The impact of Online Reviews and Influencers on Customers' Purchasing Intention

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Course: Master Thesis
in Business Administration
Date: 2022-06-01
15 cr

Supervisor: Stylianos Papaioannou
Course Code: FOA 403

Abstract:

Date: (2022-5-17)

Level: Master thesis in Business Administration, 15 cr.

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Title: The impact of online reviews and influencers on customers' purchasing intention.

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Keywords: Influencers, Online reviews, Purchasing intention, Generation Y-Z.

Research question: What is the impact of online reviews and influencers on the purchase intentions of generations Y and Z of a given product or service?

Purpose: Authors are aiming to investigate how influencers and online reviews can boost the purchase intention of a brand. Hence, the authors scrutinize some of the influencers' and online reviews' characteristics and analyze their impacts on purchasing intention from a generation Y and Z customer perspective. The authors foresee expanding the literature and opening a door for further research in this narrow area of study.

Methods: a deductive research method was applied through direct questionnaires to a number of online consumers to test hypotheses in this research, and later the data was analyzed through regression and correlations tables.

Conclusion: The online reviews by previous customers have a strong impact on customer's purchase intentions. Also, the message carried by the product ambassadors such as bloggers and celebrities impacts the customers' purchase intentions. The influencers carry the image of a product and thus it is significant for the marketing brands to consider a careful selection of brand ambassadors as this impacts greatly on the future customer purchase intention.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The concept of Consumer purchase intention has been explored by marketers over the world to understand the driving forces behind consumer purchase behavior (Chen et al., 2010; Hussain & Ali, 2015). Consumers behave differently within varied markets and their behavior can be explained by some of the two most prominent theories; Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behavior (Madden et al., 1992), these main theories link the concept of consumer purchase intention to two terminal factors; influencers and consumer reviews that influence the intention of consumers and the outcome of their behaviors of the same.

According to (Ouvrein et al., 2021), influencers are defined as individuals with a relevant and significant audience that can satisfy the marketing needs of a target group. In many instances, influencers are opinion leaders whom consumers and followers look up to for expert advice and opinion regarding different products (Huang, 2015). Those influencers have been around for a long time; however, they have just been able to metamorphose over time with advancements in technology and communication media. Initially, influencers use a plethora of media and platforms; however, currently, social media has been extensively exploited by the same individuals to promote different products and brands to target consumers that comprise their audiences (Saima & Khan, 2020).

There are several social media platforms that influencers are using such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat where the consumers subscribes to their content (Freberg et al., 2011). The proliferation of influencers over social media being a medium accessible by everyone has given rise to a large group of individuals who are seeking to influence others on different matters. This group is currently known as a social media influencer because it creates content on select topics areas for the following (Freberg et al.,2011), and those

influencers are always creating content in varied forms such as audio, audiovisual, and graphics that appeal to their audiences (Saima & Khan, 2020). Over the past years, organizations and brands have taken advantage of this proliferation and utilized the same approach to market their products to their intended consumers within the market environment. Social media influencers have managed to reach and influence the vast audiences that they command, an idea that appeals to the marketing sphere (Freberg et al., 2011). The famous influencers do not always work on their own but are contracted by different brands that they promote to drive sales towards the entire brand or to select products.

On the other hand, online reviews unlike influencers are always independent opinions regarding certain products or brands that are presented to consumers (Zhu & Zhang, 2010; Chen et al., 2011). Online reviews are equally undertaken by opinion leaders who can sometimes compare the same brand or product to competitors within the market environment. The concept of online reviews has been significantly fuelled by the rise of electronic commerce as a strategic sales strategy that businesses use to distribute their products to their consumers (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). The online reviews can come in the form of posts on the different brand websites or electronic commerce platforms by independent consumers on their experiences with different products that they purchased from the brand. These reviews are always open to those customers who make purchases from the electronic commerce platforms to give their opinions regarding their experiences with the service or the product itself and whether they would recommend the same product to other individuals.

These online reviews are independent of brand or organizational influence as in the case of those present on the electronic commerce websites (Cui et al., 2012). These consumers are always given a chance to express themselves regarding their experience with a given product.

These reviews can always be in the form of text and graphics where they can write their opinions regarding the product and as well go ahead and post pictures or videos of the same product and post to the platform for the other consumers to see what they experienced with the product (Cui et al., 2012). It is worthwhile to note that the different consumers do not always review the products that they receive only, however, in many cases, they also go ahead and evaluate other intricate aspects such as customer service within the organization. The other users are always able to see the same within these electronic commerce platforms or the official websites of these brands or business organizations that operate on the internet.

Also, reviews come in the form of stars which rank the level of satisfaction that consumers have with the products that they bought (Saumya et al., 2018). In many instances, reviews are out of five-star ratings where five stars depict high-quality products or services while one star indicates the contrary which could be a dismal performance of the commodity or poor customer service that failed to satisfy the customer. So, the consumers will leave behind their ratings and the sites average all the ratings to come up with a general rating for the product or service (Saumya et al., 2018). Other than the electronic commerce platforms, these users can always make reviews of the products or services on dedicated online review platforms such as Yelp (Gaillot, 2021), and these platforms are impartial and strive to capture the accurate opinion of the different users of the products that are reviewed on the platform for the legitimacy of the practice and to avoid misinformation. On the other hand, some dedicated online reviewers choose to review different products on their social media platforms such as YouTube of the purchases that they make (Gaillot, 2021). It is important to mention here that there is a slimline between such online reviewers and the influencers because in some cases, they are not always independent in their opinion given that they are always contracted by brands and offer products that they are supposed to review (Cui et al., 2012).

Hence, online reviews and influencers affect the different market segments in different ways, segmentation based on the age of these consumers is important in discribing the different impacts of the marketing approaches within the intended markets. Young people fulfilled such social roles even before the word "influencer" was invented, by originating and interpreting trends (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). A younger generation of influencers has emerged in recent years. Members of Generation Z roughly defined as those born between 1995 and 2010 are truly digital natives, having grown up with access to the internet, social media, and mobile devices. In this environment, a hypercognitive generation has grown up knowing how to gather and cross-reference a wide range of sources of knowledge, as well as how to integrate virtual as well as offline experiences (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

In fact, generation Y, alternatively known as the millennial generation, applies to persons born between 1982 but also 2005 (Eckleberry-Hunt & Tucciarone, 2011). This is the most recent generation to begin working. Leaders from a variety of fields are paying attention to the problems and possibilities that come with training this special group. Generation Y, like their parents, desires to establish a tight relationship with authoritative people. They want to know that their bosses are concerned about them as individuals. They want to be treated as unique individuals. Generation Y loves to work with bosses who are friendly, helpful, communicative, and motivating. However, a personal friendship might have the unintended consequence for generation Y sharing intimate, even frightening, information in an informal manner. Furthermore, millennials are unafraid to share their thoughts and criticism without regard for a suitable organization (Eckleberry-Hunt & Tucciarone, 2011). These two generations; Y and Z respond differently to influencers and online reviews and this impacts their purchase intentions differently.

1.2 Problematization

Appropriate marketing plans should always be able to accurately quantify or estimate the level of impact that a given strategy may have on the entire plan (Wymer, 2011). Impacts of marketing strategies are very essential in the prioritization or making important decisions on the continuity of the strategies or discontinuation.

Online reviews and influencers have formed part of the marketing strategies of different brands all the world over (Sethi & Kapoor, 2021). But it is unclear how these two aspects impact the businesses or the different brands that apply these elements in their plans to target consumers within generations Y and Z (Pauliene & Sedneva, 2019). Meanwhile, evaluation of the efficiency of a marketing strategy is essential in identifying or understanding whether the different strategies that are applied actually bear fruits. Therefore, it is imperative to understand how the two market segments; generation Y and Z respond to online reviews and influencers to optimize their purchase intentions (Dalol et al ., 2021).

The failure to understand the impacts of online consumer reviews and influencers on generation Y and Z purchase intentions becomes a huge problem for a brand or business organization that is trying to push its products online. This gap limits the performance of the marketing plan and also predisposes the plan to unforeseen challenges that could be avoided by the determination of the different impacts of the same on consumer purchase intentions (Pauliene & Sedneva, 2019). This problem poses a huge dilemma in 21st-century marketing that is dominated by the internet and social media platforms that have become the primary sources of information and increase awareness throughout the world.

