



## Impact of influencer marketing on consumer buying behaviour of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products

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### Abstract

In today's time, the brands have started to consider influencer marketing as a tool to promote their products, particularly in the beauty and cosmetic sector. Social media usage has drastically grown over the years where influencers are a key part of the consumer platform awareness, as well as their opinion and buying habits. This study compares influence of influencer marketing on consumer buying behaviour of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products in Delhi NCR. For more information, 240 young women were recruited with active participation as beauty influencers. The findings from the collected data were analysed using statistical analysis which included the Correlation Test and Regression Analysis and it was found that almost 69% of these consumers let influencers to make their final buying decision. SmartPLS-based PLS-SEM was further employed to validate the measurement and structural models, confirming construct reliability, validity, and that the three influencer factors explain 61.2% of the variance in Purchase Intention. While being authentic and a "good fit" for a brand is important, the results prove that content engagement like watching reels, liking, and sharing is the biggest factor that actually pushes someone to hit the "buy" button. The results are also in parallel with Sustainable Development Goal 12 that is Responsible Consumption, which focuses on the role of authentic influencer marketing to make informed and conscious purchase decisions. For brands to truly grow, businesses need to build long-term, honest partnerships with creators who know how to keep their audience's attention.

**Keywords:** Influencer marketing, Generation Z, consumer buying behaviour, cosmetic products, purchase intention

### Introduction

In today's world we can observe an increasing wave of growth in the internet and social media, the way in which companies market their products has completely changed. Unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing has become extremely popular as it is cheaper, quick and helps the brand in reaching the right audience smoothly. There are different forms of digital marketing out of which there is one most important and expanding form in today's time that is influencer marketing. People often believe in influencers because they appear more reliable and genuine than advertisements.

### Growth of Influencer Marketing in India

In India, influencer marketing has grown rapidly, with over 40.6 lakh influencers representing a 322% increase since 2020 [12]. The industry is valued at approximately ₹3,600 crore and is projected to grow by 25% in 2025. Notably, 69% of consumers report that influencers influence their final purchase decisions, underscoring the commercial relevance of this study.

### Literature Review

#### 1. Influencer Traits

The cosmopolitan industry has been consistently found to produce the highest score for the factors of "credibility", "trustworthy" and "authentic" when it comes to the influencers' purchases intention (Pick, 2020; Hassan *et al.*, 2021; Vinish, 2025) [14, 26, 37]. The impact of physical attraction on engagement is most pronounced on platforms with a strong visual orientation, but is also a key factor when trust and expertise are key factors (Ta *et al.*, 2025). Post-pandemic research validates that influencer-product

alignment and regular publication create consumer trust even better than the number of followers (Khurshid *et al.*, 2024) [20].

#### 2. Social Media Impact

##### Social media impact.

Social media plays a large role in cosmetic consumption trends which in turn influence consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. From a perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior we see that which influencers are followed has great impact on purchase intent and buying behavior especially among female consumers (Khan *et al.*, 2024) [19]. Also we see that which content is put out and how a brand presents itself on a consistent basis plays a large role in building brand trust and customer satisfaction (Kumar Priti, 2025) [21] which in turn uses social media as a platform for both info and influence (Granata, 2021) [4].

##### Purchase Intention

Purchase of cosmetic products is very much a result of brand image, influencer credibility, and consumer attitudes which Gen Z in particular is very much a part of (Castillo *et al.*, 2022; Abraham *et al.*, 2022) [1]. Though awareness may not lead to a purchase, we see that perceived value and lifestyle alignment which in turn may bridge that gap (Shukla, 2023) [30]. The growth of social commerce has also accelerated impulse buying when influencer promotions closely align with consumer lifestyle (Pandiangan *et al.*, 2024) [24].

##### Parasocial and Emotional Influence

Parasocial relationships which is a one-way emotional connection between fans and influencers see to it that trust

and purchase intent goes up which is especially the case when the influencers put forth a relatable persona as opposed to a promotion (Shariffadeen Manaf, 2020; Venciute *et al.*, 2023) [28, 35]. Also, it is noted that organic or non-sponsored posts which project authenticity do in fact play a large role in which cosmetic products do get purchased (Verplancke Gelati, 2022) [36].

