

## The Role of Instagram in Influencing Gen Z Online Purchases in Kanchipuram City

**D. Pavithra,**

*Assistant Professor,*

*Department Of Commerce,*

*SSKV College of Arts & Science for Women,*

*Kanchipuram*

### Abstract

In today's digital landscape, Instagram has emerged as a key driver of online consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z. This study investigates how Instagram influences the purchasing behavior of Gen Z in Kanchipuram City, a semi-urban region balancing traditional culture with rapid digital adoption. The research employed both primary and secondary data, with primary data collected from 110 respondents using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through percentage analysis and a chi-square test. The findings reveal a strong association between following influencers on Instagram and making online purchases. Approximately 80% of respondents follow influencers, and 65% have purchased products promoted on Instagram. Fashion, cosmetics, and gadgets were the most popular product categories. Results further indicate that Gen Z values authenticity, ad personalization, and peer or influencer recommendations, while also showing strong support for local businesses through Instagram. The study concludes that Instagram significantly shapes online purchase decisions among Gen Z by fostering engagement, trust, and interactivity. These insights hold practical value for marketers, digital entrepreneurs, and local businesses targeting Gen Z in semi-urban India, while also contributing to academic literature on digital consumer behavior.

**Key words:** Instagram, Online purchases, Gen Z, Digital Consumer behavior.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the digital era, social media platforms have become powerful tools for marketing and consumer engagement. Among these, Instagram stands out as a visually-driven platform that significantly influences consumer behavior, especially among Generation Z—those born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. With its blend of influencer marketing, targeted advertisements, interactive stories, and aesthetic product displays, Instagram has redefined the online shopping experience. Generation Z, known for their tech-savvies and constant connectivity, often rely on digital content, peer reviews, and influencer recommendations before making online purchase decisions. In cities like Kanchipuram, which is rapidly adapting to digital trends while maintaining traditional values, it becomes particularly interesting to study how Instagram impacts the online buying behaviors of this demographic. This study explores the role of Instagram in shaping Gen Z's purchasing patterns in Kanchipuram City. It seeks to understand how visual content, influencer marketing, brand engagement, and user interaction on the platform influence their online buying decisions.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the influence of Instagram advertisements and influencer content on the online purchasing decisions of Gen Z in Kanchipuram City.
2. To analyze the extent to which Gen Z users in Kanchipuram engage with brands on Instagram before making online purchases.

### **Limitations**

- The research is geographically limited to Kanchipuram City, which may not fully represent the behaviors and preferences of Gen Z individuals in other urban or rural areas of India.
- The study focuses solely on Instagram as a platform, thereby excluding the potential influence of other social media channels like YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook, or WhatsApp, which Gen Z may also use in their purchase decision-making process.
- The data collection method relies heavily on self-reported responses from participants, which may be affected by biases such as social desirability or inaccurate recall.
- The study does not account for external factors such as economic background, peer pressure, or cultural influences, which may also significantly impact the online purchasing behavior of Gen Z consumers in Kanchipuram.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is confined to analyzing the influence of Instagram on the online purchasing behavior of Generation Z in Kanchipuram City. It focuses specifically on individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, who actively use Instagram and engage in online shopping. The study aims to explore how various Instagram features—such as influencer marketing, targeted advertisements, stories, reels, and brand posts—affect the purchase decisions of this demographic. It also examines the level of brand engagement by Gen Z users on the platform, including how they interact with content, respond to promotional campaigns, and rely on peer or influencer recommendations. The research is limited to Kanchipuram City, providing insights into a population that is balancing traditional cultural values with the fast-growing digital marketplace. This localized focus helps to understand the behavioral patterns of Gen Z in a semi-urban Indian context and may serve as a basis for broader studies in similar regions.

### **Impact of the Study**

The findings of this study will offer meaningful insights for businesses, digital marketers, and local entrepreneurs aiming to target the Gen Z market in Kanchipuram more effectively. By understanding how Instagram shapes online purchasing decisions, brands can tailor their social media strategies to better resonate with this demographic. It also contributes to academic literature on digital consumer behavior in emerging urban centers, helping bridge the knowledge gap between global marketing trends and local consumer dynamics. Additionally, this research can serve as a foundation for future studies exploring the broader implications of social media in small cities adapting to digital commerce trends.

### **Methodology**

1. The present study is an empirical study based on both primary and secondary data.
2. Primary data is collected by administering a structured questionnaire on the respondents.
3. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, articles and websites.

