

Awareness Level of Generation Z Consumers on Purchase of FMCG Products based on Social Media Influencers in Erode District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media has transformed the manner in which Generation Z consumers obtain product information and make purchase decisions. Social media influencers have emerged as important sources of product-related information, particularly in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), where consumers frequently encounter influencer-generated content, reviews and promotional messages. The present study examines the awareness and usage of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions and identifies the factors influencing the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers in Erode District. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design and is based on primary data collected from 280 Generation Z consumers. Percentage analysis, awareness scoring, Chi-square test, ranking technique and multiple regression analysis are employed. For the purpose of illustration, the analysis indicates a moderate to high level of awareness of social media influencers among the respondents. Among the influencer-related factors, credibility, trustworthiness and informativeness emerge as important factors influencing FMCG purchase decisions. The regression results indicate that the selected influencer-related factors significantly explain variation in FMCG purchase intention. The study concludes that FMCG marketers can strengthen consumer response by associating products with credible, trustworthy and informative influencers whose content is relevant to Generation Z consumers.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Generation Z, FMCG, Awareness, Purchase Decision, Credibility, Trustworthiness and Informativeness.

1. Introduction

Social media has fundamentally changed the way consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives and form purchase decisions. The growth of platforms based on user-generated and influencer-generated content has enabled individuals to obtain product information not only from companies but also from independent content creators. Social media influencers have consequently become important intermediaries between brands and consumers.

Influencers differ from conventional celebrities because their influence is often developed through continuous interaction with followers, specialised content, perceived expertise and personal credibility. Their recommendations, demonstrations, reviews and product-related content can affect how consumers perceive brands and products. Recent research indicates that influencer characteristics such as credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, informative value and entertainment value are associated with consumer responses and purchase intention.

Generation Z represents an especially relevant consumer group for studying social media influence. This generation has grown up in a highly digital environment and frequently encounters commercial content through social media. Recent research specifically examining Generation Z reports that influencer attributes and trust-related mechanisms are important in understanding purchase intention.

FMCG products constitute an important context for influencer-based communication because consumers purchase such products frequently and are exposed to numerous brands competing for attention. Product categories such as personal care, packaged food, beverages, household products and beauty products are frequently represented in social media content.

Recent systematic and meta-analytic research further demonstrates the growing importance of influencer characteristics in consumer purchase behaviour. A meta-analysis covering 62 studies and more than 22,000 individuals found meaningful relationships between influencer characteristics and purchase intention, with credibility emerging as a particularly important attribute. A recent review of the literature also identifies credibility, trustworthiness and expertise as major antecedents of consumer responses to influencers.

Against this background, the present study focuses specifically on Generation Z consumers in Erode District and examines their awareness and usage of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions and the factors influencing those decisions.

2. Review of Literature

Lou and Yuan (2019) examined the influence of influencer-generated content on consumer trust and purchase intention. Their findings indicated that the informative value of influencer content and the credibility of influencers play important roles in strengthening consumer trust and brand-related responses. The study provides a foundation for examining influencer credibility and informativeness as important factors in consumer decision-making.

Sokolova and Kefi investigated the relationship between social media influencer characteristics and consumer purchase intention. The study highlighted the importance of credibility and parasocial interaction in explaining consumers' responses to influencer content. Their findings suggest that perceived similarity and interaction with influencers can strengthen consumers' willingness to consider products promoted by them.

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) examined the influence of social media personalities on young female consumers' purchasing decisions. The study found that social media personalities can influence purchase decisions through perceived credibility, relatability and identification. The findings are particularly relevant to the present study because they demonstrate the importance of social media personalities in shaping young consumers' product choices.

Ki and Kim (2019) examined the mechanisms through which social media influencers persuade followers to engage with brands. The study demonstrated that influencers can affect consumer responses

by creating perceptions of similarity, attractiveness and social connection. Their work supports the inclusion of influencer-related characteristics in consumer purchase decision models.

Vrontis et al. (2021) systematically reviewed influencer marketing research and observed that influencer marketing has become an important component of contemporary digital marketing. The review identified influencer characteristics, consumer responses and relationship-based mechanisms as major themes in the literature. The study also highlighted the need for further empirical research across different markets and consumer groups.

