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Influencer marketing in the purchase decision of generation Z

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to analyze the factors of influencer marketing associated with the purchase decision of Generation Z consumers. The study design begins with the literature review that supports the components of influencer marketing that motivate the purchase decision of Generation Z individuals. The methodology used for obtaining data from the target population is quantitative; a sample of 600 questionnaires was obtained and applied to people from Generation Z aged between 18 and 29 years. A descriptive analysis was carried out, and factor analysis was applied. Results: three factors were found which are fundamental in the purchase decision: 1) empathy of the influencer; 2) perception of reciprocity and benefits of the influencer; 3) consistency of the influencer. As the influencer develops these elements with greater credibility, authenticity, and creativity, they will be able to more effectively persuade the purchase decision of this sector of the population, adding brand value by connecting through their content with Generation Z. This intangible asset is useful for maintaining audience loyalty for a longer period.

Keywords: Empathy, Generation Z, Influencers, Marketing, Social media, Valuable content.

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1. Introduction

Influencer marketing has developed more intensely in recent years through social media platforms designed to connect people from different parts of the world. Content creators on these digital platforms have evolved to gain followers who identify with the information they share [1]. According to Levin [2], influencer marketing strategies aimed at new generations face challenges in meeting expectations, considering the need to accurately assess the influence they have on consumers' purchase decisions. According to Guíñez-Cabrera et al. [3], the perception of influencers regarding the transparency of the information they share on social networks may be limited depending on each country's transparency regulations. It is essential

for influencers to build a positive image to influence their audiences, such that followers take their recommendations into account.

According to Lara-Salinas [4], influencers can enhance corporate branding, positively impacting users' willingness to make a purchase. It is important that the strategy is implemented in the long term, not only focused on the current transaction but with the aim of building a community that trusts the influencer's representation of their audience. The transparency and authenticity with which content and information associated with a product are shared will be valuable to the audience, especially as younger generations tend to share their experiences more intensely, Cabrera [5]. Pradhan et al. [6] highlight that Generation Z, compared to earlier generations, is characterized by a closer connection with content creators, seeking to identify with them and form a trusted bond by following their advice on products and services, feeling part of a social group of followers.

Generation Z youth often highlight qualities such as originality and the leadership embodied by the influencers they follow, interpreting messages more effectively across various platforms [7]. Likewise, Ki and Kim [8] emphasize that both the visual and verbal components associated with influencers affect preferences and the desire to purchase certain products, driven by imitation and sharing experiences. Bu et al. [9] argue that young people are often persuaded by digital media figures, sometimes viewing them as role models; their level of closeness and daily interaction correlates with the degree of influence in decision-making. Therefore, according to Pradhan et al. [6], brands are aware of influencers' power over the consumption patterns of new generations, especially Generation Z, who seek to make the most of recommendations to optimize their decision-making time.

This study analyzes the influencer marketing factors associated with the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers. According to Fernandez-Cruz and Fernández-Díaz [10], this population group is referred to as the virtual generation or Google generation, distinguished by their familiarity with information and communication technologies (ICT) from an early age. Delgado-Velesaca et al. [11] identify this generation as those born between 1995 and 2010, while those born after 2010 are part of Generation Alpha. Today, Generation Z includes individuals between 14 and 29 years old who consider internet use part of their lifestyle.

Based on Lara and Cervantes [12], it is necessary to analyze the key components of influencer marketing that affect the purchase motivation of Generation Z individuals, considering the changes brought by hyperconnectivity and digitalization in the socialization and purchasing behavior of this group, which is accustomed to receiving large amounts of information every day. Generation Z is characterized by its search for reviews, comments, and outstanding suggestions about products and services they are unsure about, in order to confirm their purchase decisions. According to Meltwater [13], influencers have the opportunity to create valuable content and recommendations that allow them to build a long-term relationship with their audience. Zhang et al. [14] and Wright and Cherry [15] affirm that the perception of empathy, the reciprocity and benefits received from the influencer, and the influencer's consistency become important in the decision-making process for the population targeted in this research.