1.3 Research purpose

The ability to evaluate the impact of a marketing strategy is a very essential aspect in determining its efficiency as well as its performance. This research aims to enumerate the impacts that the different forms of online consumer reviews and influencers as marketing strategies have on generations Y and Z purchase intentions. Then, to determine and appreciate the different factors that are involved in the two strategies, and appreciate how it can improve marketing by brands and businesses in relation to generations Y and Z.

Hence, this research is practical and intends to impact the businesses or brands that operate online, and also take part in electronic commerce as one of the main means of distributing their products to generations Y and Z within the target market. Hence, the ability to understand how these two elements impact consumer intention can then by extension contribute to increases in sales and other things throughout the entire brand or business organization. Therefore, essentially, this study is meant to help improve the understanding of the concepts of online customer reviews and influencers concerning generations. Y and Z purchase intentions, which is one of the main aspects that businesses are striving to explore and appreciate.

1.4 Research Questions

This research is meant to explore the impacts that online consumer reviews and influencers have on generation Y and Z customers in terms of purchase intentions. This study aims to achieve the main aim of this study by answering the following research questions throughout its methodology and elaboration:

What is the impact of online reviews and influencers on the purchase intentions of generations Y and Z of a given product or service?

1.5 Research structure

This research study consists of eight main chapters which are illustrated as follows:

Figure 2 Thesis structure

Chapter 1 includes the background, problematization discussion, and purpose of this research. Chapter one aims to build a basic understanding of what influencers, online reviews, and purchase intention are, and why it is important for companies. This chapter also introduces the problem and the objectives in this chapter.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review of previous research and aims to give the reader a better understanding of the issue. The authors tackle the previous concepts in detail to ensure clarity in this section.

Chapter 3 explains the theoretical framework and presents how the authors constructed the hypothesis questions that correspond to the goals of this study and further provides a clear understanding of the correlation of each influencer and online review with purchase intention.

Chapter 4 presents this study's research approach and the methods of data collection

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the questionnaire conducted.

Chapter 6 discusses the analysis of data collected in numbers.

Chapter 7 is the discussion of the findings depending on the literature review and the theoretical framework and whether the results confirm the hypothesis or not.

Chapter 8 explains the results of the research and what it means for the reader.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This Chapter presents the phenomenon overview of influencers, online reviews, and customer purchasing intentions separately, then embarks on the goal of the research. The study's primary objective is to identify the impact of influencers and online reviews on customer purchasing intention, especially among generations Y and Z. It is worthwhile noting that the impact of online-generated consumer information on customer purchase decisions has been empirically proven in previous studies. Online consumer reviews of items or services, in particular, have a huge influence on a customer's attitude and behavior, and later on business sales and profitability (Zhu & Zhang, 2010) Influencers also have a substantial contribution to consumer behavior and purchasing intention. The brand name of a product that might be viewed as a summary of Customer impressions, prior consumer experiences, and current customer perceptions are all things that firms should consider.

2.1 Online Reviews

An online review refers to a review that has been made by a customer who bought a certain product or service. It is from the sources that potential customers rely on gathering information about the product or the service they want to buy. In a digital marketplace, most businesses have embraced the era by ensuring that they have a digital platform where their customers can enquire or post reviews regarding the particular product of that business.

There are distinguishable different types of online review platforms. The grouping of these platforms encompasses programs majorly created for consumer comments, such as the video-sharing platforms, which were originally meant for other purposes but attracted reviews for some products, and the independent customer review platforms (Wang et al, 2020). A video-sharing platform, personal blogs, independent customer review platforms, and

retail websites are categorized by the studies as the platforms encompassing consumer-generated comments in consumer review form (Burtona & Khammash, 2010). These platforms can be classified further because they contain content in different formats. A platform is usually segmented into various parts; review section, website names, or catchwords (Burtona & Khammash, 2010).

First, the blogging sites, particularly those that often write about the consumer experiences of the services and the product have been extremely popular in this era. Bloggers' reviews contain their experiences and service or product information (Fan &Gordon, 2014). Bloggers always perceive themselves as having phenomenal knowledge of certain products and thus usually specialize in them in their reviews (Fan &Gordon, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of a blog is to spread purchasing experiences concerning certain categories of products and then provide recommendations to other consumers. Therefore, consumers utilize this tool in informing themselves before they make purchase decisions (Huang, 2015). Since the bloggers' recommendations are perceived as an important marketing instrument for communication and a crucial source for customers to make a purchasing decision (Lu, et al., 2014), most of the bloggers are ideas leaders.

Second, Retail websites focus on the marketing and sale of services or goods via the internet. Thus, its primary content in the review platforms emanates from the key marketers. Therefore, it is categorized as private ownership (Liu et al, 2014). The primary purpose of retail websites is to market and sell retail shop products and review the supporting platforms by boosting the consumer satisfaction and service quality, such that the potential customers will be attracted by the reviews of customers whose experience was positive purchasing from them (Fan &Gordon, 2014).

Third, the video-sharing platform supports video posting that encompasses product advertisements, personal videos, or political messages (Preece & Shneiderman, 2009). The platform's main purpose is to offer consumers a platform where they can freely upload and share reviews in the form of a video concerning the general terms, interests, and website conditions. Contribution and relations among the platform members in terms of videos and remarks exchange shows that online reviews have an impact on customer product choice (Preece & Shneiderman, 2009).

In general, platforms are independent because it is not linked to the retailer's store; thus, such platforms do not offer services or products on their websites. Further, an independent consumer review platform is meant to display services or products and reviews for easy comparisons (Chua & Banerjee, 2015). It is categorized as public because of its lack of connection to stores. Potential customers can write comments about the products, and similar to retail websites, content for the review can be any kind of aggregate, the open-ended consumer-authored remarks concerning a product and ratings in the form of a numerical star (Chua & Banerjee, 2015).

In essence, communication emblems social motives while an individual's purchasing motives entail information seeking and physical activity, these motives are not the same because the customer's simple process of seeking information from online sources differs due to various purchasing intentions thus pushing them to rely on reviews (Henning-Thurau & Walsh, 2003). Customers perceive online communities as essential and empowering tools for making undoubtful decisions on product purchasing (Burtona & Khammash, 2010). The literature presents different reasons why consumers rely on online reviews in four categories: quality seeking, informational behavior, social belonging, and risk reduction (Henning-Thurau & Walsh, 2003; Burtona & Khammash, 2010; Klein & T.Ford, 2003).

It is also important to mention that the online customer reviews' dependence on making an informed product purchase is increasing tremendously as consumers take it as a low-cost method of information seeking (Klein & Ford, 2003). Communication of attaining particular ends, such as accurate information regarding services or products, motivates customers to look for opinions from online reviews (Burtona & Khammash, 2010). Therefore, information seeking can be the primary phase of consumer decision-making by actively gathering and integrating information from several sources to reduce risk is among the roots of the motivations. Henning-Thurau and Walsh (2003) argue that search time reduction and minimized purchasing process are usually the self-involvement motives resulting in information searching behavior. The information searching from online reviews entails motives like learning the consumption process of the product and the new products in the markets. Customers seek to discover the quality of the product and thus consider visiting online platforms for reviews before they decide whether to purchase the product or not.

Uniquely, customers exhibit uncertainties concerning the purchase decisions and the possible outcomes that can emanate from those decisions. Alongside purchase experiences and brand image, consumers search for information from the company's former customers to scale down any chances of risk of unknown repercussions of their takes (Burtona & Khammash, 2010). Customers view online consumer reviews as less risky and more useful and trustworthy than the information from the marketers. The process of searching for a review can be perceived as a guarantee to the customer and risk-free, and the right choice to be made. Particularly, when the customers intend to purchase a huge-priced commodity, seeking reviews is intensively done to reduce the uncertainties (Henning-Thurau & Walsh, 2003). Therefore, risk minimization is the second motive for consumers reading online reviews.