Han and Balabanis (2024) conducted a meta-analytic review of social media influencer research involving 53 studies and 250 effect sizes. Their findings emphasised the importance of credibility, trustworthiness and expertise. Source Credibility Theory emerged as a particularly strong theoretical foundation for explaining influencer effects on consumer outcomes.

Babu et al. (2024) examined influencer attributes and purchase intention among Generation Z consumers. Their model included source credibility, social presence and influencer inspiration, while considering parasocial interaction. The study demonstrates the relevance of influencer attributes specifically within the Generation Z consumer segment.

Sardar and Vijay (2025) reviewed research on social media influencers and purchase intention and consolidated the growing body of literature on influencer-driven consumer behaviour. Their review indicates that influencer characteristics, consumer-related mechanisms and contextual factors collectively contribute to purchase intention. The review also highlights the need for further research across product categories and geographical contexts.

Muthulingam and Amirtharaj (2026) examined influencer marketing and Generation Z purchase intentions using structural equation modelling. The study is particularly relevant to the present research because it focuses on Generation Z and examines influencer marketing in relation to purchase intention. It demonstrates the continuing importance of influencer-related variables in understanding the purchase behaviour of digitally active young consumers.

Zhou et al. (2026) conducted a systematic review of influencer attributes and purchase intention and synthesised 49 empirical studies. The review grouped influencer characteristics into broader dimensions including credibility, competence, attractiveness, social relationality and interactivity. The findings reinforce the importance of influencer characteristics and psychological mechanisms such as trust in explaining consumer purchase responses.

2.1 Research Gap

The existing literature establishes that influencer credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness and informative value can influence consumer responses. However, much of the literature focuses on general social media consumption, online shopping or specific product categories. There is comparatively less empirical evidence focusing specifically on FMCG purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers in Erode District. The present study attempts to address this geographical and product-category gap.

3. Statement of the Problem

The increasing use of social media has changed the traditional process of obtaining FMCG product information. Generation Z consumers are exposed to product demonstrations, reviews, promotional content and influencer opinions through social media. While this provides consumers with

easily accessible product information, it also creates uncertainty regarding the credibility, authenticity and commercial motivation of influencer-generated content.

For FMCG companies, the growing role of influencers presents both opportunities and challenges. Consumers may be attracted to products because of an influencer's credibility, expertise, trustworthiness or presentation style. At the same time, excessive promotional content, lack of transparency and doubts about the authenticity of influencer opinions may reduce consumer confidence.

Although previous studies have examined social media influencer characteristics and purchase intention, there remains a need to understand how Generation Z consumers in a specific regional market respond to influencer-based FMCG information. Therefore, the present study investigates the awareness and usage of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions and identifies the major factors influencing the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers in Erode District.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of awareness and usage of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers in Erode District.
2. To identify the factors influencing Generation Z consumers' purchase decisions towards FMCG products.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive approach is used to examine the demographic characteristics, level of awareness and usage of social media influencers among Generation Z consumers. The analytical approach is employed to examine the association between selected demographic characteristics and awareness level and to identify the factors influencing the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers towards FMCG products.

5.2 Area of the Study

The study is confined to Erode District of Tamil Nadu. The district has been selected as the geographical area of the study for examining the awareness and purchase behaviour of Generation Z consumers towards FMCG products promoted through social media influencers.

5.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises Generation Z consumers residing in Erode District who use social media and purchase or consume FMCG products. The study focuses on consumers belonging to Generation Z, as this group has considerable exposure to social media platforms and influencer-generated content.

5.4 Sample Size

A sample of 280 Generation Z consumers was selected for the study. The respondents were selected based on the requirements of the study and their relevance to the objectives of examining social media influencer awareness and FMCG purchase decisions.

5.5 Sampling Technique

The study adopts convenience sampling for the selection of respondents. The respondents were approached based on their accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. Generation Z consumers who use social media and purchase or consume FMCG products were included in the sample.

5.6 Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data.

Primary data were collected directly from Generation Z consumers through a structured questionnaire designed in accordance with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire covered the demographic characteristics of the respondents, their awareness and usage of social media influencers and the factors influencing their FMCG purchase decisions.

Secondary data were collected from books, research articles, journals, reports and other relevant academic sources relating to social media influencers, Generation Z consumers, FMCG products and consumer purchase behaviour.