**Regional-Specific Studies**

Regional studies confirm that Gen Z responds more strongly to influencer recommendations than Millennials, particularly on visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok (Räsänen, 2022; Tavdishvili & Maglakelidze, 2024) [34]. Trust and authenticity consistently drive purchase intention across geographies, though influencer marketing tends to be more effective for awareness creation than direct purchase conversion in developed markets (Jide, 2023; Nabila & Saputera, 2025) [18, 23].

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on two related theoretical approaches. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, (1991) [2]) suggests that behaviour is determined by attitudes, norms and perceived behavioural control, and for Gen Z women, these attitudes to the product, norms that are created by influencers and perceived ease of purchase online. The Source Credibility Model (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) [16] explains that a person’s expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness play an important role in how much they can influence others. In context to influencer marketing, this explains that when an influencer appears reliable, genuine and promotes products that aligns with them, people are more likely to trust their recommendations and develop a stronger intention to purchase that product. Together, these aspects provide a strong base for understanding that how influencer marketing influences the cosmetic buying behaviour of Gen Z women.

**3. Statement Of Problem**

With the increase in the usage of social media, influencer marketing has become one of the powerful techniques for cosmetic brands to attract young consumers. Gen Z women,

specifically, eagerly follow beauty influencers and are majorly dependent on their content before making any purchase decisions. Without the proper awareness about factors like authenticity, content engagement, and influencer–product fit, there is a huge investment going on in the influencer market. These influencer-related determinants influence the buying behaviour of Gen Z women. In the Indian context, especially in Delhi NCR, there are limited to no empirical studies conducted to evaluate these relationships. This creates a need to understand that how influencer marketing actually affects the purchase intentions of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products.

**4. Aims and Objectives**

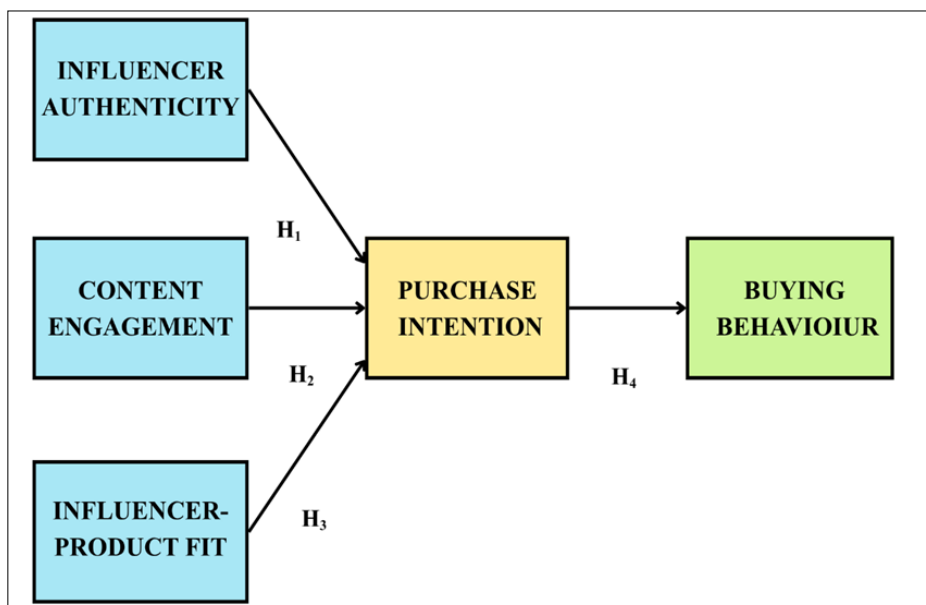
To attain the purpose of the study, the following aim and specific objectives are determined.

1. To assess the impact of influencer marketing on the buying behaviour of Generation Z for cosmetic products.
2. To determine the effect of influencer authenticity on purchasing intentions of Generation Z women.
3. To examine how purchase intentions get influenced by content engagement.
4. To analyse the role of influencer–product fit in developing buying decisions.
5. To examine the relationship between purchase intention and actual buying behaviour among Gen Z women.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions have been formulated based on the objectives of the study.