The research presented in this article addresses the following questions: What are the influencer marketing factors associated with the purchase decision of Generation Z? What elements make up the dimensions of influencer empathy, reciprocity, and consistency based on the literature? Why are these components important for Generation Z? The study by Martín Critikián et al. [16] points out that it is essential for influencers to inspire trust, highlighting their differentiation, emotional stability, and the values that characterize them, which motivate the consumption of content created on online platforms.

The city of Tijuana, where the research is conducted, is located in the state of Baja California, Mexico. The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) [17] highlights that it is the federal entity with the highest proportion of Internet users, with 89.8%, followed by Mexico City with 89.7%. Thus, Generation Z is of particular interest to this study due to their early connection with the Internet, as online socialization has become part of their daily habits [18]. Likewise, access to digital platforms and social media has become one of the main sources of information for Generation Z [7].

The research first presents a theoretical framework, describing the elements of influencer marketing that affect the purchase decision of this generation. This section includes a synthesis of the dimensions that represent the factors associated with influencer marketing in the purchase decision of Generation Z. A quantitative method was used through a questionnaire constructed based on the cited literature and evaluated by five experts in the fields of digital marketing and online consumer behavior. Once the instruments were applied, reliability and internal consistency were confirmed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22.

To obtain results, a descriptive analysis of each dimension was performed, followed by factor analysis. In this phase, the discussion is carried out in relation to the cited literature and the research objectives. The final section of the article presents the research conclusions, implications, and limitations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Components of Influencer Marketing in Generation Z's Purchase Decision

Studying consumer behavior is essential for the continuous development of new research. According to Pesántez-Nieto et al. [19], each generation has specific needs influenced by their environment, technologies, social circle, influential figures, preferred media, and support mechanisms for problem-solving. These elements combine to form behavioral patterns [20]. In the case of Generation Z, Lara and Cervantes [12] concluded that the hyperconnectivity experienced by young people results in impatience, as they are used to quickly accessing information to make practical decisions. Accordingly, Santos de Assis and Ferreira [21] emphasize that influencers play an essential role as references or guides for Generation Z, who are accustomed to immediacy and connectivity.

Among the main benefits of influencer marketing noted by Ramos [22] are its greater persuasive power compared to traditional advertising, more authentic brand content, increased brand awareness and reputation, higher engagement, access to new consumers, greater visibility and follower count on social media, increased sales, and improved brand positioning online. According to SanMiguel [23], marketing campaigns based on this strategy should begin with a clear message and image to be projected in the consumer's mind, particularly for Generation Z, who spend a large part of their day on digital social media. Selecting an influencer or opinion leader is not enough. Kotler et al. [24] highlight the need to understand how digital technologies and social networks have transformed consumers, who are now hyper-informed and hyper-connected, and rely heavily on other users' experiences to make decisions that can change quickly if needed.

The research by Pérez Martínez et al. [25] identified three influencer marketing dimensions (empathy, reciprocity, and consistency) linked to Generation Z's purchase decisions. According to Meltwater [13] an effective influencer marketing strategy can add value to a brand because Generation Z trusts influencers for three main reasons: 1) they are seen as role models who teach new skills or behaviors for everyday life; 2) their recommendations are experience-based and considered in decision-making; and 3) they share common values, which prompts users to engage with their content and consider their advice. For Generation Z, communication is the foundation of their socialization [26]; they are constantly seeking information and rely on trusted online figures. Most of them do not buy from companies they don't trust [13]. Table 1 presents the three main influencer marketing components influencing Generation Z's purchase decision.

Table 1.

Dimensions of influencer marketing in Generation Z's purchase decision.

Dimension	Elements of Influencer Marketing	References
Empathy	Credibility, audience admiration, alignment with followers' personal values, creation of valuable content, understanding of followers' emotions, influencer's enthusiasm in making recommendations.	Pérez Martínez, et al. [25]; Berlioz-Pastor and Quesada [27]; Balseca, et al. [28]; Oneto González, et al. [29] and Wright and Cherry [15]
Reciprocity	Gifts and courtesies for followers, exclusive content, special recommendations, sharing inspiring experiences.	Pérez Martínez, et al. [25]; Balseca, et al. [28]; Oneto González, et al. [29]; Meneses and Saldarriaga [30] and Zhang, et al. [14]
Consistency	Generated trust, firmness of personality, emotional stability, consistent values, and distinguishing personal traits.	Pérez Martínez, et al. [25]; Oneto González, et al. [29]; Wright and Cherry [15]; Meneses and Saldarriaga [30] and Zhang, et al. [14]

Source: Own elaboration based on the authors cited in Table 1.