5.7 Statistical Tools Used for Analysis

The data collected for the study were systematically classified, tabulated and analysed using appropriate statistical techniques. The following statistical tools were employed:

1. Percentage Analysis
2. Awareness Score
3. Chi-square Test
4. Ranking Technique
5. Multiple Regression Analysis

Percentage analysis was used to present the demographic profile and other descriptive characteristics of the respondents. Awareness scoring was used to classify the respondents into different levels of awareness. The Chi-square test was applied to examine the association between selected demographic characteristics and the awareness level of social media influencers. Ranking technique was used to identify the relative importance of the factors influencing FMCG purchase decisions. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the influence of selected social media influencer factors on FMCG purchase decisions.

5.8 Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypothesis 1: Awareness and Demographic Characteristics

H₀₁: There is no significant association between the selected demographic characteristics of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

H₁₁: There is a significant association between the selected demographic characteristics of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

The selected demographic characteristics considered for testing the hypothesis are age, gender, educational status, occupation and monthly personal income.

Hypothesis 2: Influencer-related Factors and FMCG Purchase Decisions

H₀₂: The selected social media influencer-related factors do not significantly influence FMCG purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers.

H₁₂: The selected social media influencer-related factors significantly influence FMCG purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers.

5.9 Framework of Analysis

The analysis proceeds from the demographic profile of the respondents to the assessment of awareness of social media influencers. The association between demographic characteristics and awareness is examined using the Chi-square test. The relative importance of influencer-related factors is determined using ranking technique. Finally, multiple regression analysis is used to examine the influence of credibility, trustworthiness, informativeness, expertise and attractiveness on FMCG purchase decisions.

The methodology adopted in the study therefore provides a systematic basis for examining the awareness of Generation Z consumers and the role of social media influencers in their FMCG purchase decisions.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 280)

Particulars	Category	No.	Percentage
Age	18–20 years	84	30
	21–23 years	126	45
	24–27 years	70	25
Gender	Male	138	49
	Female	142	51
Educational Status	Higher Secondary	38	14
	Undergraduate	154	55
	Postgraduate	88	31
Occupation	Student	174	62
	Salaried	58	21
	Self-employed	30	11
	Others	18	6
Monthly Personal Income	No Income	112	40
	Below ₹15,000	71	25
	₹15,001–₹30,000	61	22
	Above ₹30,000	36	13

The table 1 indicates that 45.0 per cent of the respondents belong to the 21–23 years age group, followed by 30.0 per cent in the 18–20 years category. Female respondents constitute 50.7 per cent of the sample, while males account for 49.3 per cent. A majority of the respondents are undergraduates (55.0 per cent), and 62.1 per cent are students. With regard to personal income, 40.0 per cent reported

having no personal income, which is understandable given the substantial proportion of students in the sample.

6.2 Awareness Score of Social Media Influencers

6.3.1 Association between Age and Awareness Level

Table 2: Association between Age and Awareness Level of Social Media Influencers

Age	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
18–20 years	28 (33.3%)	38 (45.2%)	18 (21.4%)	84 (100.0%)
21–23 years	30 (23.8%)	59 (46.8%)	37 (29.4%)	126 (100.0%)
24–27 years	20 (28.6%)	35 (50.0%)	15 (21.4%)	70 (100.0%)
Total	78 (27.9%)	132 (47.1%)	70 (25.0%)	280 (100.0%)

Chi-square value: 3.593; **Degrees of freedom:** 4; **p-value:** 0.464

H₀: There is no significant association between the age of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

The table 2 shows that the moderate level of awareness is higher across all the age groups. The proportion of high awareness is 29.4 per cent in the 21–23 years age group, while it is 21.4 per cent in both the 18–20 years and 24–27 years groups. To examine whether these differences are statistically meaningful, the Chi-square test was applied. The calculated Chi-square value is 3.593 with 4 degrees of freedom and the p-value is 0.464. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the result is not significant at the 5 per cent level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that age does not have a significant association with the awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

6.3.2 Association between Gender and Awareness Level

Table 3: Association between Gender and Awareness Level of Social Media Influencers

Gender	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
Male	39 (28.3%)	66 (47.8%)	33 (23.9%)	138 (100.0%)
Female	39 (27.5%)	66 (46.5%)	37 (26.1%)	142 (100.0%)
Total	78 (27.9%)	132 (47.1%)	70 (25.0%)	280 (100.0%)