In either case, consumers choose to belong to a certain virtual community to easily access reviews and ratings for various products produced by different brands or companies (Klein & Ford, 2003). These communities are found within the customer review platforms. Through the platforms, they can get users with whom they share interests concerning a particular service or product and then establish communications regarding the same. For instance, personal blogs mainly focus on a specific category of product and thus usually pull numbers of customers with similar interests (Huang, 2015). Online opinion platforms have communication chances, such as an opportunity to contact directly to the author of the review and inquire more about the product or comment on their reviews, leading to an established bond in that particular bond. Therefore, social belonging can pull together peer groups who are potential customers within those platforms.

2.2 Influencers

Several factors lead young adults to follow influencers and thus click and purchase more of the products the influencers advertise. One of the factors is information seeking, as mentioned earlier (Sohn et al, 2020). Youths come to the online platforms to seek information concerning an entirely different issue, and as they surf the internet, they come across an advert by a particular influencer they follow online (Croes &Bartels, 2021). Then buying intention is triggered by the product being advertised.

The second factor is information sharing which has the same effect as information seeking (Sohn et al, 2020). Boredom and relaxing "online music" also motivate young adults to get online where they find the influencers, and their buying behavior gets twisted towards buying certain products. Finally, habits, news, and cool trends also make the millennial and

generation Z people influenced by the media, increasing the urge for a particular product (Croes &Bartels, 2021).

Many brands use influencers to spread their message to the target audiences. Influencer marketing majors in the use of public figures to pass information concerning the products to their potential customers (Smart Insights 2017). Social media influencers are the contemporary third-party tools for endorsement in this technological era (Freberg et al., 2011). They profoundly give a hand in publicizing the product information and the recent or the latest promotions to their online followers through different social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. As they interact with their fans, Social media influencers provide them with product updates (Markethub, 2016).

In the marketing realm, an endorsement is a vital tool in maintaining the company's positive image and attainment of its corporate goals. When compared to other marketing approaches (like celebrity endorsement), influencers have taken a milestone to become endorsers by creating various buzzwords, and they have been viewed as the most cost-effective and efficient marketing strategy (Paul et., al, 2016; Talaverna, 2015). Moreover, influencers pose good results, fascinating results in customer persuasion, and media coverage (Booth &Matic 2011).

Companies typically depend on social media influencers who have many followers on their platforms' accounts, such as bloggers, as their brand ambassadors according to the influencer marketing ideas (Tapinfluence 2017). Customers usually perceive social media influencers' posts as more captivating and reliable, as evidenced by a substantial percentage of followers' views in which the potential customers are more likely to comply with their favorite bloggers' ideas (Talaverna, 2015). Due to influencers' capacity to easily establish good relationships

with consumers, influencers have been seen as trustworthy, useful, and more effective than celebrities in promotion and marketing techniques. They are highly relied upon by companies targeting the younger generation in the market segmentation.

Influencer marketing can produce more than ten times greater "returns on investments (ROI) than other forms of marketing, as per the marketing survey conducted by Neilsen (Tapinfluence, 2017). Celebrity promotion and marketing techniques, on the other hand, be more effective in the realization of brand recognition among potential consumers; however, social media influencers are definitely more effective in triggering brand loyalty and product engagement (Tapinfluence, 2017). This is due to the outstanding ability to offer better communication in every market segmentation.

Organizations believe that influencer endorsement can guarantee accuracy in passing the product information to consumers (Amoateng &Poku 2013). Owing to this widespread norm, every brand has been seeking to rely on endorsements on every social media platform. Media Kix marketing highlights that over 70% of internet marketers trust that influencers are the outstanding prospective endorsers who can help their businesses grow (Digital marketing institute, 2021) . The use of these statistics can justify the importance of influencers in determining consumers' purchasing intention. The recent influencer marketing approximates that about 50% of businesses have augmented their budget allocation to cater to the influencers who promote and market their products (Digital marketing institute, 2021). Furthermore, influencers are seen as highly authentic mediums for delivering and offering demonstrations about the promoted products to their huge list of fans (Tapinfluece 2017).

One of the aims of this research is to deeply comprehend the concept of influencers by assessing their impact on consumer purchase intention and attitude. Morwitz (2014) contends that purchase intention is the most common tool for measuring the effectiveness and

efficiency of a marketing strategy. The research on the impact of influencers on two generations Y and Z will be explored. As a result, identifying the effect of influencers on purchase intention via consumers' attitudes could presumably provide significant relation and insights to every marketer, thus offering a scheme of developing promotional and marketing techniques to create positive and useful consumer decision-making relating to their services and products.

2.3 Customers' purchasing intention

Customer purchase intentions refer to the willingness of a consumer to buy a particular service or commodity. It is a dependent variable that is determined by both internal and external factors (Morwitz, 2014). Purchase intentions can also be referred to as the respondent's attitude measure towards availing of a service or purchasing a product. It is a very crucial metric in marketing. Marketing based on consumers' intentions results in the production of products or services based on the customer's intentions or the intent to accept, purchase or use a certain service or product that may not or may have been well mentioned by the brand or company (Wang et al, 2020).

As a measuring tool, purchase intention considers reliable in designing promotions and marketing opportunities (Lu et al., 2014). Customer intent can bring ease in iterating the kind of marketing content that should be included in the advertisement (Morwitz, 2014). The consumer intention can reflect the knowledge of customers' minds concerning the product. Based on intent as measurement, planners can use it to develop a marketing design. The customers' purchase intentions can be analyzed to create an integrated map that would serve as the blueprint for an advertising campaign.

Marketing managers measure and use purchase intention to decide on existing and new services and products. Purchase intention can be relied on in the prediction of future sales. Knowledge of its determinants is necessary to deliver efficiently in those roles. This brings the significance of conducting research on the impacts of online reviews and influencers on consumer purchase intention.

A marketing strategy that bases its measurement on purchase intentions warrants augmented return on investment in marketing activities. Having an exact measure or an idea concerning the customers' intent can help design the market activities to reach the target audience or segment and yield products with the desired results that extremely involve consumers and greater return on the investment (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). This occurs because of the lack of the necessity for awareness about the service or product rendered by the company or a brand in a customer's mind before they promote (Morwitz, 2014). Consumer purchase intentions can be predicted or estimated like any other measurement and recorded according to the interaction database and the customer behavioral data, captured at times when the consumer tries to buy a service or product, and by any chance, the purchase fails to occur or the transactions get aborted.

Purchase intention measurement source may come from search marketing which is commonly known as search engine optimization or search engine marketing. Other sources of customer intent information include site data, point of sale, off-site activities, or consumer relationship managers (Lu et al., 2014). The data retrieved from the social networks, social data, can be very crucial. It is one of the most vital aspects that can ensure business an everlasting project. Provided the customers have intentions of buying from a particular business, make a season thus this business can thrive. The success of a business is closely linked to consumer intent (Morwitz, 2014). Online reviews and influencers can be among the

determinants of purchase intention, and this form evokes the need for this study. Building trust in the company or brand helps keep customer loyalty.

2.4 Online reviews and purchasing intention

In the media platforms, people who visit the sites are provided with a dialogue box to comment about their experience with specific products or services from particular brand makers. These comments left by users are the ones called online reviews (Choshaly & Mirabolghasemi, 2020). Reviews are also referred to as "social proof tools," which business people employ to make up media presence and trust among the sites' visitors (Huang, 2015). Most customers are looking for information about services or products they wish to buy (Zhang et al., 2020). The reviews are famous for their ability to spark customers' desire to purchase certain goods or services. The sites mostly use enticing and straightforward language to popularize the products or services (Choshaly & Mirabolghasemi, 2020). Online reviews turned out to be the front of digital advertisements where they are more responsible for how the customers' buying behavior changes (Zhang et al., 2020).

One of the advantages that reviews have on businesses; is helping the companies be noticed by the relevant customers (Burtona & Khammash, 2010). People who are looking for a particular product will search online for it; on those sites, pop-ups or ads of other users' comments are displayed showing similar or related products. Thus, the attention of the customer deviates towards another similar product where they get to know about the existence of the product (Zhang et al., 2020). Adding to this, online reviews also trigger the customer to look for the contacts of the suppliers of the products and call them for deliveries. There has been an eruption in the house-to-house delivery business (Burtona & Khammash, 2010). Customer needs only to call or text the producers of the product or service they are

looking for and get it delivered to their doorstep without necessarily leaving their house to go and look for the product themselves (Zhang et al., 2020).