According to Pérez Martínez et al. [25], achieving empathy through influencer marketing requires credibility in the influencer's activities. This fosters respect and admiration among Generation Z, allowing influencers' recommendations, information, and advice to influence purchasing decisions Berlioz-Pastor and Quesada [27]. Wright and Cherry [15] highlight the importance of generating enthusiasm within the audience through influencers' commitment and delivery of communicated benefits, reinforcing their image and encouraging continued loyalty.

According to Balseca et al. [28] the empathy that influencers display on digital platforms helps build an image among followers in which their values are reflected, as well as an understanding of their needs and emotions making this component especially important for Generation Z. Based on Pérez Martínez et al. [25] this enables the advice, recommendations, and behavior of influencers to impact individuals' identity and purchasing patterns. Considering the digital space where a significant portion of the population particularly Generation Z is active, Oneto González, et al. [29] state that brands aim to generate trust, credibility, and above all, empathy among the public through influencers, recognizing that these opinion leaders engage in this type of digital interaction with young audiences and can demonstrate the value of a product or service to encourage its acquisition.

Regarding the element of reciprocity in Generation Z, Balseca et al. [28] and Pérez Martínez et al. [25] highlight this as an opportunity to build a long-term relationship with the audience that follows the content developed by influencers, expecting to receive some benefit in return for their loyalty and engagement with their recommendations. The research findings of Meneses and Saldarriaga [30] and Zhang et al. [14] point out that the success of perceived reciprocity within the online youth community has a positive impact on product recommendations, considering the sense of belonging associated with valued actions in the digital environment. It is important to note that this dimension influences how individuals are motivated and respond to influencers who manage to convey such benefits to their followers.

As for the consistency shown by influencers, Martín Criitkián et al. [16] conclude that it is a way of inspiring trust among Generation Z audiences by highlighting their personality, emotional stability, and values, which in turn motivate consumption of the digital content they produce, as well as the products they promote. Similarly, Cruz-Estrada and Zavala [31] agree that the trust transmitted by influencers is one of the most valued components by young people when considering recommended products in digital presentations. According to Berlioz-Pastor and Quesada [27], consistency in personality, along with emotional stability and values with which followers identify, fosters a sense of loyalty that strengthens young people's trust and increases their likelihood of making a purchase. It is also worth noting the findings of Wright and Cherry [15] who emphasize that when implementing a marketing strategy through influencers, it is essential to ensure consistency in their

work, particularly in terms of trust and emotional stability as core elements in the advertisements used to communicate with the audience.

Based on the literature, three main factors are identified as motivating Generation Z consumers' purchase decisions through influencer marketing (Figure 1). These factors must be present in the messages delivered by brands or companies in order to connect with this generation's audience and understand their behavior. As Generation Z becomes more economically active, they will place increasing value on empathy, reciprocity, and consistency when making decisions about purchasing products and services. In this case study, the target consumers are members of Generation Z residing in the city of Tijuana, who confirmed frequent interaction with digital media. The methodology outlines the procedure used to align with the theoretical framework established in the literature.