1. How influencer marketing impacts the buying behaviour of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products?
2. What is the role of influencer authenticity play in influencing purchase intentions?
3. How does engaging content actually change whether Gen Z women decide to buy a product?
4. Does it really matter if the influencer "fits" the beauty product they are promoting?
5. How much do influencers actually matter when Gen Z women in Delhi NCR go out to buy makeup?



**Fig 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

## Hypothesis

The following hypotheses have been formulated for empirical testing.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Influencer authenticity has a significant positive influence on the purchase intention of Generation Z women towards cosmetic products.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Content engagement with influencer posts significantly influences the purchase intention of Generation Z women towards cosmetic products.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Influencer–product fit has a significant influence on the purchase intention of Generation Z women towards cosmetic products.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Purchase Intention has a significant positive influence on the actual Buying Behaviour of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products.

## Sampling Design

### Empirical Research Design

#### 1. Population of the Study

The target population comprises Generation Z women residing in Delhi NCR who actively use social media and follow beauty or cosmetic influencers.

#### 2. Area of the Study

The study is geographically restricted to Delhi NCR due to time, accessibility, and feasibility constraints.

#### 3. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A convenience sampling technique was employed to facilitate access to the target population, with a final sample of 240 respondents.

## Tools and Techniques For Data Collection and Analysis

An online questionnaire was made to collect the primary data from the respondents. That questionnaire was distributed through various social media platforms. It was primarily focused to assess factors like influencer authenticity, content engagement, influencer–product fit, purchase intention and buying behaviour. For the analysis of the collected data, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 31.0.2.0) is used.

## Basis of Scales Used In Various Studies (Indian Context)

The factors influencing used in this research are taken from past empirical studies based on Indian context. A very few changes were done as per Gen Z women, cosmetic products, and social media influencers in Delhi NCR.

All the factors were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree which are commonly used in Indian marketing and management research (Likert, 1932) [22].

### 1. Influencer Authenticity

Adapted from Indian studies evaluating honesty, trust, and credibility of social media influencers, the authenticity scale captures genuine opinions and personal product experience (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Sharma & Verma, 2021) [29, 32].

### 2. Content Engagement

The content engagement scale measures consumer interaction with influencer content—including liking, commenting, sharing, and viewing reels—drawing on established Indian digital marketing research (Chopra *et al.*, 2021; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021) [17].

### 3. Influencer–Product Fit

The influencer–product fit scale assesses congruence between the influencer’s profile and the promoted product, based on Indian advertising and influencer marketing research (Patel & Varshney, 2022; Gupta *et al.*, 2020) [12, 25].

### 4. Purchase Intention

The purchase intention scale is adapted from established consumer behaviour research widely used in Indian studies, capturing factors such as desire to purchase, brand preference, and willingness to try influencer-endorsed products (Jain *et al.*, 2021; Singh & Banerjee, 2018) [17, 31].

## Data Analysis and Results

### 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Approximately 55% of respondents were aged 19–24, consistent with the Generation Z demographic. Nearly 45% spent less than ₹1,000 monthly on cosmetics, reflecting budget-conscious purchasing behaviour. Over 71% followed a mix of influencer types, indicating diverse content consumption rather than reliance on a single creator category.

### 2. Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics – Mean (SD) for All Items (N = 240)

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean (SD)
IA1	240	1	5	3.66 (0.924)
IA2	240	1	5	3.66 (1.086)
IA3	240	2	5	4.18 (0.871)
IA4	240	1	5	3.85 (0.972)
IA5	240	1	5	3.97 (0.991)
CE1	240	1	5	3.30 (1.068)
CE2	240	1	5	3.57 (1.099)
CE3	240	1	5	3.81 (0.885)
CE4	240	1	5	3.82 (1.046)
CE5	240	1	5	3.80 (1.021)
IPF1	240	1	5	3.77 (0.995)
IPF2	240	1	5	3.79 (1.079)
IPF3	240	1	5	3.91 (0.962)
IPF4	240	1	5	3.82 (1.069)
IPF5	240	1	5	3.90 (0.905)
PI1	240	1	5	3.59 (1.128)
PI2	240	1	5	3.68 (1.217)

PI3	240	1	5	3.67 (1.103)
PI4	240	1	5	3.78 (1.085)
PI5	240	1	5	3.66 (1.098)
BB1	240	1	5	3.76 (1.042)
BB2	240	1	5	3.69 (1.097)
BB3	240	1	5	3.74 (1.050)

Source: Author's own analysis.

