Digital Marketing and Influencer-Driven E-Commerce: A Study on Generation Z's Superfood Consumption Behavior

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Abstract

The emergence of digital marketing and social media channels has profoundly disrupted customer interactions within the e-commerce field in general, and health & wellness niche in particular. This study examines the impact of influencer-based marketing tactics on consumer buying habits regarding superfoods, with a focus on Generation Z, evaluating parameters including social media involvement, frequency of using superfoods, and exposure to influencer advertising, finding key factors that drive buying decisions through Binary Logistic Regression analysis. These findings suggest that while social media and influencer endorsements wield considerable influence over Generation Z perceptions, advertising saturation can generate skepticism and cut into advertising efficacy. Moreover, millennial influence through social media increases the likelihood that zoomers, who are frequent participants in this media environment will be influenced in their food choices, demonstrating the importance of the social media landscape as a source of influencers on food choices. This study presents useful implications for firms hoping to adjust their digital marketing strategies in such a way that they can balance authenticity and targeted influencer collaborations,

tapping Generation Z trust and engagement.

1. Introduction

Digital marketing and social networking have been one of the most significant reasons for consumer behavior transformation in e-commerce (Gao, 2024). With influencer marketing on the rise, organizations are stronger and more frequently using social media channels for product promotion, thus influencing the ways in which consumers decide (Bansal et al., 2024). For digital marketing, social networking sites that influencers utilize to create visually appealing content for their audience, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, are of great importance (Rieger and Klimmt, 2019). These platforms enable a close relationship between influencers and consumers and significantly impact consumer behavior and impressions of a brand (Ki et al., 2022). They are also consulted for insights about product choices, and they inspire more confidence through their recommendations than traditional methods of advertising (Muralidar and Megha, 2024; Venkata Sai Viswanadh, 2024). Scholars are still investigating the extent to which consumer choices are influenced by marketing that centers on influencers. Although some consumers are particularly susceptible to digital leveraging; others display resistance in contexts characterized by over-promotion and advertising fatigue (OECD, 2023; Talwar et al., 2024)

Notably, sectors associated with health and wellness, including the superfood sector, have witnessed a substantial increase in online engagement. On one hand, the global health crisis has served as a catalyst for a profound transformation in consumer behavior, compelling individuals to seek dietary alternatives that enhance health and immunity, thereby generating heightened interest in superfoods (Hassoun et al., 2024). Conversely, the advent of digital marketing has assumed a pivotal role in disseminating pertinent information regarding the health advantages associated with superfoods, consequently augmenting their accessibility to the wider community (Pimprale et al., 2022).

Undoubtedly, there has been considerable dialogue regarding superfoods; however, the notion itself continues to be difficult to express with accuracy (Magrach and Sanz, 2020), and it lacks a scientifically recognized definition (Fernández-Ríos et al., 2023). There seems, however, to be an agreement that the term encompasses foods with a large quantity of nutrients, especially when produced with little pre- or post-processing. Superfoods sometimes are thought to be little known or "forgotten" or non-mainstream foods. Grains, like quinoa, or fruits, like coconut, are often regarded to be superfoods. In any case, superfoods have been adopted by large groups of the population in their daily diet for their nutritional value, the subsequent benefits to their overall health of the body and for the sustainable production (Franco Lucas et al., 2022), having a low carbon footprint (Fernández-Ríos et al., 2023). People with an interest to these aspects are more likely to add superfoods to their diet. They are often described as adventurous, involved open to innovation and environmentally minded (Franco Lucas et al., 2023). Among them is the Generation Z.

Generation Z comprises of individuals born roughly between 1997 and 2012 (Mahayosnand and Sabra, 2024). They are generally regarded to be the first generation born and raised within a digital frame of references. Computers and Internet, mobile phones and their applications are so widely used during Gen-Z people lives that it is next to impossible to think their lives without them. This has implications to their lifestyle, work attitudes (Barhate and Dirani, 2022), media consumption and, generally, their overall approach to life. Moreover, their lives have been influenced by global events, like the economic crisis of 2008, and its consequences which spread during the 2010s though in various degrees around the world (Turner, 2015). What is more, Generation Z demonstrates a tendency for plant-derived and innovative food substitutes, signifying a transition toward more health-conscious dietary practices (Bogueva and Marinova, 2024).

