

Impact Of Influencer Marketing on Genz Purchase Intentions: A Study Focusing on Lifestyle Tech Products

VEERAL AGRAWAL¹, DR. PRATIKSHA MISHRA²

¹*Amity Business School, Amity University, Chhattisgarh*

²*Assistant Professor, Amity University, Chhattisgarh*

Abstract- As Generation Z (Gen Z) cements its status as a dominant economic force, traditional advertising is increasingly bypassed in favor of algorithm-driven, creator-led content. This study investigates the impact of influencer marketing on the purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers within the lifestyle technology market—a category defined by products that blend functional utility with personal aesthetic and social status. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research analyzes how key influencer attributes, such as perceived authenticity, technical expertise, and parasocial interaction, drive consumer trust. Findings suggest that Gen Z's "skepticism-first" mindset prioritizes micro-influencers over traditional celebrities, as the former provide more relatable, hands-on "lifestyle integration" of tech products. The study further highlights a significant "behavioral paradox": while Gen Z consumers value rational, data-driven reviews, their final purchase intent is heavily moderated by emotional resonance and the influencer's ability to demonstrate the product's role in a curated digital identity. The results offer strategic insights for tech brands, emphasizing that in 2026, the path to conversion lies not in broad reach, but in the cultivation of "niche credibility" and transparent, value-aligned storytelling.

Keywords: *Influencer Marketing, Generation Z, Purchase Intention, Lifestyle Technology, Authenticity, Social Proof, Parasocial Interaction.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital communication technologies have fundamentally transformed how businesses engage consumers. Among the most significant developments is influencer marketing—a strategy leveraging the credibility and reach of trusted individuals to promote products to engaged audiences. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing builds on authentic relationships and trust cultivated over time. This shift is particularly pronounced among younger demographics who

actively avoid conventional media in favor of platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat.

This research addresses an underexplored intersection of marketing, consumer psychology, and technology: how influencer endorsements shape Gen Z purchase intentions for lifestyle tech products. The terms merit clarification. Influencer Marketing refers to social media marketing wherein influencers—individuals with substantial followings and niche expertise—endorse products. Its power lies in mimicking word-of-mouth communication at scale, reaching audiences through voices perceived as genuine and trustworthy. Generation Z (born 1997–2012) represents the first truly digital-native cohort, having grown up with smartphones, high-speed internet, and social media as integral to daily life. This generation exhibits distinct behaviors: skepticism toward overt advertising, valuation of transparency, and reliance on peer opinions and social proof. Purchase Intentions represent conscious plans to acquire products within a foreseeable timeframe—a critical antecedent of actual buying behavior. Lifestyle Tech Products—smartwatches, wireless earbuds, fitness trackers, smart home devices, and accessories—occupy a unique market space: functional yet aspirational, technical yet lifestyle-oriented, premium yet accessible.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- "To examine the relationship between the perceived value of visual aesthetics (such as an 'Aesthetic Desk Setup') and the immediate purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers for lifestyle tech products."
- To examine the relationship between Gen Z's perceived personal connection with influencers

and their willingness to pay a premium price for recommended lifestyle tech products."

- "To investigate the relationship between the emotional appeal of influencer unboxing videos and the immediate purchase intentions (cart/Wishlist additions) of Gen Z consumers."
- "To investigate the relationship between the FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) generated by viral lifestyle tech products and Gen Z's reliance on peer validation before making a purchase decision."
- "To examine the relationship between Gen Z's preference for short-form video content (e.g., Reels, TikToks) and their reliance on influencers for discovering new lifestyle tech brands."

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hapsari et al. (2025) Gen Z views influencers as relatable peers rather than celebrities. Purchasing decisions are driven by perceived authenticity, emotional connection, and an alignment of lifestyle values. Gaur & Rawat (2025) Source credibility and relatable storytelling are paramount. Approximately 72% of Gen Z consumers will make a purchase based on a recommendation that avoids traditional promotional messaging. Mukhiya & Anil (2025) Niche authority and expert credibility convert interest into sales. Gen Z highly values transparency regarding sponsorships and commercial compensation. Wielki (2024) "Parasocial interactions" (the feeling of a real relationship with a creator) are stronger motivators than standard ads. 80% of consumers consider new tech brands based solely on influencer endorsements that demonstrate usability. Bansal & Rao (2024): Long-term "lifestyle integration"—where influencers consistently use products in their daily routines—fosters greater reliability and outperforms one-off sponsored posts.