It is found from the above table that the mean scores across all 23 items range from 3.30 to 4.18, with all responses recorded on a 5-point Likert scale from 240 respondents. Influencer Authenticity recorded the highest mean with IA3 scoring 4.18, while Content Engagement had the lowest mean with CE1 scoring 3.30, indicating that respondents relate more to influencer authenticity than content engagement when it comes to cosmetic purchases.

### 3. Reliability Testing

A pilot study of 100 responses was done to check whether the questionnaire is reliable or not. For this, Cronbach's Alpha was used. The value came out to be 0.933, which is higher than 0.7. This shows that the data is reliable and the questions are consistent. So, the questionnaire was suitable to use for final data collection.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.933	0.933	23

Source: Author's own analysis.

### 4. Bivariate Pearson's Correlation

Bivariate Pearson's Correlation test was used to understand the relationship between Influencer Authenticity and Purchase Intention, Content Engagement and Purchase Intention, Influencer-Product Fit and Purchase Intention, and Buying Behaviour and Purchase Intention.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation – Influencer Authenticity and Purchase Intention

	Influencer Authenticity	Purchase Intention
Influencer Authenticity	1	0.667**
Purchase Intention	0.667**	1
N	240	240

Source: Author's own analysis.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Pearson Correlation – Content Engagement and Purchase Intention

	Content Engagement	Purchase Intention
Content Engagement	1	0.710**
Purchase Intention	0.710**	1
N	240	240

Source: Author's own analysis.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Pearson Correlation – Influencer-Product Fit and Purchase Intention

	Influencer-Product Fit	Purchase Intention
Influencer-Product Fit	1	0.672**
Purchase Intention	0.672**	1
N	240	240

Source: Author's own analysis.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6: Pearson Correlation – Buying Behaviour and Purchase Intention

	Buying Behaviour	Purchase Intention
Buying Behaviour	1	0.769**
Purchase Intention	0.769**	1
N	240	240

Source: Author's own analysis.

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All four variables demonstrated strong, positive, and statistically significant correlations with Purchase Intention ( $p < .001$ ). Buying Behaviour recorded the highest correlation ( $r = 0.769$ ), followed by Content Engagement ( $r = 0.710$ ), Influencer-Product Fit ( $r = 0.672$ ), and Influencer Authenticity ( $r = 0.667$ ), collectively supporting the premise that influencer marketing significantly impacts Gen Z women's cosmetic purchasing behaviour.

### 5. Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of Influencer Authenticity, Content Engagement, and Influencer-Product Fit on Purchase Intention and Buying Behaviour.

#### Impact on Purchase Intention

Table 7: Model Summary – Purchase Intention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1 (Purchase Intention)	0.77	0.59	0.59

Source: Author's own analysis.

Table 8: ANOVA – Purchase Intention

Model	F Value	p-value
Regression	113.91	.000

Source: Author's own analysis.

Table 9: Coefficients – Purchase Intention

Variable	Standardised Beta (β)	p-value	VIF
Influencer Authenticity	0.25	.000	2.24
Content Engagement	0.38	.000	2.25
Influencer-Product Fit	0.23	.001	2.45

Source: Author's own analysis.

All three predictors jointly explain 59% of the variance in Purchase Intention ( $R^2 = .59$ ,  $F = 113.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Content Engagement had the strongest individual effect ( $\beta = .38$ ), followed by Influencer Authenticity ( $\beta = .25$ ) and Influencer-Product Fit ( $\beta = .23$ ), with all VIF values below 3 confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

#### Impact on Buying Behaviour

Table 10: Model Summary – Buying Behaviour

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1 (Buying Behaviour)	0.74	0.55	0.55

Source: Author's own analysis.