2.5 Influencers and purchasing intention

In the millennial and generation z error, influencers are being used to create awareness of producers' products, brands, and services than before through influencer marketing (Belanche et al., 2021). This type of marketing involves placing influencers' products and endorsements on social media. An influencer has built an excellent reputation in a specific topic or field and regularly posts it on the internet platforms (Jarrar et al, 1970).

The method of consumer engagement has greatly been affected by the invention of social media, which came into force during the period when the two generations (generation Y and Z) emerged. Social media thus became the central advertising hub for the two generations (Jarrar et al, 1970). The move made companies change their way of advertising their products to their audience by competing in identifying the critical leaders known as influencers to increase the promotion of the products.

Those leaders generate recommendations through the use of "electronic word-of-mouth" and virtual words encouraging the relevant audience to engage in buying the concerned company's products(Belanche et al., 2021). The origin of the motivation that makes the target audience follow these influencers has been debated by many researchers. The influencers have some reputable knowledge in their fields of specialization. Through the independent research, the literature gap mentioned will be understood better (Belanche et al., 2021).

Chapter 3. Theoretical framework

Consumer purchase intention is influenced by a variety of factors as portrayed by the two theories, Reasoned Action and Planned Behavior (Fitzmaurice, 2005; Yousafzai et al., 2010). However, it is worthwhile noting that consumer purchase intention is just a single step within the entire purchase process or the consumer attraction funnel. The preceding aspects are the different factors that determine the consumer intention while the succeeding factors are the outcomes of consumer purchase intention which is the target behavior. In the marketing and business environment at large, the main target behavior is almost always making a purchase by the different consumers. It is important for the different marketers to generate a lead and close a sale and this is something that plays a huge role in determining and influencing their performance as professionals.

The theory of Reasoned Action argues that all the decisions and intentions of the consumers are not randomized and are determined by attitude and the normative beliefs of the individuals (Madden et al., 1992). The attitude defines how the consumers feel regarding a certain product that is marketed to them by the marketers. These consumer attitudes are influenced by the different aspects of their environments. For instance, given marketing strategies could trigger or incite appropriate consumer behavior among different individuals while others can trigger positive reactions (Madden et al., 1992).

Consumers have different personalities and view different aspects variedly eliciting varied responses within a group of consumers. The attitude of consumers is always strongly tied up to how they feel about a certain aspect of their environment or something that they are exposed to by the marketers or anyone trying to sell them something. These differences in reaction in many cases are always inborn contributing to the uniqueness. The normative

behaviors of consumers are determined by the different social groups and social pressure surrounding the same individuals (Goldenberg & Laschinger, 1991). Two very essential aspects that interact and operate within the market environment today strongly align to the same, influencers and online consumer reviews.

3.1-The impact of customers' reviews on purchasing intention

Online reviews fall on the subjective or normative aspects that influence consumer purchase intention according to the theory of Reasoned Action. Depending on how an individual chooses to see the two aspects, it can belong to both or just a single perspective. First, the online reviews can inform the attitudes of the consumers or can be looked at from the normative perspective of the majority of opinion depending on the populous trend (Chen et al., 2011). On the other hand, the concept of influencers can be either subjective or normative depending on whether a consumer focuses on the content of the influencer or the amount of following that they command through their platforms to determine their legitimacy.

Scholars in the fields of psychology and marketing have also explored the concept of consumer purchase intention from the theoretical perspective of planned behavior (Paul et al., 2016). The theory of planned behavior is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action that brings in the concept of control beliefs in addition to the two determinants of purchase intention which are behavioral and normative beliefs. According to this theory, the different consumers have control over how they respond to the different influences that they receive with regards to making certain decisions or exhibiting given behavior (Paul et al., 2016). This theory of planned behavior takes into account all the different aspects that influence consumer purchase intention in an attempt to determine the final consumer behavioral outcomes within the market environment.

3.1.1 The positive impact of online reviews on purchasing intention for generation Y-Z

The internet majorly drives the current world. The ideas and information exchange are through wireless connectivity leading to the rise of "electronic word-of-mouth," which is the top face of the online shoppers and services/products reviews (Henning-Thurau & Walsh, 2003). In making their purchase decisions, more than 50% of US citizens rely heavily on the online videos and comments, that review a particular product or service (Liu et al., 2020). There has emerged a "multi-sided platform" which allows a one-on-one engagement between the customers and sellers of certain products where the relevant information is readily displayed and answers being sought by the buyer are answered. A buyer looks for an online review to know the product's utility, and in the process, the untimely boosting of their purchasing intent happens. The reviews can be either relevant or not, determining how credible the review is concerning the target audience(Liu et al., 2020). The reviewers look at the social standing and personality of the target groups and the type of language used. These factors determine how exciting and enticing the review is to the reader, affecting the customer's buying intention (Liu et al., 2020).

The votes from clients allowed by media platforms on their shopping experiences determine the reviews' credibility (Zhong et al, 2021). For a review to be helpful, various factors are considered: the review's length, recency and sediment, and the type of advertised products. Some products that are in higher demand than others will have helpful votes(Wang et al., 2020). More extended reviews have more positive feedback as they provide more details and information about a product, making customers understand it more and vice-versa(Zhong et al, 2021). Reviews with visual content like pictures and videos submitted by the users also capture the attention of the young adults more and increase their purchasing intentions towards a product or service. Such good reviews boost the purchasing morale of the

millennial and generation z customers since they get satisfied by the usefulness of the product they are looking for and leave a positive comments at the end of their purchases (Wang et al., 2020).

3.1.2 Positive impact of negative reviews on purchasing intention

(Luan, 2021) has found that negative reviews can positively impact a product or service. The most positive effect that can be realized through a negative review is the creation of awareness of a product's existence.

Regardless of the reviews' reputations, they all create product awareness to the relevant audience. In one way or the other, they increase the morale of young adults to search for the same product online frequently, which further spreads its popularity(Luan et al., 2021). With the increasing awareness of the development and sales, the sites can master how to manage the negative reviews with time to increase their effectiveness and make them more positive in the advertising arena (Pantano & Corvello, 2013). The repetition of the product reviews captures the target audience's attention and applies that knowledge when comparing the good and bad products for purchasing purposes. The unpopular brand memory is enhanced with the created awareness. The arousal from negative reviews results in a narrowing of attention, leading to a better memory of the brands and products. Sometimes, the review valence memory can fade and dissociate. Thus, the remaining familiarity and awareness of the unpopular product/brand from negative reviews experience positive reversion, thus producing a positive effect (Luan et al., 2021).

H1: Online reviews have a positive impact on generation Y and Z consumers' purchase intention.

3.2 The impact of Influencers on purchasing intention:

The normative behavior is always determined in many cases by the people who the consumers respect their opinions, or rather, opinion leaders in different fields (Goldenberg & Laschinger, 1991). These normative influences can come from within the consumer's close social environment. For instance, consumer purchase intentions can be determined by the friends or the need to identify with a certain group. In other instances, it can be due to the influence of family or close partners within the lives of these consumers who they trust and rely on their judgment. These social aspects that define the reaction of an individual to a certain idea or determine their purchase intentions are important to marketers.

The influencers (bloggers and vloggers) have several ways to affect the buying behaviors of products or people's buying intentions, either negatively or positively. Various factors are responsible for the relationship between the influencers and the young adults buying intentions. One of these factors is social identification. In social contexts, different people define themselves as belonging to a specific group (Gazi & G., 1970). In the marketing context, this is one of the predictors of the individual's behavior in society and is used by advertisers of products to

increase their sales through influencers (Belanche et al., 2021). If an individual identifies themselves with a particular group, they are tied to specific products consumed by the group; thus, influencers apply that knowledge to increase the trust, loyalty, and consumption of such brands by the target persons. Social identification of the influencers also influences the buying behavior of young adults. Thus companies tend to be selective on the type of influencers to use on different social platforms depending on their social belonging (Chopra,

2021). Some young adults identify themselves with famous people or celebrities, which in turn they show clicking on their online advertising and the higher their frequent online buying of the product. Young adults rely on influencers to get relevant information on specific products instead of researching the product themselves (Belanche et al., 2021).