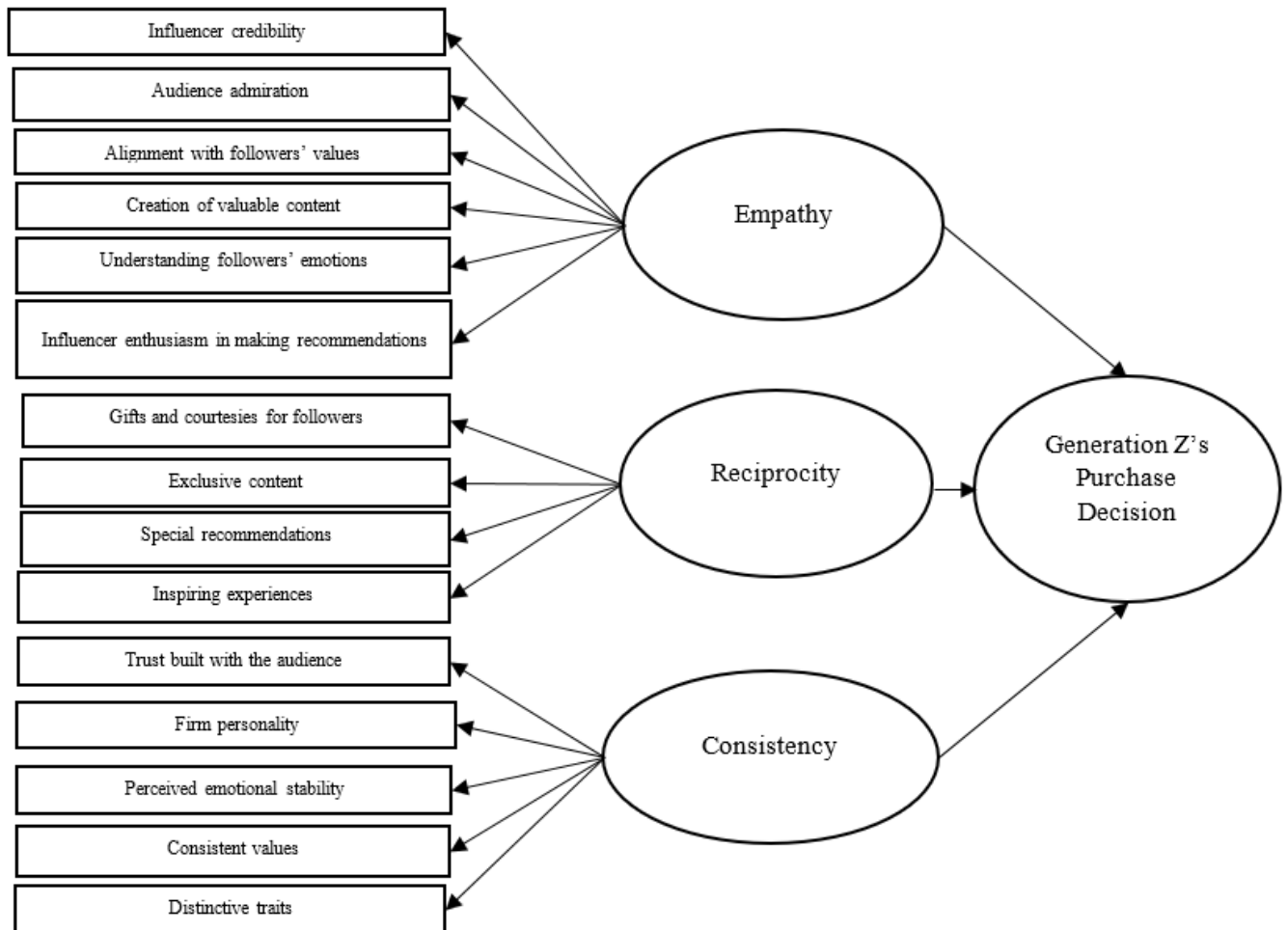


Figure 1.
Influencer Marketing Factors Associated with the Purchase Decision of Generation Z.

3. Methodology

Some research studies related to the present work include the study by Pradhan et al. [6], which compared four samples obtained from online questionnaires. These examined the reasons why Generation Z consumers tend to avoid influencer recommendations associated with brands. Their conclusions highlight the need for consistency in social media content and for influencers to demonstrate consistent behavior in order to deliver valuable recommendations focused on their audience. In the literature review by Cabrera [5], it is emphasized that influencers can motivate purchases by showing authenticity, empathy, and authority in their posts, which fosters trust among individuals who consult the digital information available on the Internet. For their part, Wright and Cherry [15] used a questionnaire applied to 401 Generation Z individuals in Ireland and, through multiple regression analysis, found a positive impact on brand trust endorsed by influencers, driven by empathy, authority, and the opinion leader's knowledge when making recommendations.