**Table 11:** ANOVA – Buying Behaviour

Model	F Value	p-value
Regression	97.84	.000

Source: Author's own analysis.

**Table 12:** Coefficients – Buying Behaviour

Variable	Standardised Beta ( $\beta$ )	p-value	VIF
Influencer Authenticity	0.16	.017	2.24
Content Engagement	0.42	.000	2.25
Influencer-Product Fit	0.25	.000	2.45

Source: Author's own analysis.

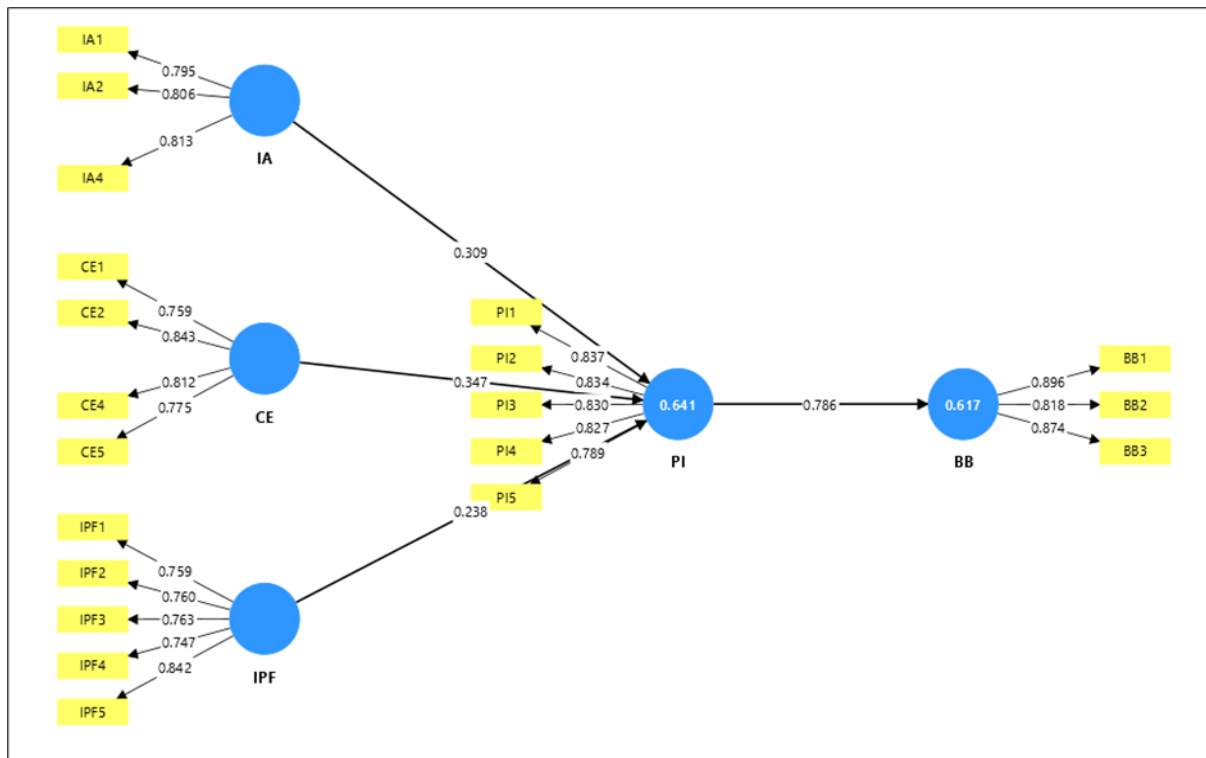
The three predictors jointly explain 55% of the variance in Buying Behaviour ( $R^2 = .55$ ,  $F = 97.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with

Content Engagement again the strongest predictor ( $\beta = .42$ ), followed by Influencer-Product Fit ( $\beta = .25$ ) and Influencer Authenticity ( $\beta = .16$ ). All VIF values were within acceptable limits.