Thus, trust and credibility are crucial factors in making influencers positively affect the youth customers' buying intention (Saima & Khan, 2020). Influencers describe helpful information about chosen products which allows interested people to understand the quality and the performance of these products. Indeed, the information that influencers present to the public or the way they introduce a new product can allocate new customers (Saima & Khan, 2020). So what influencers really do is engage their followers with a specific brand and stimulate a real shopping experience for the potential customers (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

H2: Influencers have a positive impact on generation Y and Z customers' purchase intention.

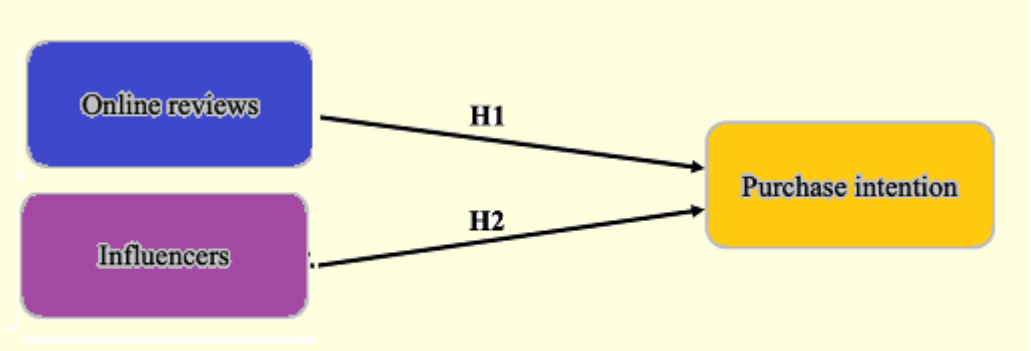

Figure 1

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1 Research approach:

A number of researchers explored the impact of influencers or online reviews on purchase intention besides other variables such as social media-picked advertising. Still, the relation between those variables is not clear, especially with the absence of age consideration for most of the research, that the impact of influencers for example on generations Y and Z is more than on generation x (Croes &Bartels, 2021).

Researchers such (Belanche et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020) did not constrain the relation between the influencers and online reviews with the purchase intention of young customers they allowed both relations to correlate and they suggest future research that analyzes the interplay between those variables. Back to the question about the impact of online reviews and influencers on purchase intentions of generations Y and Z of given products the framework in this study is analyse the nature of the relation between these variables where this research focuses on variables that have been explored by many researchers that already mention in literature review and try to continue what previous researches have studied before using the deductive approach. The deductive approach enables the relationship between theory and perceptions of the social world to create an image of an external objective reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

This study tries to fit these research ideas into a predetermined theoretical account and develop theories of customer intention of generations Y and Z through quantitative data.

Along with it will try to find answers to these questions by studying the customer's perception. This research was carried out by conducting questionnaires from customers that have been involved in purchasing online activities in Sweden. In conclusion, built upon primary quantitative data, quantitative methods study the relationship between certain variables by collecting numerical data (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Through the previous multiple forms, the authors will be able to form a deductive generalization.

4.2 Primary data

4.2.1 Segment of generation Y and Z:

According to a survey by Harvard business made in 19 countries in 2017; generation Y or Millennials are those who were born between 1984 and 1996, and generation Z are those who were born after 1997, This study focuses on generation Y and Z, cause as mentioned earlier, those generations are relying more on technology especially when it comes to the purchasing activities. In order to ensure the clarity of this research, the authors had to choose a customer segment that represents the majority of those who are affected by influencers and online reviews. Indeed, samples that are picked for convenience regularly meet deliberate sample criteria selections that are applicable to the researchers' examination point.

4.2.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique:

After segmenting the respondents into two categories (generation Y and Z), the sample determination was carried out following a purposive sampling technique. A purposive sampling technique refers to a sampling method respondents of a study are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment. Ideally, the method follows a deliberate choice of respondents with a particular attribute under investigation (Campbell et al., 2020).

In this study, the focus was to draw inferences on the influence of online reviews and influencers on the customer purchase intentions of generations Y and Z. Therefore, the focus was purposefully to understand the effect of online reviews and influencers on purchasing intentions of generations Y and Z and not any other respondent. Thus, the inclusion criterion for selecting the respondents was an age bracket of range between 25 and 40 years for generation Y and age between 10 and 24 years (Ames et al., 2019).

To determine the sample size, a target population of 500 respondents from each generation was put into consideration. Further, using the sample size determination by Taherdoost (2016) was used. The formula is stated as follows:

$$sample\ size = \frac{\frac{Z^2XP(1-P)}{Z^2}}{1+(\frac{Z^2XP(1-P)}{E^2N})}$$

Whereby, N is the target population (500), Z is the Z-score (1.96), P is the standard deviation, and E is the margin of error. Using this formula, the sample size for each generation was 200. The formula is preferred because it has a small margin of error.

4.2.3 Primary data collection:

The questions are formulated with Likert rating scale answers, related to influencers and online reviews and their correlation with the purchasing intention. By using Likert scales or multiple choices, the survey gives all respondents the possibility to reflect on scales 1-7 and from the range “strongly agree” to the range “strongly disagree”. This type of scale allows one to gain more reliability regarding conclusions about the investigated topic in the research (Anastasiadou et al., 2018). This kind of scale allows the survey respondent to rate themselves according to relevant statements, where each statement focuses on understanding a specific behavior. Indeed, each of the three variables in this survey was investigated with four statements.

4.3 Secondary data

The authors collected needed data from business journals and similar articles on databases Web of Science and ABI/Inform Global. In order to find the relevant data that meet the main research question, the authors used keywords, purchase intention, influencers, online reviews, and online stores. The secondary data provides an advantage of saving both time and money (Vartanian 2011). Adding to this, using the secondary data from trustworthy articles has the advantage that they give accurate measures since the information has already been collected. Whereas secondary data disadvantage is that websites can be noncredible or a book from a library can contain nonvalid information if it is an old edition for example. (Kotler. P & Armstrong. G, 2016). The authors in this research make sure to gather the most related information, which indeed helps in answering the research question.

The collected data were analyzed using different strategies such as frequency statistics, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics. Regarding the frequency statistics, the

demographic information of the respondents was summarized in terms of frequencies and percentages. The demographic information comprised of gender and age distribution for generations Y and Z respondents.

Descriptive statistics entails summarizing the collected data in terms of central tendencies measures such as mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values. Descriptive statistics helps in establishing the distribution structure of the collected data and predefines how reliable is the data in carrying out further statistical modeling and estimations. In this study, online reviews, influencers, and customer purchase intentions for generations Y and Z were considered and information was summarized in terms of mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics are analyses that are conducted to show any significant relationships and effects of one variable on another variable. This study considered correlation and regression analysis in evaluating the relationship and impact of the online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intention generations Y and Z.

In particular, correlation analysis helps in pointing out the direction of the relationship and whether the relationship is significantly negative or positive (Plotnikov et al., 2018). In other words, a correlation coefficient that is negative portrays a negative relationship between the variables and the converse is true. The correlation coefficient runs from -1 to 1. The correlation coefficient near zero depicts a weak relationship between the variables in question and a correlation coefficient close to 0.5 shows an average relationship between the variables. Moreover, a value closer to 1 depicts a strong relationship between the variables in question (Busu et al., 2019).

Regression analysis refers to a test that evaluates the extent to which an independent variable impacts the dependent variable. The test entails three parts; model summary which entails the

coefficient of determination (R-square) which helps in describing the amount of variation of a dependent variable that is explained by the selected independent variables (Sarstedt, M., & Mooi, 2019). The second phase is the ANOVA which shows the value of the F-statistics that shows whether the set hypotheses are rejected or accepted based on the P-value of the F-statistic value. A p-value of less than 0.05, implies that the model is statistically fit and that the set hypotheses accepted. The last phase is the coefficient estimate which shows the extent to which the independent variables impact the dependent variable. The signs of the coefficient estimates are evaluated so as to determine how much of the independent variable impacts the dependent variable.