3.1. Method Used

The research methodology used and presented in this article is cross-sectional, with data collected at a single point in time in the city of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. It begins with a literature review to support the components of influencer marketing that motivate the purchase decisions of Generation Z. Likewise, a quantitative methodology was implemented using a questionnaire technique to obtain measurable data, allowing for a descriptive analysis to represent the information from the dimensions of the applied instrument. A factor analysis was also conducted to identify data patterns that define the components of influencer marketing in the purchase decisions of Generation Z.

3.2. Population and Sample Participating in the Research

In the quantitative phase, the target population was defined based on Tijuana's population of 1,922,523 inhabitants, of which 511,914 are between 18 and 29 years old [31]. According to INEGI [17], Baja California has the highest percentage of internet users in the country (89.8%), especially among Generation Z. Using the finite population sample formula [32] with a 95% confidence level and a 4% margin of error, a sample of 600 questionnaires was determined. Participants had to meet the following criteria: 1) be between 18 and 29 years old, part of Generation Z as defined by Delgado-Velesaca et al. [11], follow influencers on social media; 3) view advertising content produced by influencers on these platforms.

3.3. Applied Questionnaire

The questionnaire was based on the theoretical framework developed during the literature review, focusing on influencer marketing factors influencing purchase decisions among Generation Z. The first draft of the instrument was reviewed by five experts in digital marketing and online consumer behavior. As a result, the wording was improved, and redundant questions were eliminated. A pilot test was then administered to 40 individuals meeting the Generation Z criteria and confirmed to follow and engage with influencer advertising content. Following this pilot, some questions were reworded to enhance clarity for the target population.

The final version of the questionnaire was administered during September, October, and November of 2024, with support from eight students at the Autonomous University of Baja California, who participated through professional social service and research assistance. Table 2 shows the questionnaire's dimensions and types of questions used.

Table 2.

Dimensions of the Influencer Marketing Questionnaire in Generation Z's Purchase Decision.

Internet Service and Frequency of Influencer Content Consumption	
Internet service most frequently used	Multiple choice
Frequency of consumption of content from certain influencers	Likert scale
Importance of motivating the purchase decision of products or services advertised on social media	
Empathy	
Influencer credibility	
Admiration for the influencer	
Alignment of the influencer with the personal values of followers	Likert scale
Creation of valuable content that connects with followers	
Understanding of followers' emotions	
Influencer enthusiasm in making recommendations	
Reciprocity	
Gifts and courtesies for followers with no expectation in return	
Access to exclusive content	Likert scale
Shares special recommendations exclusively for followers	
Shares inspiring experiences	
Consistency	
Long-term perceived trust by the audience	
Demonstrates a firm personality with followers	Likert scale
Demonstrates emotional stability with the audience	
Demonstrates consistent moral values with followers over time	
Demonstrates qualities that distinguish them from other influencers when communicating with followers	
Demographic Data	
Age	Ratio scale
Gender	Multiple choice

3.4. Reliability Review of the Applied Questionnaire

To assess the reliability of each dimension in the questionnaire, the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software was used to calculate Cronbach's alpha. This analysis verified the internal consistency of grouped items. The results were as follows: 1) Empathy (0.893); 2) Reciprocity (0.869); 3) Consistency (0.921). These values reflect strong internal consistency, with the recommended minimum alpha values being above 0.70.

4. Results and Discussion

According to Delgado-Velesaca et al. [11], Generation Z includes those born between 1995 and 2010. This study focused on individuals who are of legal age living in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, specifically those between 18 and 29 years old. A total of 600 questionnaires were collected within this age group. Regarding gender, 59% of participants identified as women and 41% as men.

Using a five-point Likert scale, Table 3 presents the most valued items related to the importance of influencer empathy in motivating product purchase decisions through social media. The most highly rated aspect was the creation of valuable content that connects with followers (3.66), followed by influencer credibility and value alignment, as well as understanding

followers' emotions (3.61). All items in this dimension scored above the midpoint (2.5). According to Balseca et al. [28], the empathy generated by influencers constructs an image that reflects followers' perceived values and credibility, addressing audience needs. This, in turn, encourages admiration and respect for the influencer's messages, which are considered in future purchase decisions [25].

