction and e-experience and social media influencers in relation to consumer loyalty. In keeping with previous research Van Tonder (2016) conducted one study that examines the impact of social media influencers on customers' purchasing intentions. Customers' faith in a brand's ability to fulfill commitments, produce superior goods and services, and act morally and responsibly is what makes them social media influencers. Long-term customer retention is higher for a medical device company that has developed a strong social media influencer relationship with its clients. This is due to the fact that clients believe the business to offer dependable, secure, and efficient medical products, which can have a big influence on their health and general wellbeing.

According to Prabjit et al. (2021) and Alhaddad (2015), success in the competitive business world of today depends on building trust-based connections with clients. Based on their contacts with service providers across several touch points, consumers form a sense of loyalty toward them, according to research findings from (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Social media influencers are cultivated through the use of products by their previous customers. Customer satisfaction with a brand will increase in response to favorable interactions (Khan & Rahman, 2016; Veloutsu, 2015). A significant contributing factor to a customer's intention to buy is their online experience. A satisfying online shopping experience can raise the probability that consumers will make additional purchases from a business, refer others to it, and stick with the brand over time. For a medical device company, this could entail giving attentive customer care, supplying understandable product information, and making sure that goods are Influencers on social media are essential for positively affecting customer satisfaction (Hai & Quoc, 2022; Kuan-Yin et al., 2007).

Influencer trust is critical for medical device manufacturers in three areas: sustaining relationships with consumers to ensure their satisfaction and repeat business; identifying organizational strengths; and reaping financial gains (Aldaqah et al., 2012). Previous studies have demonstrated that the consumer e-experience has a considerable impact on influencer trust (Hasfar et al., 2020; Dobrota et al., 2012). A medical device business is more likely to develop a devoted client base when it provides excellent customer service and cultivates strong social media influencer relationships with its clients. Even if the company's products are more costly or more difficult to obtain, these clients are more likely to select them over those of rivals. They may also be more understanding of infrequent mistakes or poor service since they believe the business can generally meet their needs. Even in the case of a medical device company, cultivating social media influencers and offering a satisfying online shopping experience are essential elements in generating client purchase intention. Businesses may contribute to ensuring sustainability and long-term success by giving these elements priority.

CONCLUSION

Customers are more likely to build brand trust and have a pleasant experience when they are happy with a company's goods or services. For instance, a medical device company can enhance the customer experience and develop social media influence if it continuously produces high-quality items that satisfy customers' expectations. Consequently, there may be a rise in the desire of customers to make purchases. Consumers are more inclined to stick with a brand in the future if they trust it and have pleasant interactions with it. Influencer trust, however, can have an impact on how strong this relationship is. High levels of customer satisfaction with a business's

goods or services can increase the influence of social media influencers and online customer experiences on sales intention. Stated differently, a highly satisfied customer is more likely to stick around if they feel good about the social media influencer and had a good experience.

Conversely, customer dissatisfaction with a company's offerings might mitigate the influence of social media influencers and customer e-experience on the intention of customers to make a purchase. If a consumer is dissatisfied with the goods or services they receive, they may decide to go to a rival even if they trust the brand and have a good experience. Therefore, it's critical that medical device firms give influencer trust same weight with consumer e-experience and social media influencers. Companies can improve the relationship between these elements and consumer purchase intention by offering high-quality goods and services that satisfy customers' requirements and expectations.

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