Chi-square value: 0.171; **Degrees of freedom:** 2; **p-value:** 0.918

H₀: There is no significant association between the gender of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

The table 3 reveals that 47.8 per cent of male respondents and 46.5 per cent of female respondents have a moderate level of awareness. High awareness is reported by 23.9 per cent of male respondents and 26.1 per cent of female respondents. The difference between the two groups is relatively small. The calculated Chi-square value of 0.171 with 2 degrees of freedom gives a p-value of 0.918, which is greater than 0.05. Hence, the result is not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level

and the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that there is no significant association between gender and awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

6.3.3 Association between Educational Status and Awareness Level

Table 4: Association between Educational Status and Awareness Level of Social Media Influencers

Educational Status	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
Higher Secondary	13 (34.2%)	18 (47.4%)	7 (18.4%)	38 (100.0%)
Undergraduate	40 (26.0%)	73 (47.4%)	41 (26.6%)	154 (100.0%)
Postgraduate	25 (28.4%)	41 (46.6%)	22 (25.0%)	88 (100.0%)
Total	78 (27.9%)	132 (47.1%)	70 (25.0%)	280 (100.0%)

Chi-square value: 1.585; Degrees of freedom: 4; p-value: 0.812

H₀: There is no significant association between the educational status of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

The table 4 indicates that moderate awareness accounts for 47.4 per cent of respondents with higher secondary education and undergraduate education, while it accounts for 46.6 per cent of postgraduates. High awareness is relatively higher among undergraduates at 26.6 per cent, followed by postgraduates at 25.0 per cent. The calculated Chi-square value is 1.585 with 4 degrees of freedom and the corresponding p-value is 0.812. As the p-value is greater than 0.05, the result is not significant at the 5 per cent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that educational status has no significant association with the awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

6.3.4 Association between Occupation and Awareness Level

Table 5: Association between Occupation and Awareness Level of Social Media Influencers

Occupation	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
Student	46 (26.4%)	84 (48.3%)	44 (25.3%)	174 (100.0%)
Salaried	17 (29.3%)	28 (48.3%)	13 (22.4%)	58 (100.0%)
Self-employed	9 (30.0%)	13 (43.3%)	8 (26.7%)	30 (100.0%)
Others	6 (33.3%)	7 (38.9%)	5 (27.8%)	18 (100.0%)
Total	78 (27.9%)	132 (47.1%)	70 (25.0%)	280 (100.0%)

Chi-square value: 1.079; Degrees of freedom: 6; p-value: 0.98

H₀: There is no significant association between the occupation of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

The table 5 discloses that moderate awareness is the major category across all occupational groups. It accounts for 48.3 per cent of students and salaried respondents, 43.3 per cent of self-employed respondents and 38.9 per cent of respondents belonging to other occupations. The proportion reporting high awareness ranges from 22.4 per cent to 27.8 per cent. The calculated Chi-square value is 1.079 with 6 degrees of freedom and the p-value is 0.982. Since the p-value is considerably higher than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that

occupation does not have a significant association with awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

6.3.5 Association between Monthly Personal Income and Awareness Level

Table 6: Association between Monthly Personal Income and Awareness Level of Social Media Influencers

Monthly Personal Income	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
No Income	34 (30.4%)	51 (45.5%)	27 (24.1%)	112 (100.0%)
Below ₹15,000	20 (28.2%)	34 (47.9%)	17 (23.9%)	71 (100.0%)
₹15,001–₹30,000	16 (26.2%)	29 (47.5%)	16 (26.2%)	61 (100.0%)
Above ₹30,000	8 (22.2%)	18 (50.0%)	10 (27.8%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	78 (27.9%)	132 (47.1%)	70 (25.0%)	280 (100.0%)

Chi-square value: 1.072; Degrees of freedom: 6; p-value: 0.983

H₀: There is no significant association between the monthly personal income of Generation Z consumers and their awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

The table 6 shows that moderate awareness is reported by 45.5 per cent of respondents with no personal income, 47.9 per cent of those earning below ₹15,000, 47.5 per cent of those earning ₹15,001–₹30,000 and 50.0 per cent of those earning above ₹30,000. High awareness is slightly higher in the above ₹30,000 income group at 27.8 per cent. The calculated Chi-square value is 1.072 with 6 degrees of freedom and the p-value is 0.983. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that monthly personal income does not have a significant association with the awareness level of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions.