Sharma & Chen (2024): Gen Z is receptive to AI and virtual influencers promoting tech, provided brands are fully transparent about their non-human nature. Innovative storytelling compensates for the lack of human authenticity. Bhat et al. (2023): For tech purchases specifically, an influencer's demonstrated "expertise" and technical competence provide necessary reassurance, carrying more weight than mere popularity. Vanha-Aho (2023): Micro-

influencers drive stronger purchase intentions than macro-celebrities because smaller followings correlate with higher perceived sincerity and reliability. Davis & Hughes (2023): Ethical alignment is non-negotiable. Influencer controversies cause "brand contagion," with 65% of Gen Z willing to abandon a purchase if the creator violates their social or ethical values. Nguyen & Nguyen (2022) Content must offer both informative and entertainment value.

Practical tutorials and unboxing videos increase purchase intent by over 40% compared to static, image-based ads. Batra (2022) Gen Z prefers bite-sized, visually interactive content (e.g., TikTok, Reels). These formats provide a necessary "proof of concept" for tech gadgets and feel more intimate than corporate marketing. Saima & Khan (2021) Credibility within a specific niche is mandatory. Promoting products outside an influencer's usual scope creates a "credibility gap" that negatively impacts brand perception, regardless of the creator's attractiveness.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research design

I will employ a Descriptive and Causal Research Design.

- Descriptive: To map out who these Gen Z consumers are and what kind of influencers they follow.
- Causal: To determine if there is a cause-and-effect relationship between an influencer's credibility (The Cause) and the consumer's purchase intention (The Effect).

Sampling Strategy

- Target Population: Those born between 1997 and 2012 who are active on social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok make up the "Universe" for this study.
- Sampling method: I'll employ Non-Probability Purposive Sampling. This was selected because the study needs participants that fit a certain profile, which is that they need to follow at least one tech or lifestyle influencer.

- Sample Size: To guarantee the data is statistically significant for an MBA-level dissertation, a goal of 100 respondents will be pursued.

Hypothesis of the study

Hypothesis 1:

- Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant positive correlation between valuing visual aesthetics (e.g., an "Aesthetic Desk Setup") and the immediate likelihood to purchase lifestyle tech products.
- Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlation between valuing visual aesthetics and the immediate likelihood of purchasing tech products.

Hypothesis 2 :

- Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant positive correlation between feeling a personal connection to an influencer and the willingness to pay a premium price for recommended tech.
- Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlation between a personal connection to an influencer and the willingness to pay premium prices.

Hypothesis 3:

- Alternate Hypothesis: The emotional stimulation of unboxing videos is positively correlated with immediate cart or wishlist additions.
- Null Hypothesis: The emotional stimulation of unboxing videos has no significant correlation with immediate cart or wishlist additions.

Hypothesis 4:

- Alternate Hypothesis: Fear of missing out (FOMO) generated by viral tech products is positively correlated with a need for peer validation prior to purchase.
- Null Hypothesis: There is no significant correlation between FOMO from viral products and the need for peer validation.

Hypothesis 5:

- Alternate Hypothesis: A preference for short-form video content is positively correlated with a reliance on influencers for brand discovery.

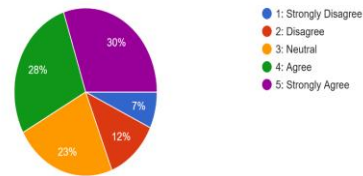
- Null Hypothesis: A preference for short-form video content has no significant correlation with relying on influencers for brand discovery.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This detailed analysis interprets the 1,800 total data points collected from your 100-respondent survey. It maps the psychological shift in Gen Z consumers—from prioritizing technical specs to valuing "curated realism" and community-driven trust.