**6. SmartPLS Analysis**

**Assessment of the Measurement Model (SmartPLS)**

Prior to structural model assessment, the measurement model was evaluated across four criteria: indicator reliability (outer loadings), internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), convergent validity (AVE), and discriminant validity (HTMT ratio and Fornell-Larcker criterion), across five latent constructs: IA, CE, IPF, PI, and BB.



**Fig 2:** PLS-SEM Structural Model Showing Path Coefficients and Outer Loadings

**Indicator Reliability**

Outer loadings exceeding 0.70 confirm indicator reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2019) [13]; indicators below this threshold were

removed during scale purification. Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples confirmed all retained outer loadings are statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 13:** Outer Loadings — Indicator Reliability (n=240)

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	T-Statistic	P-Value
Buying Behaviour (BB)	BB1	0.891	54.070	< 0.001
	BB2	0.826	27.952	< 0.001
	BB3	0.868	49.864	< 0.001
Content Engagement (CE)	CE1	0.758	21.200	< 0.001
	CE2	0.832	28.271	< 0.001
	CE4	0.801	27.387	< 0.001
Influencer Authenticity (IA)	CE5	0.761	22.468	< 0.001
	IA1	0.773	21.997	< 0.001
	IA2	0.791	25.050	< 0.001
Influencer-Product Fit (IPF)	IA4	0.805	32.150	< 0.001
	IPF1	0.742	17.954	< 0.001
	IPF2	0.745	19.850	< 0.001
	IPF3	0.749	21.306	< 0.001
	IPF4	0.732	17.599	< 0.001
	IPF5	0.833	35.643	< 0.001

Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.827	33.627	< 0.001
	PI2	0.826	36.175	< 0.001
	PI3	0.818	24.623	< 0.001
	PI4	0.817	32.380	< 0.001
	PI5	0.775	24.322	< 0.001

Source: Author's own analysis.

As shown in Table 14, all 20 retained indicators exceed the 0.70 threshold (range: IPF4 = 0.732 to BB1 = 0.891). Indicators CE3, IA3, and IA5 were removed during purification. All loadings are significant at  $p < 0.001$ , confirming indicator reliability across constructs.

### Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity results are presented in Table 15.

**Table 14:** Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity (n=240)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
BB	0.828	0.838	0.897	0.743
CE	0.797	0.800	0.868	0.622
IA	0.700	0.705	0.833	0.624
IPF	0.818	0.823	0.873	0.579
PI	0.871	0.872	0.907	0.661

Source: Author's own analysis.

All five constructs meet reliability thresholds: Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0.700 (IA) to 0.871 (PI), and rho\_c values range from 0.833 (IA) to 0.907 (PI), all exceeding 0.70. AVE values exceed the 0.50 convergent validity threshold for all constructs (BB = 0.743; CE = 0.622; IA = 0.624; IPF = 0.579; PI = 0.661), fully establishing both reliability and convergent validity.

### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Henseler et al., 2015) [15] and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) [10].

**Table 15:** Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio Matrix (n=240)

	BB	CE	IA	IPF	PI
BB					
CE	0.856				
IA	0.810	0.863			
IPF	0.801	0.856	0.863		
PI	0.905	0.846	0.871	0.799	

Source: Author's own analysis.

As shown in Table 16, most HTMT values fall below the 0.90 liberal threshold. The PI-BB value (0.905) marginally exceeds this threshold, which is expected given their strong direct structural path ( $\beta = 0.775$ ) and is consistent with accepted PLS-SEM practice (Hair et al., 2019) [13].

### Fornell-Larcker Criterion

The Fornell-Larcker criterion requires the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal) to exceed all cross-construct correlations (off-diagonal), as shown in Table 17.

**Table 16:** Path Coefficients and Bootstrapping Results (n=240)

H	Path	$\beta$ (Original)	Sample Mean	STDEV	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	IA → PI	0.302	0.305	0.059	5.096	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	CE → PI	0.348	0.351	0.075	4.651	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	IPF → PI	0.234	0.230	0.067	3.486	< 0.001	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	PI → BB	0.775	0.776	0.037	20.981	< 0.001	Supported

Source: Author's own analysis.