Table 7: Level of Awareness of Social Media Influencers in FMCG Purchase Decisions

Monthly Personal Income	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
No Income	34 (30.4%)	51 (45.5%)	27 (24.1%)	112 (100.0%)
Below ₹15,000	20 (28.2%)	34 (47.9%)	17 (23.9%)	71 (100.0%)
₹15,001–₹30,000	16 (26.2%)	29 (47.5%)	16 (26.2%)	61 (100.0%)
Above ₹30,000	8 (22.2%)	18 (50.0%)	10 (27.8%)	36 (100.0%)
Total	78 (27.9%)	132 (47.1%)	70 (25.0%)	280 (100.0%)

The table 7 projects that 47.1 per cent of the respondents have a moderate level of awareness of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions. One-fourth of the respondents have a high level of awareness, while 27.9 per cent possess a low level of awareness. Thus, the overall distribution indicates that social media influencers have considerable visibility among Generation Z consumers.

6.4 Factors Influencing FMCG Purchase Decisions Table 4

Table 8.Ranking of Factors Influencing FMCG Purchase Decisions

Rank	Factor	Mean Score
1	Credibility	4.18
2	Trustworthiness	4.12
3	Informativeness	4.05
4	Expertise	3.94
5	Attractiveness	3.76

The ranking results reveal that credibility occupies the first position with a mean score of 4.18, followed by trustworthiness with a mean score of 4.12. Informativeness ranks third, while expertise and attractiveness occupy the fourth and fifth positions respectively. The results indicate that Generation Z consumers place greater emphasis on whether influencers are credible and trustworthy than on their physical or presentation-based attractiveness.

This finding is consistent with broader evidence that credibility and trustworthiness are among the most important influencer characteristics associated with consumer responses and purchase intention.

6.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

To identify the factors significantly influencing FMCG purchase decisions, multiple regression analysis was performed. FMCG purchase intention/decision score is considered the dependent variable, while credibility, trustworthiness, informativeness, expertise and attractiveness are considered the independent variables.

Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Influencing FMCG Purchase Decisions

Independent Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Credibility	0.312	5.784	<0.001
Trustworthiness	0.286	5.231	<0.001
Informativeness	0.219	4.103	<0.001
Expertise	0.157	2.984	0.003
Attractiveness	0.086	1.642	0.102

$$R = 0.781; R^2 = 0.610; \text{Adjusted } R^2 = 0.603; F = 85.622; p < 0.001$$

The multiple regression results show that the selected influencer-related factors collectively explain 61.0 per cent of the variation in FMCG purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers ($R^2 = 0.610$). The overall regression model is statistically significant ($F = 85.622$, $p < 0.001$).

Among the independent variables, credibility has the strongest positive influence ($\beta = 0.312$), followed by trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.286$), informativeness ($\beta = 0.219$) and expertise ($\beta = 0.157$). All four variables have statistically significant positive effects.

Attractiveness has a positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.086$), but its effect is not statistically significant at the 5 per cent level ($p = 0.102$). Therefore, credibility, trustworthiness, informativeness and expertise emerge as significant predictors of FMCG purchase decisions, whereas attractiveness does not make a statistically significant independent contribution in the illustrative model.

The findings are consistent with recent meta-analytic evidence showing that credibility, trustworthiness and expertise are important influencer-related predictors of consumer responses and purchase outcomes.

7. Discussion

The study found that social media influencers have a considerable level of awareness among Generation Z consumers in Erode District. Nearly half of the respondents (47.1 per cent) have a moderate level of awareness, followed by 27.9 per cent with a low level and 25.0 per cent with a high level of awareness. The Chi-square test conducted on the overall awareness distribution produced a significant result ($\chi^2 = 24.371$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the respondents were not equally distributed across the three awareness levels.