### **Research Methodology**

The study is based on both primary and secondary data were collected. The study was conducted in Kanchipuram district. For collecting primary data, structured questionnaire of 110 respondents in Kanchipuram district. The sample are selected by way of adopting convenience sampling techniques. The Secondary data has been collected from published sources, such as various periodicals, articles, books and journals, etc., which are highly relevant to the topic of the study.

- Sample size: The population is indefinite. For this research 110 sample size is collecting for the respondents.
- Test used: 1. Simple percentage analysis 2. Chi-square test

### **Analysis And Interpretation**

Data collected through questionnaire are assessed and interpreted by applying appropriate statistical tools.

Demographic profile of the respondents

#### **Gender wise classification**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. Of. Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	60	55
Female	50	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **Age wise classification**

<b>Age</b>	<b>No. Of. Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-24	90	82
Others	20	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **Residence wise classification**

<b>Residence</b>	<b>No. Of. Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Resident of Kanchipuram	100	91
Non- resident	100	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **Occupation wise classification**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>No. Of. Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Student	58	53
Employed	32	29
Unemployed	20	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

Monthly Online Spending

Monthly Online Spending	No. Of. Respondents	Percentage
Below Rs. 500	11	10
Rs. 500- Rs. 1000	33	30
Rs. 1000- Rs. 2000	44	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

Hypothesis

- **H0:** There is no association between following influencers on Instagram and making online purchases.
- **H1:** There is an association between following influencers on Instagram and making online purchases.

Observed Frequency Table

Following Influencers	Purchase (Yes)	Purchase (No)	Total
Yes	50	38	88
No	21	1	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>110</b>

Expected Frequency Table

Following Influencers	Made Purchase (Yes)	Made Purchase (No)	Total
Yes	56.73	31.27	88
No	14.27	7.73	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>110</b>

Chi-square Calculation

Cell (O, E)	O	E	(O - E) <sup>2</sup> / E
Yes – Purchase (Yes)	50	56.73	0.799
Yes – Purchase (No)	38	31.27	1.455
No – Purchase (Yes)	21	14.27	3.176
No – Purchase (No)	1	7.73	5.886
<b>Total <math>\chi^2</math></b>			<b>11.316</b>

Interpretation

There is a **statistically significant association** between following influencers on Instagram and making online purchases among Gen Z consumers in Kanchipuram. This indicates that influencer marketing on Instagram plays a key role in shaping purchase behavior.

## **Findings**

- A majority of Gen Z respondents (around 75%) use Instagram daily and spend between 1–2 hours per day on the platform.
- Most users engage with content related to fashion, beauty, entertainment, and technology.
- Over 80% of respondents follow influencers or public figures on Instagram.
- The chi-square test shows a significant relationship between following influencers and making online purchases after seeing promoted products.
- 65% of respondents have made at least one online purchase after seeing a product on Instagram.
- Popular product categories include clothing, cosmetics, and gadgets.
- More than half of the respondents follow brand pages on Instagram.
- 60% regularly check comments and reviews under brand posts before making a purchase decision.
- 65% feel more connected to brands they engage with on Instagram.
- Trust is influenced by factors such as content quality, authenticity, and relatability more than just follower count.
- 70% of respondents feel Instagram ads are personalized to their interests.
- 65% said they would recommend products seen on Instagram to friends or family.
- A significant number (70%) prefer buying from local or small businesses that promote via Instagram.

## **Suggestions**

- Focus on micro-influencers who align with the brand's values and appeal to Gen Z's sense of authenticity.
- Utilize Instagram tools like stories, polls, reels, and live sessions to increase user interaction and brand visibility.
- Encourage customers to post about their purchases and tag the brand, which boosts trust and organic reach.
- Ensure influencers disclose paid partnerships and offer honest product reviews to retain consumer trust.

- Emphasize cultural relevance, tradition, and community to attract Gen Z in semi-urban areas like Kanchipuram.
- Introduce giveaways, discount codes, or referral bonuses via Instagram to boost visibility and sales.

## II. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Instagram plays a significant role in shaping the online purchasing decisions of Generation Z in Kanchipuram City. Influencer marketing, personalized advertisements and high levels of brand engagement contribute to increased purchase activity. Gen Z values authenticity, interactivity, and peer recommendations over traditional advertising. Moreover, there's a strong inclination toward supporting local businesses on Instagram, reflecting both digital fluency and community values.

While the study is limited to Kanchipuram and Instagram, the insights are valuable for marketers, small businesses, and researchers aiming to understand and tap into emerging semi-urban digital markets. Future research can broaden the scope by including other platforms and regions for a more comprehensive understanding.

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