**Table 16:** Fornell-Larcker Criterion Matrix (n=240)

	BB	CE	IA	IPF	PI
BB	0.862				
CE	0.700	0.789			
IA	0.632	0.655	0.790		
IPF	0.672	0.700	0.665	0.761	
PI	0.775	0.709	0.685	0.678	0.813

Source: Author's own analysis.

This criterion is fully satisfied across all five constructs, confirming discriminant validity and supporting the validity of the overall measurement model.

### Assessment of the Structural Model

Following satisfactory measurement model assessment, the structural model was evaluated for collinearity (VIF), path coefficient significance via bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples), coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), and effect size ( $f^2$ ), per Hair et al. (2019) [13].

### Collinearity Assessment (VIF)

The inner model was tested for multicollinearity between predictor constructs before path coefficients were analysed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Collinearity can cause standard errors to be inflated and path coefficient estimates distorted. Hair et al. (2019) [13] suggest a maximum VIF of 5.0 and a conservative limit of 3.3. The inner model VIF values are shown in Table 18.

**Table 17:** Inner Model Collinearity Statistics (VIF) (n=240)

Predictor Construct	Endogenous Construct	VIF
Content Engagement (CE)	Purchase Intention (PI)	2.247
Influencer Authenticity (IA)	Purchase Intention (PI)	2.052
Influencer-Product Fit (IPF)	Purchase Intention (PI)	2.296
Purchase Intention (PI)	Buying Behaviour (BB)	1.000

Source: Author's own analysis.

All inner model VIF values are well below the conservative threshold of 3.3: CE (2.247), IA (2.052), IPF (2.296), and PI predicting BB (1.000), confirming predictor independence and the absence of multicollinearity.

### Path Coefficients and Significance

Direct path coefficients were estimated via PLS-SEM and tested using non-parametric bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) per Hair et al. (2019) [13]; a path is significant when  $T > 1.96$  and  $p < 0.05$ .

All four proposed paths are significant at  $p < 0.001$ , as reported in Table 19.

**H<sub>1</sub> (IA → PI):** Supported ( $\beta = 0.302$ ,  $T = 5.096$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )—influencer authenticity is the second strongest predictor of purchase intention.

**H<sub>2</sub> (CE → PI):** Supported ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $T = 4.651$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )—content engagement is the most influential predictor in the structural model.

**H<sub>3</sub> (IPF → PI):** Supported ( $\beta = 0.234$ ,  $T = 3.486$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )—influencer–product fit has the smallest but still statistically significant effect on purchase intention.

**H<sub>4</sub> (PI → BB):** Supported ( $\beta = 0.775$ ,  $T = 20.981$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )—purchase intention is the dominant predictor of actual buying behaviour.

**Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>)**

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) indicates the variance explained in each endogenous construct. Substantial, moderate, and weak R<sup>2</sup> levels are 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25, respectively (Hair *et al.*, (2019) [13]). The effect size (f<sup>2</sup>) indicates the predictive power of each predictor on the endogenous construct, with 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 as small, medium and large effects, respectively (Cohen, (1988) [5]). R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup> and f<sup>2</sup> are shown in Table 20.

**Table 19:** Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>) (n=240)

Endogenous Construct	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Adjusted	Predictor	Path	f <sup>2</sup>
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.612	0.607	IA	IA → PI	0.114
			CE	CE → PI	0.139
			IPF	IPF → PI	0.061
Buying Behaviour (BB)	0.601	0.599	PI	PI → BB	1.506

Source: Author’s own analysis.

The three influencer factors explain 61.2% of variance in Purchase Intention (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.612, Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = 0.607), exceeding the moderate threshold (0.50) and approaching the substantial level (0.75). Purchase Intention in turn accounts for 60.1% of Buying Behaviour variance (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.601), confirming its role as a dominant predictor. The PI → BB path produces a large effect size (f<sup>2</sup> = 1.506), while Content Engagement (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.139) and Influencer Authenticity (f<sup>2</sup> = 0.114) show small-to-medium effects on PI.