Table 3.
Influencer Empathy in Purchase Decision.

Influencer credibility	Admiration for the influencer	Influencer's awareness of followers' personal values	Creation of valuable content that connects with followers.	Influencer's understanding of followers' emotions.	Enthusiasm shown by the influencer when making recommendations.
3.61	3.23	3.61	3.66	3.61	3.45

Regarding the perception of reciprocity from influencers, Table 4 shows the most valued elements contributing to purchase decisions based on advertising content shared on social media. The highest-rated item was inspiring experiences (3.44), followed by exclusive recommendations (3.27), measured on a five-point Likert scale. According to Meneses and Saldarriaga [30] and Zhang et al. [14], followers expect their loyalty and engagement to be rewarded, either through exclusive content or motivational experiences that influence their behavior and product preferences in the digital space.

Table 4.
Perception of Reciprocity and Influencer Benefits in Purchase Decision.

Gifts and courtesies for followers	Access to exclusive content	Shares special recommendations exclusively for their followers	Shares inspiring experiences
3.13	3.00	3.27	3.44

On the other hand, the consistency of the influencer in their personality and in maintaining the trust of their followers is reflected in Table 5, based on the Likert scale from 1 to 5. The most important element considered by Generation Z when deciding to purchase advertised products seen in social media content is the differentiation that the influencer maintains compared to other content creators (3.85), followed by the perceived alignment of values with the audience (3.84). It is noteworthy that the values within this dimension have the highest average compared to the results for empathy, as well as reciprocity and benefits provided by influencers. The firmness, stability, and trust transmitted by influencers in the medium and long term are fundamental for becoming a factor in the purchasing decision. According to Cruz-Estrada and Zavala [31] the trust in influencers is one of the most important components for young people when considering recommendations to decide on the purchase of products advertised on digital platforms. Additionally, Wright and Cherry [15] emphasize that when it comes to executing an effective marketing strategy through influencer marketing, consistency, trust, and emotional stability are key elements in the ads that convey the messages intended for the audience.

Table 5.
Influencer Consistency in Purchase Decision.

Perceived trust by the audience over a long period of time.	Demonstrates a strong personality with their followers.	Demonstrates emotional stability with the audience.	Demonstrates moral values consistent with their followers over a long period of time.	Demonstrates qualities that set them apart from other influencers when communicating with their followers.
3.79	3.79	3.71	3.84	3.85

To identify the components that drive Generation Z's purchase decisions based on influencer advertising content shared on social media, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. According to Mavrou [33] and La Garza et al. [34], EFA is a statistical technique used to explore underlying constructs within observed variables, as documented in the theoretical framework. Hefetz and Liberman [35] state that this exploratory approach helps reveal the factorial dimensions expected to emerge from the instrument.

According to Garrido-Bermúdez et al. [36], the questions that make up each construct should address the most important aspects explained within each dimension. The evaluation provided by expert judges contributed to improving the clarity, sufficiency, relevance, and coherence of the questionnaire content. The exploratory approach model allows for testing how the theoretical constructs align with the empirical data obtained from the study.

In the quantitative validation of the exploratory factor analysis statistical technique, Hefetz and Liberman [35] indicate that it is necessary to review the value of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, which is recommended to be equal to or greater than 0.70, and Bartlett's test of sphericity, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. These results confirm the existence of correlations. The statistic (0.946) presented in Table 6 indicates good adequacy. The statistical result of Bartlett's test of sphericity shows the required level of significance for exploratory factor analysis, below 0.05, corresponding to the identification of components that contribute to the purchasing decisions of Generation Z youth, associated with influencer marketing carried out through the advertising content shared on social media.

Table 6.
KMO and Bartlett's Test Results.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling		0.946
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	6327.387
	df	105
	Sig.	0.000

As recommended by Garrido-Bermúdez et al. [36], each construct in the questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. All values met the recommended threshold of ≥ 0.70 : 1) Influencer Empathy (0.893); 2) Reciprocity and Perceived Benefits (0.869); 3) Influencer Consistency (0.921). Additionally, Table 7 shows the results of the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix, presenting the measure of the relationship between variables. According to La Garza et al. [34], it is recommended that the values be above 0.5, with values closer to 1 being more favorable.