4.4 Reliability and Validity

4.4.1 The research Validity

The validity of a study is approved when researchers provide a description of how the data have been collected and present the different levels of the analysis and the decision made throughout the research (Saunders,2016). In the same way, there is a clear explanation for data collection resources in this study, besides the figures and measurement tables that allow readers to have a close look at how authors ended up with their conclusion.

4.4.2 The research reliability:

When authors are able to apply the same research design and reach the same results as well, that gives their research reliability (Saunders et al., 2016, p.202). Similarly, in this study, the reliability was ensured; the authors started research by collecting secondary data from relevant research studies that discuss similar topics and which support the research questions in this study about what impact influencers and online reviews have on youth customers purchasing intention. For that purpose, the authors depended first on both MDU university

library and Google Scholar in collecting the secondary data beside a number of reliable websites. In addition, The authors made the survey on google and applied a reliable program that many researchers apply in marketing research in majoring data which is the SPSS program.

In addition, the authors made the survey on google and applied a reliable program that many researchers apply in marketing research in majoring data which is the SPSS program. In this case, the reliability of the questionnaire instrument used in collecting data regarding the online reviews, influencers, and customer purchase intention of generations Y and Z was evaluated using the Cronbach's Alpha test, whereby a benchmark value of 0.70 and above was regarded as reliable (Bryman & Bell, 2017), was used to make the assertion that the tool used was sufficient in meeting the study's desired results. To achieve this, all study variable measure items were included in determining Cronbach's Alpha.

The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis:

Group	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items included
Generation Y	.717	13
Generation Z	0.785	13
Overall	0.751	13

The findings are shown in Table 1 indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for generation Y is 0.717 and that of generation Z is 0.785. Also, the overall Cronbach's Alpha for the study is 0.751. Comparatively, all the coefficients are above 0.7 which is the benchmark for decision making that the data collection instrument was highly reliable, and the items included in it were valid hence the results from the further analysis are sufficiently desirable.

Chapter 5. Empirical findings:

This chapter entails an analysis of the collected data. The collected data was analyzed in line with the set objectives and research hypotheses. The analysis was conducted following three approaches. The first one is the frequency statistics which was carried out to summarize the demographic information of generations Y and Z in the form of frequencies and percentages. The second approach was descriptive statistics which was conducted to summarize the collected data regarding the variable measurement measures in terms of central tendency measures such as mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. The third approach was inferential statistics which was carried out to test the set hypotheses and make deductions as per the study theory and literature. The inferential statistics used in this study comprise correlation and regression analysis as the analyses were deemed fit to uncover the study's leading question of how online reviews and influencers impact the customer purchase intentions of the generations Y and Z.

The research results were organized as follows; section one of this chapter covered the reliability and validity analysis, section two covered the demographic and respondent's information summary analysis, section three covered the descriptive statistics of the study variables to show the data summary, section four entailed inferential statistics which was organized as per the two set hypotheses in their respective order. The last section under this chapter was a detailed discussion of the results to establish key trends and facts about the results collaborated with the literature review and in line with the theory informing the study. The results were presented in tables and figures for an easier understanding and inferencing. The chapter was organized as follows:

5.1 Descriptive Statistics of Variable Measures:

The study focused on three key study variables. These consist of online reviews which were measured using various test items. It was included as one of the independent variables. The second variable is the influence which was measured using various test items and it was the second independent variable. The key dependent variable was the customer purchase intentions and it was measured using variable items. The collected test items in form of statements measured using a 7-Likert scale with 1 captured completely disagree and 7 captured completely agree were analyzed following descriptive statistics and findings presented as follows:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Customer Purchase Intentions for Generations Y and Z

Generations Y Purchase Intentions	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Willingness to buy online is high	103	1	7	4.84	1.702
I believe that I will buy more online in the future	103	1	7	4.89	1.674
I intend to keep on purchasing online	103	1	6	4.92	1.570
I want to buy more online than today in future	103	1	7	4.94	1.656
Generations Z Purchase Intentions	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev*
Willingness to buy online is high	119	1	7	4.31	1.789
I believe I will buy more online in the future	119	1	7	4.16	1.850
I intend to keep on purchasing online	119	1	7	4.39	1.757
I want to buy more online than today in the future	119	1	7	4.66	1.704

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the customer purchase intentions of generations Y and Z. The findings show that the mean value of respondents' view on purchase intentions in generation Y ranges between 4.84 and 4.92, depicting that they somewhat agree that they intend and will keep on purchasing online. The results also show that the mean of the generation Z respondents' response regarding the purchase intentions' measurement items ranges between 4.16 and 4.66, hence signifying that they somewhat agree that they will keep on purchasing online. The minimum value of 0 indicates the response of respondents who didn't want to say a thing and a maximum value of 7 captures the response of respondents who completely agree with the test items of customer purchase intentions.

Table 3: Online Reviews of Generations Y and Z

Generations Z Online Reviews	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Online reviews give me a feeling of trust	119	1	7	5.18	1.436
Online reviews make product to be trustworthy	119	1	7	5.35	1.344
I have trust in the reviews found on online stores	119	1	7	4.84	1.340
Reviews are important when shopping online	119	1	7	5.71	1.215
Generations Y Online Reviews	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev*
Online reviews give me a feeling of trust	103	1	7	4.96	1.371
Online reviews make product to be trustworthy	103	1	7	4.97	1.445
I have trust in the reviews found on online stores	103	1	7	4.62	1.401
Reviews are important when shopping online.	103	1	7	5.49	1.468

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the online reviews response of generations Y and Z. The findings show that the mean value of respondents' view on online reviews of generations Y ranges between 4.62 and 5.49, affirming that they agree that online reviews give them a feeling of trust and are important when shopping online. The results also show that the mean of the generation Z respondents' response regarding the online reviews measurements ranges between 4.84 and 5.71, hence depicting that they agree that online reviews by other customers give them trust and confidence when they shop online. The minimum value of 0 indicates the response of respondents who didn't want to say a thing and a maximum value of 7 captures the response of respondents who completely agree with the test items of the online reviews variable.

Table 4: Influencer Response of Generations Y and Z

Generations Y Influencer Responses	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
If my favorite influencer recommends a brand/product, I am more likely to try it.	103	1	7	5.18	1.460
I collect knowledge about an online store through the information shared by influencers.	103	1	7	5.30	1.447
The information about an online store provided by the influencers that I follow is useful to me.	103	1	7	5.45	1.390
The influencers I follow are trustworthy.	103	1	7	5.24	1.415
Generations Z Influencer Responses	*N*	*Min*	*Max*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev*
If my favorite influencer recommends a brand/product, I am more likely to try it	119	1	7	4.99	1.715
I collect knowledge about an online store through the information shared by influencers.	119	1	7	5.40	1.486
The information about an online store provided by the influencers that I follow is useful to me	119	1	7	5.17	1.782
The influencers I follow are trustworthy	119	1	7	4.83	1.768

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the product influencer response of generations Y and Z. The results show that the mean value of respondents' view on the product influencer of generations Y ranges between 5.18 and 5.45, indicating that they agree that if their favorite influencers endorse the product, they are likely to buy it and that they also rely on the information provided by the influencers of the product.

The results also show that the mean of the generation Z respondents' response regarding the measurement variables of product influence ranges between 4.83 and 5.40, hence pointing out that they agree that online endorsement of products by their favorite influencers influence their purchasing decisions as they rely on the information provided by the influencers regarding the product. The minimum value of 0 indicates the response of respondents who didn't want to say anything about the product influencer information and a maximum value of 7 captures the response of respondents who completely agree with the test items of the product influencer variable.

5.2 Correlation Analysis of the Study Variable Measures:

The study focused on determining the impact of online reviews and influencing the customer purchase intentions. It was therefore significant to carry out correlation analysis in order to determine the kind of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In particular, correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between online reviews and customer purchase intentions and determine the relationship between influencers and customer purchase intentions for generations Y and Z.