**Summary of Results**

Overall, H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> are all significant at  $p < 0.001$ , confirming that our model is valid. Content engagement ( $\beta = 0.348$ ) is the most important predictor of purchase intention, followed by influencer authenticity ( $\beta = 0.302$ )

and influencer-product fit ( $\beta = 0.234$ ). Together, these three factors explain 61.2% of the variation in purchase intention (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.612). The most important finding is the direct path from purchase intention to buying behaviour ( $\beta = 0.775$ , f<sup>2</sup> = 1.506) which accounts for 60.1% variance in buying behaviour.

In summary, the results highlight that the core influencer marketing elements, specifically influencer authenticity and content engagement, are relevant antecedents of consumer intentions, and influence buying behaviours in the beauty sector.

**Hypothesis Testing Summary**

All four hypotheses are accepted, as summarised in Table 21 below.

**Table 20:** Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results at a 5% level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )

Hypothesis	Statement	Key Statistic	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	Influencer authenticity has a significant positive influence on purchase intention of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products.	$\beta = 0.302$ , $T = 5.096$ , $p < 0.001$	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub>	Content engagement with influencer posts significantly influences purchase intention of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products.	$\beta = 0.348$ , $T = 4.651$ , $p < 0.001$	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	Influencer–product fit has a significant influence on purchase intention of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products.	$\beta = 0.234$ , $T = 3.486$ , $p < 0.001$	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	Purchase Intention has a significant positive influence on the actual Buying Behaviour of Gen Z women towards cosmetic products.	$\beta = 0.775$ , $T = 20.981$ , $p < 0.001$	Accepted

Source: Author’s own analysis.

**Summary of Findings**

All three influencer marketing constructs—Influencer Authenticity, Content Engagement, and Influencer–Product Fit—significantly and positively influence Purchase Intention, with all four hypotheses supported at  $p < 0.001$ . Content Engagement ( $\beta = 0.348$ ), Influencer Authenticity ( $\beta = 0.302$ ) and Influencer–Product Fit ( $\beta = 0.234$ ) were the most influential predictors under all analysis approaches. The three factors account for 61.2% of the variance in Purchase Intention (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.612). The greatest path having been obtained in the model is Purchase Intention to Buying Behaviour ( $\beta = 0.775$ , f<sup>2</sup> = 1.506), which means that if the purchase intent occurs among Gen Z women, they are more likely to buy the product.

**Implications**

As per the results of the study, this year, brands must not only focus on follower count and spending but on building a long-term rather true relationships with influencers who actually engage with their audiences. Content Gen Z women want to see and connect with is what influences their purchases. So helpful reels and stories matter more and not spend. On a large scale, it can further promote mindful and conscious buying among youth to ensure influencer brand collaborations are truthful and transparent.

**Limitations of The Study**

The generalisability of this study is restricted to the convenience sampling method, being conducted in Delhi

NCR and with 240 participants. The range is also restricted to cosmetic products and to three constructs related to the influencers; other factors like price sensitivity, brand loyalty, and peer influence were not investigated. Self-reported information also can lead to response bias.

### Scope For Further Studies

Further research should be conducted beyond the Delhi NCR region and smaller cities to make it more representative of the Indian region. The findings would be enriched by further constructs like price sensitivity, peer recommendations, brand loyalty or by broadening the product categories to fashion or healthcare. Comparative generational studies with Gen Z and Millennials might help reveal the changing digital consumption trends.

Comparative generational studies with Gen Z and Millennials might help reveal the changing digital consumption trends.

### Conclusion

Today influencers play a big part in the popularity of beauty brands. This research explored how these social media stars are changing the shopping habits of Gen Z women. We discovered that content that is real and a good fit for the brand is important, but it is content that makes people hit the “buy” button. To sum up, companies can expand much more rapidly if they concentrate on these digital trends, because the younger generation is now guided primarily by influencers in its purchasing decisions. It is crucial to understand influencer marketing to understand exactly how it is a hugely important factor in being able to influence what people actually buy via digital platforms. This allows companies to develop in a sustainable, honest and transparent manner, and promotes SDG objectives.

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