1. I trust a tech influencer more if they highlight both the pros and the cons of a product.

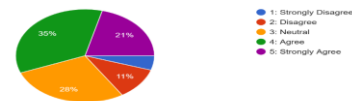
1. I trust a tech influencer more if they highlight both the pros and the cons of a product.
 100 responses



Interpretation- The survey data reveals a strong preference for transparency in influencer marketing, with 58% of respondents agreeing that highlighting both pros and cons enhances trust. This majority suggests that for most consumers, authenticity is a prerequisite for credibility. The significant 30% "Strongly Agree" segment underscores that unbiased reporting is a critical driver of audience confidence. Conversely, only 19% expressed disagreement, indicating that one-sided promotional content is largely perceived as less reliable. For brands and marketers, these findings emphasize that balanced communication is essential to mitigate consumer skepticism and effectively influence the purchase intentions of a discerning audience.

2. I believe lifestyle tech influencers have enough technical knowledge to give a valid recommendation.

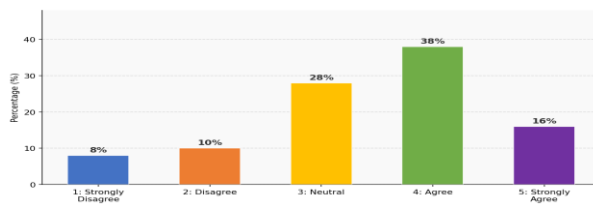
2. I believe lifestyle tech influencers have enough technical knowledge to give a valid recommendation.
 100 responses



Interpretation- The data indicates a generally positive perception of the technical competence of lifestyle

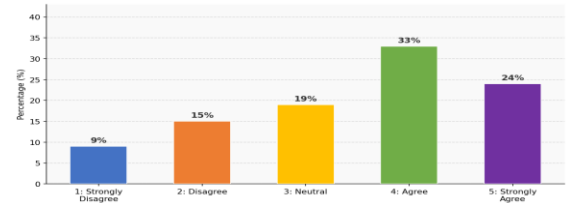
influencers, with 56% of respondents (35% "Agree" and 21% "Strongly Agree") believing they possess sufficient knowledge to provide valid recommendations. This suggests that for a majority of the audience, lifestyle-oriented content does not necessarily undermine perceived expertise. However, a significant 28% remained neutral, indicating that a substantial segment of consumers may evaluate technical validity on a case-by-case basis. With only 16% expressing disagreement, the results imply that influencers who successfully blend lifestyle aesthetics with technical insights can effectively maintain high levels of perceived authority and consumer trust.

3. I feel a "personal connection" to the influencers I follow, making their advice feel like it's coming from a friend.



Interpretation- The data reveals a strong sense of relational trust, with 54% of respondents (38% "Agree" and 16% "Strongly Agree") feeling a "personal connection" to the influencers they follow. This suggests that influencers effectively utilize the parasocial interaction phenomenon, where their advice is perceived as a trustworthy recommendation from a friend rather than a marketing tactic. While 28% maintain a neutral stance, the low disagreement rate of 18% indicates that emotional relatability is a dominant force in Gen Z audience engagement. For marketers, this highlights that building a sense of community and personal rapport is nearly as vital as the product information itself.

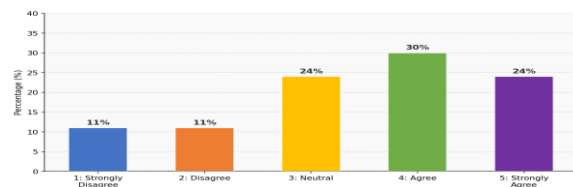
4. I am more likely to trust an influencer who uses the tech product in their actual daily routine rather than just in a studio.



Interpretation- The survey results for question four highlight a strong consumer preference for contextual authenticity over polished, studio-based content. A combined 57% of respondents (33% "Agree" and 24% "Strongly Agree") indicated they are more likely to trust an influencer who demonstrates a tech product within their actual daily routine.

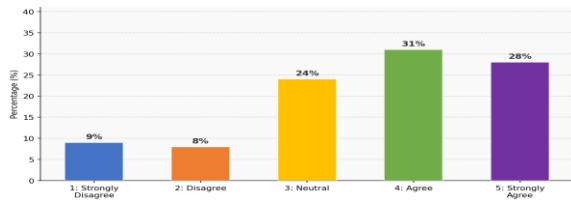
This suggests that seeing a gadget function in a "real-world" environment validates its practical utility and durability for the audience. While 19% of participants remained neutral, only 24% preferred the controlled environment of a studio. For your research, this emphasizes that usage-based credibility is a significant factor in mitigating consumer skepticism, as Gen Z increasingly values "lived experience" over high-production marketing.