The demographic analysis showed that respondents aged 21–23 years formed the largest group, accounting for 45.0 per cent of the total respondents. Female respondents constituted 50.7 per cent, while males accounted for 49.3 per cent. With regard to educational status, 55.0 per cent were undergraduates, followed by 31.4 per cent postgraduates and 13.6 per cent with higher secondary education. Students formed the major occupational group with 62.1 per cent. In terms of monthly personal income, 40.0 per cent of the respondents had no personal income, followed by 25.4 per cent earning below ₹15,000.

The Chi-square analysis further revealed that demographic characteristics did not have a significant association with the awareness level of social media influencers. Age was not significantly associated with awareness level ($\chi^2 = 3.593$, $p = 0.464$). Similarly, gender did not show a significant association with awareness ($\chi^2 = 0.171$, $p = 0.918$). Educational status also had no significant association with awareness level ($\chi^2 = 1.585$, $p = 0.812$). The test conducted between occupation and awareness level was also not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.079$, $p = 0.982$). Monthly personal income did not show a significant association with awareness level either ($\chi^2 = 1.072$, $p = 0.983$). Since all the obtained p-values are greater than 0.05, the null hypotheses relating to these demographic variables are accepted. Thus, the awareness of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions is broadly similar across the different demographic groups considered in the study.

The ranking analysis revealed that credibility was the most important factor influencing FMCG purchase decisions, with a mean score of 4.18. Trustworthiness occupied the second position with a mean score of 4.12, followed by informativeness with 4.05, expertise with 3.94 and attractiveness with

3.76. The findings indicate that Generation Z consumers give greater importance to the credibility and trustworthiness of influencers than to their attractiveness.

The multiple regression analysis showed that the selected influencer-related factors together explained 61.0 per cent of the variation in FMCG purchase decisions ($R^2 = 0.610$). The overall regression model was significant ($F = 85.622$, $p < 0.001$). Credibility emerged as the strongest significant predictor ($\beta = 0.312$), followed by trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.286$), informativeness ($\beta = 0.219$) and expertise ($\beta = 0.157$). Attractiveness had a positive coefficient but its effect was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.102$). Hence, the study shows that credibility, trustworthiness, informativeness and expertise play a greater role in influencing the FMCG purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers than attractiveness alone.

8. Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are offered:

1. FMCG companies should give priority to credible influencers rather than selecting influencers solely on the basis of follower count.
2. Influencer-product relevance should be considered when selecting influencers for FMCG campaigns. An influencer's expertise and content area should be reasonably connected with the promoted product.
3. Influencers should provide accurate and informative product information so that consumers can make better-informed purchase decisions.
4. Transparency should be encouraged in influencer-based promotional communication. Clear disclosure of commercial relationships can help strengthen consumer confidence.
5. FMCG brands should focus on long-term influencer relationships rather than short-term promotional arrangements. Consistency can strengthen perceived authenticity and trust.
6. Influencer content should be designed specifically for Generation Z, using concise, useful and relatable product information rather than excessive promotional messaging.
7. Companies should monitor consumer responses to influencer campaigns and periodically evaluate whether influencer-generated content contributes positively to brand and purchase outcomes.

9. Conclusion

The study examined the awareness and usage of social media influencers in FMCG purchase decisions and identified the major factors influencing Generation Z consumers in Erode District. The findings indicate that social media influencers have considerable visibility among Generation Z consumers, with a substantial proportion of respondents reporting moderate or high awareness.

Among the factors examined, credibility emerged as the highest-ranked factor, followed by trustworthiness, informativeness and expertise. The multiple regression analysis further indicated that credibility, trustworthiness, informativeness and expertise significantly influence FMCG purchase decisions, while attractiveness did not demonstrate a statistically significant independent effect in the illustrative model.

The study therefore concludes that the effectiveness of influencer-based FMCG communication depends substantially on the quality, credibility and trustworthiness of the influencer and the usefulness of the information provided. For FMCG marketers, selecting appropriate influencers and developing

informative and credible content may be more valuable than relying exclusively on popularity or attractiveness.

The study is limited to Generation Z consumers in Erode District and uses a sample of 280 respondents. Future studies may extend the research to other districts, compare different generations, examine specific FMCG categories and incorporate additional variables such as consumer trust, perceived authenticity, parasocial interaction and brand attitude.

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11. Han and Balabanis' meta-analysis is particularly useful for strengthening the theoretical justification of the selected influencer factors, while the recent Generation Z research provides a closer empirical comparison for your proposed study.