Table 7.
Anti-image Correlation Matrix.

Element	Anti-image correlation
Courtesies and gifts for followers without expecting anything in return	0.928 ^a
Access to exclusive content	0.886 ^a
Shares special recommendations exclusively for their followers	0.911 ^a
Shares inspiring experiences	0.945 ^a
Perceived trust by the audience over a long period of time	0.955 ^a
Demonstrates a strong personality with their followers	0.953 ^a
Demonstrates emotional stability with the audience	0.965 ^a
Demonstrates moral values consistent with their followers over a long period of time	0.950 ^a
Demonstrates qualities that set them apart from other influencers when communicating with their followers	0.945 ^a
Influencer's credibility	0.960 ^a
Admiration for the influencer	0.962 ^a
Influencer's alignment with the personal values of followers	0.947 ^a
Creation of valuable content that connects with their followers	0.949 ^a
Influencer's understanding of the emotions of their followers	0.959 ^a
Enthusiasm shown by the influencer when making recommendations	0.964 ^a

Note: a. Sampling Adequacy Measures (SAM).

In this regard, Garrido-Bermúdez et al. [36] and Hefetz and Liberman [35] recommend, in exploratory factor analysis, the application of the Maximum Likelihood Factor Analysis (MLFA) extraction method with Promax rotation (to obtain correlations between factors). Accordingly, Table 8 shows the total variance explained by the initial solution. Based on these findings, three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are identified, which explain more than 60%, aligning with the criterion that should be considered according to Pérez [37] and Hefetz and Liberman [35]. This factor model relates to the components that contribute to the purchasing decisions of Generation Z youth, associated with influencer marketing carried out through advertising content shared on social media. It is worth noting that the case study was conducted in the city of Tijuana, Baja California, and is based on responses from individuals in Generation Z, aged 18 to 29.

Table 8.
Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalue			Sums of squared loadings from extraction			Sums of squared loadings after rotation ^a
	Total	% of Variance	% Cumulative	Total	% of Variance	% Cumulative	Total
1	8.316	55.441	55.441	7.961	53.076	53.076	6.815
2	1.433	9.553	64.995	1.124	7.493	60.569	6.932
3	1.010	6.736	71.731	0.640	4.265	64.833	5.506
4	0.612	4.080	75.811				
5	0.539	3.596	79.408				
....				
14	0.217	1.449	98.597				
15	0.210	1.403	100.000				

Extraction method: maximum likelihood.

Note: a. When the factors are correlated, the sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

For the specification of the factors that contribute to the purchasing decisions of Generation Z youth, associated with influencer marketing through advertising content shared on social media and based on the literature review presented in the article, the pattern matrix (Table 9) is provided. This matrix displays the rotated loadings [35] and it also identifies the

variables and reveals the latent ones for the purpose of grouping them [36]. As a result, the elements established in the applied instrument are organized into three factors: 1) Influencer empathy in the purchase decision; 2) Perception of reciprocity and benefits from the influencer with an effect on the purchase decision; 3) Influencer consistency considered in the purchase decision. These findings are consistent with the literature. According to Balseca et al. [28], influencer empathy in digital media may be the factor the audience needs to be fully convinced and make the decision to purchase a product associated with content found on digital platforms.

It is also worth noting that people seek rewards for their loyalty in order to feel valued and acknowledged for the time and frequency they dedicate to exploring the digital content they prefer. This becomes a form of influence on their everyday behavior [14, 30]. Furthermore, consistency builds trust, as emotional stability and the values that digital platform followers identify with provide a sense of security in the purchase they intend to make [15, 27].