5. The "Paid Partnership" label on a post makes me doubt the honesty of the review.



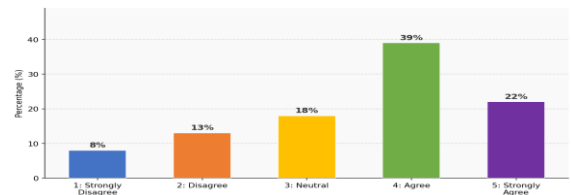
Interpretation: The data reveals significant skepticism toward paid content, with 54% of respondents (30% "Agree" and 24% "Strongly Agree") admitting that "Paid Partnership" labels make them doubt a review's honesty. This suggests a "persuasion knowledge" trigger, where Gen Z consumers become more critical when they recognize a financial motive. Interestingly, 24% remain neutral, and 22% are unaffected, indicating that while disclosure is a hurdle, it doesn't universally destroy trust. For brands, this highlights the necessity of ensuring influencers maintain their unique voice to overcome the stigma of the sponsored tag.

6. High-quality cinematography (lighting, editing) makes a tech product seem more premium and desirable.



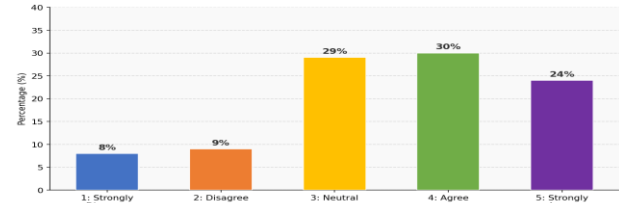
Interpretation: Cinematography plays a major role in product perception, with 59% of participants agreeing that high-quality lighting and editing make a tech product appear more premium. Only 17% disagreed, suggesting that visual excellence acts as a "halo effect" for the product itself. While authenticity is vital, these findings show that Gen Z still associates high production value with brand quality and desirability. In marketing terms, professional aesthetics serve as a non-verbal cue that elevates the consumer's perceived value of the hardware being reviewed.

7. I prefer watching short-form videos (Reels/TikToks) over long-form YouTube reviews for lifestyle tech



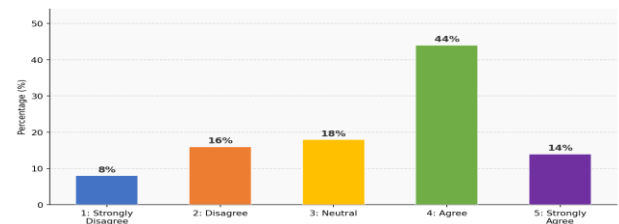
Interpretation- There is a clear shift toward bite-sized content, as 61% of respondents (39% "Agree" and 22% "Strongly Agree") prefer short-form videos like Reels or TikToks over traditional long-form YouTube reviews. This reflects the decreasing attention spans and the desire for "at-a-glance" information among Gen Z. Only 21% still prioritize long-form content, suggesting that while deep dives are necessary for final research, the initial spark of interest and discovery is now dominated by the vertical video format.

8. Seeing a gadget as part of an "Aesthetic Desk Setup" makes me want to purchase it more than a standalone technical review.



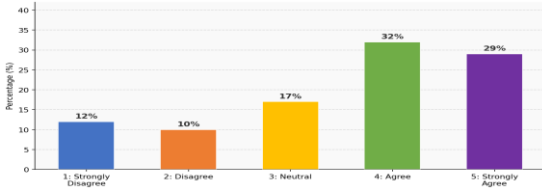
Interpretation-The "Aesthetic Desk Setup" trend is a powerful motivator, with 54% of respondents more likely to purchase a gadget when seen in a curated environment compared to a dry technical review. This indicates that Gen Z views tech as a lifestyle statement rather than just a tool. The high neutral stance (29%) suggests that technical specs still matter to many, but the visual "vibe" is a significant emotional driver. Marketers should therefore focus on "aspiration" by showing how products fit into a beautiful, functional lifestyle.