To determine the correlation between customer purchase intentions and online reviews and between customer purchase intentions and influencers, and overall summated scale was determined by calculating the average overall scale of all test items for each variable. The findings are presented in the Tables below:

Table 5: Correlation between Online Reviews, Influencers and Purchase Intentions for Generations Y

Correlations		Purchase Intentions	Overall Reviews	Overall Influencer
Purchase Intentions	Pearson Correlation	1	.806**	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.036	.002
	N	103	103	103
Overall Online Reviews	Pearson Correlation	.806**	1	.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036		.000
	N	103	103	103
Overall Influencer	Pearson Correlation	.702**	.361**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	
	N	103	103	103

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

Note: Summated scale is obtained by adding all the test items for online reviews, influencers, and purchase intentions.

Table 5 presents the correlation between summated overall online reviews scale and summated customer purchase intentions scale for generations Y. The results reveal that the correlation coefficient between customer purchase intention and online review is (r=0.806, p-value=0.036<0.05). This depicts that there exists a significant and strong positive relationship between customer purchase intentions and online reviews among generation Y customers. The results show that the correlation coefficient between summated customer purchase intentions average scale and summated influencer average scale is (r=0.702, p-value=0.002<0.05). This is an indication that there is a strong positive relationship between

customer purchase intentions and the influencer. That's, as influencer endorsement messages increase, the generation Y customers increase their online purchase intentions.

Table 6:Correlation between Online Reviews, Influencers and Purchase Intentions for Generation Z

Correlations		Purchase Intentions	Overall Reviews	Overall Influencer
Purchase Intentions	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**	.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	.209
	N	119	119	119
Overall Online Reviews	Pearson Correlation	.751**	1	.323**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006		.000
	N	119	119	119
Overall Influencer	Pearson Correlation	.116	.323**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.209	.000	
	N	119	119	119

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

Note: Summated scale is obtained by adding all the test items for online reviews, influencers, and purchase intentions. The results in Table 6 above show that the correlation coefficient between summated customer purchase intentions average scale and summated online reviews average scale for generations Z. The results show that the correlation coefficient between customer purchase intentions and online reviews for generation Z is ($r=0.751$, p-value=$0.006<0.05$). This affirms that there is a strong and significant relationship between customer purchase intentions and online reviews among generation Z. This confirms that as online reviews of a particular product increase, generation Z customers increase their online purchase intentions.

Further, results showed that the correlation coefficient between summated customer purchase intentions average scale and summated influencer average scale is (r=0.116, p-value=0.209>0.05). This means that there is an insignificant weak positive relationship between customer purchase intentions and influencer endorsement messages among generation Z customers.

5.3 Regression Analysis:

The research concentrate on determining the impact of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions for generations Y and Z. From the leading question of whether the online reviews and product influencers impact the customer purchase intentions or not, four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study as follows:

H_{1a}: There is a significant positive impact of online reviews on customer purchase intentions for generation Y.

H_{1b}: There is a significant positive impact of product influencers on customer purchase intentions for generation Y.

H_{2a}: There is a significant positive impact of online reviews on customer purchase intentions for generation Z.

H_{2b}: There is a significant positive impact of product influencers on customer purchase intentions for generation Z.

To test whether these hypotheses were valid, regression analysis was carried out. Regression analysis is ideal in not only estimating the relationship but also validating the set hypotheses. The collected data was analyzed precisely and coefficient estimates of each measure for the online reviews and product influencers on the customer purchase intentions for generations Y and Z were evaluated. Negative coefficient estimates and the p-value of less than 0.05 at a 5% significance interval were considered a negative relationship between variables. The converse was also true if the coefficient estimate was found to be positive.

-Regarding the impact of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions for generation Y, regression analysis was carried out following H_{1a} and H_{1b}. The findings are presented in Table 7 and Figure 7 below.

Table 7:Regression Analysis Results for Generation Y

Model	*Unstandardized Coefficients*		*Standardized Coefficients*	*T*	*Sig*
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.148	.701		4.492	.000
Online Review	-.030	.118	-.026	-.257	.018
Influencers	.102	.118	.312	3.052	.003
R-square	0.892				
F-stat	5.069				
F-prob	0.008				

The findings presented in Table 7 show the regression analysis depicting the impact of online reviews and product influencers on the customer purchase intentions for generation Y. The summated customer purchase intention, online reviews, and influencers' average scales were used in the regression. Based on the findings, the coefficient estimate for the constant is 3.148 and a p-value=0.000<0.05, indicating that customer purchase intentions among generation Y increase by 3.148 units regardless of being influenced by online reviews and influencers.

-Regarding the impact of online reviews, the results show the coefficient estimate of -0.030 and p-value=0.018<0.05, hence indicating that the persistence of negative online reviews by 100% leads to a decline in online purchase intentions by 3% holding all other factors constant. The results show the coefficient estimate of influencers as 0.102 and

p-value=0.003<0.05, hence indicating that an increase in product endorsement influencers' message by 100% leads to an increase in the online customer purchase intentions by 10.2% holding all other factors constant.

Also, the results show the value of R-square as 0.892. This shows that 89.2% variation of the online purchase intentions is explained by the online reviews and influencers. The remaining 10.85 is not captured in this regression model. The F-statistic value of 5.069 and a p-value=0.008<0.05, signify that hypotheses (H_{1a}) were confirmed to be true but hypothesis (H_{1b}) was confirmed to be true. Thus, online reviews and influencers have a significant impact on purchase intentions among generation Y customers.

The regression analysis showing the impact of online reviews and product influencers on the customer purchase intention for generation Z was also carried out. The analysis followed the hypotheses (H_{2a} and H_{2b}). The summate purchase intentions, online reviews, and influencers' average scales were used. the findings are presented in the following Tables 9 and Figures 8.

Table 8: Regression Analysis Results for Generation Z

Model	*Unstandardized Coefficients*		*Standardized Coefficients*	*T*	*Sig.*
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.686	.739		3.300	.001
Online reviews	.325	.130	.238	2.509	.013
Influencers	.045	.109	.039	.413	.008
R-square	0.764				
F-stat	3.983				
F-prob	0.021				

The findings presented in Table 8 show the regression analysis depicting the impact of online reviews and product influencers on the customer purchase intentions for generation Z. The summated customer purchase intention, online reviews, and influencer's average scales were used in the regression. Based on the findings, the coefficient estimate for the constant is 2.686 and a p-value=0.001<0.05, indicating that customer purchase intentions among generation Z increase by 2.686 units regardless of being influenced by online reviews and influencers.

Concerning the impact of online reviews on purchase intentions among generation Z customers, the results show the coefficient estimate of 0.325 and p-value=0.013<0.05, thereby depicting that an increase in online reviews by 100% leads to an increase in online purchase intentions by 32.5% holding all other factors constant. Furthermore, the results show the coefficient estimate of influencers as 0.045 and p-value=0.008<0.05, thus showing that an increase in product endorsement influencers' messages by 100% leads to an increase in the online customer purchase intentions of generation Z by 4.5% holding all other factors constant.

The value of R-square is 0.764, indicating that 76.4% variation of the online purchase intentions of generation Z is explained by the online reviews and influencers. The remaining 23.6% is not explained in this regression model. The F-statistic value of 3.983 and a p-value=0.021<0.05, signify that hypotheses (H_{2a} *and* H_{2b}) were confirmed to be true. Thus, online reviews and influencers have a significant positive impact on purchase intentions among generation Z customers.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis:

This chapter entails evaluating the discussed results in line with the research objectives and research hypotheses set. In this research, the main objective of the research was to determine the impact of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions. The research focused on determining the impact of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions for generations Y and Z. From the leading question of whether the online reviews and product influencers impact the customer purchase intentions or not, four hypotheses were formulated to guide the research as follows:

H_{1a}: There is a significant positive impact of online reviews on customer purchase intentions for generation Y.

H_{1b}: There is a significant positive impact of product influencers on customer purchase intentions for generation Y.

H_{2a}: There is a significant positive impact of online reviews on customer purchase intentions for generation Z.

H_{2b}: There is a significant positive impact of product influencers on customer purchase intentions for generation Z.

To determine the validity of the set hypotheses, both correlation, and regression analyses were conducted as evaluated below.

Under this section, the set hypotheses are evaluated to determine if they hold true or not. The obtained findings also collaborate with the reviewed empirical literature in order to determine the coherence of the findings with the existing subject at hand as well as attempt to fill the gaps and add to the knowledge. In this accord, the first two hypotheses were used to test the impact of online reviews and influencers on purchase intentions among generation Y customers. Summated purchase intentions, online reviews, and influencers' average scales were used to test correlation and regression analyses.

The correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between summated the online review average scales, summated influencers average scale, and summated customer purchase intention average scale. Furthermore, the regression analysis showed there is a significant negative impact of online reviews on customer purchase intention among generation Y customers. Also, the results show that there is a significant impact of influencers on purchase intentions among generation Y customers. Thus hypotheses (H_{1a} *and* H_{1b}) were confirmed to be true and the conclusion was drawn that there is a significant impact of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions for generations Y. Thus, hypotheses were confirmed to be true.

Concerning the impact of online reviews and influencers on the customer purchase intention for generation Z, summated purchase intentions, online reviews, and influencers' average scales were correlated and regressed. The correlation analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between summated the online review average scales, summated influencers average scale, and summated customer purchase intention average scale. Furthermore, the regression analysis showed there is a significant negative impact of online reviews on customer purchase intention among generation Z customers. Also, the results show that there is a significant impact of influencers on purchase intentions among generation Z customers. Thus hypotheses (H_{2a} *and* H_{2b}) were confirmed to be true and the conclusion was drawn that there is a significant impact of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions for generations Z. Thus, hypotheses were confirmed to be true.

Chapter 7. Discussion:

Overall, the findings above were found to be in line with the findings from the previous studies that observed that online reviews and influencers trigger online purchase intentions. Namely, the findings are similar to the findings of Croes and Bartels (2021) who observed that youths come to the online platforms to seek information concerning an entirely different issue, and as they surf the internet, they come across an advert by a particular influencer they follow online.

Then, the findings are in line with the findings of Sohn et al., (2020) who found evidence that the buying intention is then triggered by the product being advertised. It confirms also the reviewed literature that online reviews increase the chances of future purchasing. For instance, the findings align with the findings of Choshaly and Mirabolghasemi, (2020) who observed that reviews are famous for their ability to spark customers' desire to purchase certain goods or services. Undoubtedly, online reviews turned out to be the front of digital advertisements where they are more responsible for how the customers' buying behavior changes (Zhang et al., 2020).

However, the findings are in line with the empirical literature which documented a negative relationship between online reviews and customer purchase intentions as well as a negative relationship between influencers and customer purchase intentions. For instance, the findings are in agreement with the findings of Luan (2021) who found that negative reviews can positively impact a product or service. The most positive effect that can be realized through a negative review is the creation of awareness of a product's existence. Similarly, the findings are in line with the findings of Pantano and Corvello (2013) who observed that the arousal

from negative reviews results in a narrowing of attention, leading to a better memory of the brands and products. Sometimes, the review valence memory can fade and dissociate.

Moreover, findings were found to be in line with previous studies such as Smart Insights (2017) which documented that influencer marketing majors in use of public figures to pass information concerning the products to their potential customers. In the same breath, the findings are in line with the findings of Zhang et al., (2020) and Markethub (2016) who observed that influencers profoundly give a hand in publicizing the product information and the recent or the latest promotions to their online followers through different social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Adding on this , the findings align with the recent business statistics which show that in influencer marketing that about 50% of businesses have augmented their budget allocation to cater to the influencers (Digital marketing institute, 2021). Furthermore, influencers are seen as highly authentic mediums for delivering and offering demonstrations about the promoted products to their huge list of fans (Tapinfluece, 2017).

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Recommendations:

8.1 Conclusion:

The main aim of the research was to determine the impact of online reviews and influencers on the customer purchase intentions for generations Y and Z regarding shopping online. The research employed correlation and regression analysis tests to evaluate the relationships and effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The findings indicated a significant positive and negative relationship between online reviews and customer purchase intentions as well as the relationship between online reviews and influencers on the customer purchase intentions. Regression analysis also indicated the existence of both negative and positive impacts of online reviews and influencers on customer purchase intentions. Therefore, based on these findings, it can be concluded that the online reviews by previous customers have a strong impact on the future customer's purchase intentions. Any negative review in terms of a low rating of a product hampers or reduces the confidence of a prospective customer and likewise, a positive review of a product online through a referral will impact the probability of future customers' intention to buy it online.

Also, the message carried by the product ambassadors such as bloggers and celebrities impacts the customers' purchase intentions. The influencers carry the image of a product and therefore it is significant for the marketing brands to consider a careful selection of brand ambassadors as this impacts greatly on the future customer purchase intention.

8.2 Implications and Recommendations:

The recognition of the different impacts that are brought forth by the application of a given strategy such as online reviews and influencers on generations Y and Z can also be helpful in determining the best way to market a product or the different pitfalls to be avoided by the different marketers while developing marketing plans and when coming up with important strategies that are essential in achieving success within the market environment. The ability to gauge the efficiency of these marketing strategies is important in ensuring that they can be optimized as well in order to maximize their benefit within the business organization or the creation of brand awareness or anything else geared towards the influence of generation Y and Z purchase intention (Wymer, 2011).

Based on the drawn conclusion, the following policy recommendations are fronted to be adopted by the organizations:

i. The brand management should consider influencers who are not only famous but portray a positive image of the product as this will increase the customer's purchase intentions.
ii. The brands should adopt online reviews platforms that can sieve through to remove or deactivate the negative reviews so as to avoid negative references for the products.

8.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies:

Online reviews are always difficult to determine for businesses or brands that lack an online presence because they rely on the online environment in order to meet their objective as marketing tools. The connection between present generations and future generations has always been tumultuous. Threats, envy, or just pride in a generation's outstanding achievements are all possible causes for criticism, but a lack of understanding might also be a factor. The world around the generations is changing dramatically, including scientific-technical factors such as cultural linkages; as a result, new generations are socialized in these new settings, which means they are not like previous young generations. For parents, teachers, and decision-makers, accepting new ideas and comprehending new behavioral patterns is tough.

With all the benefits that influencers bring to digital marketing, influencers still have some adverse effects on the young millennial age regarding their purchase decisions. Indeed, influencers can easily mislead young followers as they see them as motivators in the right direction whenever they promote a product or service, future studies can explore the long-term negative impact of influencers on purchasing decisions. The research used a primary method in collecting data therefore it faced the limitation of questionnaire filling in bias but this was overcome by explaining the purpose of the questionnaire prior to data collection. Future studies can focus on the impact of influencers and online reviews on brand image and brand loyalty of products among generations Y and Z.

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Appendix:

Theoretical concept	Question	Modification of the question	Reference
Purchase intention	My willingness to buy the product from this time-limited promotion is high.	My willingness to buy a product from an online store is high.	(Peng et al., 2019)
	I believe that I will buy more online in the future.	I believe that I will buy more online in the future.	(Anastasiadou et al., 2019)
	I intend to keep on purchasing online.	I intend to keep on purchasing online.	(Anastasiadou et al., 2019)
	In the future, I want to buy other things online than I do today.	In the future, I want to buy other things online than I do today.	(Anastasiadou et al., 2019)
Online reviews	Online reviews give me a feeling of trust.	Online reviews give me a feeling of trust.	(Zhu et al., 2020)

	The online reviews of products and vendors give me a trustworthy impression.	**The online reviews of products makes them more trustworthy.**	**(Zhu et al., 2020)**
	I have trust in online reviews of products and vendors.	**I have trust in the reviews found on online stores.**	**(Zhu et al., 2020)**
	How important are online product reviews for your buying decision?	**Product reviews are important when shopping online**	**(Lackermair et al., 2013)**

Influencers	**I would rely on the recommendations about clothing made by this influencer**	**If my favorite influencer recommends a brand/product I haven't tried before, I am more likely to try it.**	**(Belanche et al., 2021)**
	I accumulate knowledge through the information shared by the influencers that I follow.	**I collect knowledge about an online store through the information shared by influencers that I follow.**	**(Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021)**
	The information provided by the influencers that I follow is useful to me.	**The information about an online store provided by the influencers that I follow is useful to me.**	**(Sánchez-Fernández & Jiménez-Castillo, 2021)**

	It is important that influencers that I follow are trustworthy and honest.	**The influencers I follow are trustworthy.**	**(Belanche et al., 2021)**