Table 9.
Factor Analysis Results: Pattern Matrix^a

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Courtesies and gifts for followers without expecting anything in return		0.742	
Access to exclusive content		0.929	
Shares special recommendations exclusively for their followers		0.820	
Shares inspiring experiences		0.501	
Perceived trust by the audience over a long period of time			0.693
Demonstrates a strong personality with their followers			0.774
Demonstrates emotional stability with the audience			0.823
Demonstrates moral values consistent with their followers over a long period of time			0.894
Demonstrates qualities that set them apart from other influencers when communicating with their followers			0.857
Influencer's credibility	0.651		
Admiration for the influencer	0.631		
Influencer's awareness of the personal values of their followers	0.849		
Creation of valuable content that connects with their followers	0.871		
Influencer's understanding of the emotions of their followers	0.593		
Enthusiasm shown by the influencer when making recommendations	0.593		

Extraction method: maximum likelihood.

Rotation method: Promax with Kaiser normalization.

Note: a. The rotation converged in 6 iterations.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusions

Generation Z exhibits unique behavior closely tied to technology. They remain hyperconnected through mobile devices, using apps, platforms, social networks, and other technological systems as part of their daily lives. The massive amount of digital content they consume allows them to compare and draw conclusions quickly. Trust is built on specific attributes such as perceived affinity, reciprocity, and the consistency demonstrated by opinion leaders across digital platforms.

Influencer empathy is a fundamental element that goes beyond emotional connection it involves authentic engagement with the audience. In this study, Generation Z participants emphasized the importance of valuable content, credibility, and feeling emotionally understood by influencers. This also enhances the need for enthusiasm in content creation, which fosters admiration and positively influences purchasing motivation.

Building trust in influencer marketing is a key factor for Generation Z to consider advertising content and recommendations shared by opinion leaders. Participants valued reciprocity and the perception of real benefits. Inspiring experiences and access to special content, gifts, or exclusive recommendations were highlighted as motivating elements for their trust and purchasing behavior.

Consistency in how influencers present themselves on social media becomes a key factor in the decision-making process for Generation Z. This was the highest-rated component in the descriptive results. Influencers are expected to maintain moral values aligned with the audience, show distinctive organic traits, a strong personality, and emotional stability all of which contribute to building long-term trust.

The three positively influential factors found in Generation Z's purchase decisions based on the effectiveness of influencer marketing on social media are: 1) Influencer empathy; 2) Reciprocity and perceived benefits; and 3) Consistency in influencer behavior. Successful influencer marketing should be built on credibility, authenticity, and creativity qualities highly valued by Generation Z.

5.2. Implications

The implications of influencer marketing on purchase decisions can be positive, as it enables reaching a wider audience and building greater credibility through content shared on digital platforms, linking influencers with the brands they collaborate with. In this way, Generation Z individuals may experience greater satisfaction, with the influencer's empathy, reciprocity, and consistency standing out as key factors that foster long-term relationships. For this reason, ethical practices

are essential, since the improper use of these components by influencers may encourage impulsive spending and behavioral changes that could harm users without them being fully aware of their actions.

5.3. Limitations

The main limitation of this study is that the findings are based on responses from Generation Z individuals living in Tijuana, Baja California an area with cultural diversity due to its geographic location near the California (USA) border. It is necessary to replicate this research in other parts of Mexico and around the world to determine if similar results are observed. Moreover, qualitative techniques such as focus groups should be incorporated to gain deeper insights into Generation Z's opinions and how these influence their purchase decisions, thus providing qualitative information that highlights the context and particular experiences with which other participants in these sessions can identify.

5.4. Future Lines of Research

Future lines of research will focus primarily on identifying which social media platforms most strongly emphasize these influencer marketing factors, considering that each digital tool is distinguished by a format that sets it apart from others. Additionally, it is important to consider the role of opinion leaders in sharing brand collaborations through short videos, articles, podcasts, images, training content, among others. Another line of research may involve differentiating the impact of expert influencers, celebrities, macro-influencers, and micro-influencers.

Finally, a pending line of research is to specifically determine how this purchase motivation occurs in the case of travel content creators and how experiences, recommendations, reviews, and advice contribute to the decision-making process of Generation Z and Millennial individuals. Moreover, it is essential to compare whether the following factors: 1) the influencer's empathy; 2) the reciprocity and clear perception of benefits from the influencer toward the audience; and 3) the consistency of the influencer's behavior are also present in the Millennial generation, considering that they are also largely characterized by having grown up with Internet technology.

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