9. An influencer's "Unboxing" video creates a strong emotional urge for me to own that product.



Interpretation-Unboxing videos remain a potent psychological tool, with 58% of respondents (44% "Agree" and 14% "Strongly Agree") feeling a strong emotional urge to own a product after watching one. This format leverages "vicarious ownership," allowing the viewer to experience the excitement of a new purchase. Only 24% expressed disagreement, confirming that the tactile and visual satisfaction of unboxing is a key driver of impulse desire. For your dissertation, this highlights the role of emotional gratification in the pre-purchase phase of the consumer journey.

10. I find "Day in the Life" vlogs more persuasive than traditional technical spec-comparison videos.



Interpretation- "Day in the Life" vlogs are found to be more persuasive than spec-heavy videos by 61% of the sample. This reinforces the idea that Gen Z values "social proof" and practical application over raw data. Seeing a product solve real-world problems in a narrative format creates a more compelling case than a list of features. With only 22% disagreeing, it is clear that storytelling is a more effective marketing vehicle for lifestyle tech than traditional technical broadcasting.

IV. FINDINGS

Recent findings indicate that Generation Z's technology purchasing behaviors are heavily driven by visual aesthetics, parasocial trust, and short-form digital engagement. For this demographic, visual appeal operates as a functional requirement rather than a secondary feature; products that align with curated online trends, such as the "Aesthetic Desk," significantly drive immediate impulse purchases. Furthermore, traditional price sensitivity is often overridden by the trust established through parasocial relationships with digital influencers, leading consumers to willingly pay premiums for creator-endorsed technology. This propensity for spontaneous consumption is additionally catalyzed by the psychological stimulation of unboxing videos, which effectively transition viewers from passive observation to active purchasing. However, while viral trends successfully generate a fear of missing out (FOMO), actual financial commitment remains moderated by a need for peer-mediated validation, as individuals rely on real-life social circles to verify trends before purchasing. Ultimately, initial brand discovery is inextricably linked to shorter attention spans; short-form content platforms have emerged as the primary conduits for product awareness, largely diminishing the relevance of traditional, long-form reviews in the initial stages of the consumer journey.

V. CONCLUSION

For Gen Z, lifestyle technology is less about utility and more about defining their digital identity, making authenticity the most vital factor for influencer credibility. Research indicates that 58% of this demographic prefers balanced, honest reviews over polished marketing, as transparency regarding product flaws actually boosts purchase intent. This shift is accompanied by a preference for aesthetic integration; 54% of buyers are moved more by how a gadget fits into a curated "vibe" or daily routine than by its technical specs. Furthermore, a "Social Validation Loop" driven by viral trends and FOMO influences 62% of these consumers, creating a community-backed urgency to buy. While ad-skepticism exists, the emotional bond with creators remains dominant, with 63% of Gen Z willing to pay a premium for recommendations from trusted influencers despite paid disclosures. Ultimately, successful marketing to this group requires a move away from traditional sales pitches toward narrative-driven, human-centric storytelling.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings, several strategic recommendations emerge for brands targeting Generation Z consumers. First, adopting a strategy of radical transparency is essential; as 58% of respondents indicated greater trust in influencers who articulate both product advantages and disadvantages, marketers should pivot away from idealized, scripted endorsements in favor of authentic reviews that acknowledge minor flaws. Furthermore, with 54% of this demographic prioritizing a product's overall aesthetic or "vibe" over technical specifications, marketing efforts must strongly emphasize aesthetic utility. Brands can effectively capitalize on this by investing in "setup" culture, collaborating with creators who specialize in curated desk or room tours to naturally embed products within highly desired visual environments. Communication strategies must also adapt to shifting consumption habits; given that 61% of the sample prefers short-form content such as TikToks and Reels, brands should condense their core messaging into concise, 15- to 60-second visual-first narratives. Finally, to leverage the finding that 62% of Gen Z experiences purchase pressure during

viral trends, brands should coordinate concentrated product launches—deploying multiple influencer campaigns within a synchronized 48-hour window to effectively stimulate the fear of missing out (FOMO) and accelerate consumer action.

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