At present, people, Generation Z included, increasingly rely on social media for inspiration and guidance in their daily lives (Voramontri and Klieb, 2019), in ways upexpected a few years ago. There is a whole market of influencers that attempt to persuade social media users on consumption of goods and services, in ways traditional marketing has failed to achieve. The dissemination of news media regarding superfoods has escalated, frequently accentuating their purported nutritional assertions and health advantages, thereby intensifying consumer fascination (Gandhi et al., 2023). At the same time, engagement metrics derived from health promotion initiatives suggest that digital platforms proficiently inspire individuals to adhere to health objectives, illustrating a more extensive phenomenon in health and wellness engagement (Gibson et al., 2017).

This comprehensive analysis attempts to assess the role of social media and digital marketing practices on zoomers' trends within the e-commerce domain, with specific attention to superfoods. More specifically, the analysis investigates whether the endorsements by influencers hold significant sway over consumers' choices to purchase superfoods, especially for Gen Z, while also considering the implications of essential elements such as social media involvement, the regularity of superfood consumption, exposure to marketing, and demographic data. Through the application of Binary Logistic Regression analysis, this research meticulously evaluates pivotal elements such as social media engagement, exposure to digital advertisements, and endorsements by influencers in influencing consumer decision-making frameworks. Comprehending these dynamics will provide significant insights for organizations striving to enhance their digital marketing approaches and increase customer engagement.

The main contribution of this analysis has four aspects. Firstly, to address the intersection of influencer marketing and superfood consumption. Second, to provide statistical substantiation of the correlation between social media engagement, advertising exposure, and consumer behavior within the framework of superfoods. Third, to assist enterprises within the health and wellness sector to their digital marketing approaches and optimize influencer collaborations to bolster consumer trust and engagement. Fourth, to underscore the possible adverse repercussions of excessive advertising and influencer endorsements, imparting insights into consumer resistance and advertising fatigue, which may guide the development of more authentic and effective marketing strategies.

This manuscript is structured as follows: the upcoming section will investigate the available literature on influencer marketing, the repercussions of social media, and internet advertising as they pertain to e-commerce. The methodology section articulates the research design and the data analytical techniques employed in this investigation. The discussion and results sections bring into focus the essential findings and their significance, culminating in a concise summary that reflects the contributions of this study and indicates possible future research paths.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Superfoods, Social Media, and Influencers

Consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors play a pivotal role in the online sales of superfoods, motivated by health consciousness, product characteristics, and consumer segmentation (Graeff-Hönninger and Khajehei, 2019; Hayakawa, 2017; Lim, 2020). Consumers place a premium on health advantages when selecting superfoods, frequently linking them with favorable health outcomes (Pećanin and Vukasović, 2022). Research has indicated that the importance of health significantly influences the likelihood of purchasing behaviors, thereby highlighting the impact of nutritional characteristics on consumer decisions (Rombach et al., 2023). The inherent qualities, like nutritional benefits, alongside external influences such as packaging and brand image, significantly affect consumer choices about superfoods (Rombach et al., 2023). Moreover, consumers are willing to spend more money on imported superfoods, considering these products as a higher quality (Pećanin and Vukasović, 2022).

Different segments of the consumer population exhibit diverse attitudes toward superfoods, from "superfood enthusiasts" who readily embrace superfoods to "skeptical" consumers who are not yet sold on their benefits (Franco Lucas et al., 2023). As a result, and in recognition of the importance of these consumer segments, businesses can tailor their marketing strategies, targeting specific demographics based on their perceptions and behavioral patterns (Franco Lucas et al., 2023). In particular, the role of sustainable consumption is considered to be of paramount importance in increasing Generation Z to choose sustainable products, including superfoods (Rubiyanto et al., 2024) Indicating a shift towards more health-oriented dietary habits, Generation Z shows a preference towards plant-based food and innovative forms of food (Bogueva and Marinova 2023). This phenomenon is driven by a deep yearning for social connection among Generation Z who indulge in nutrition, including superfoods, that bolster the cause they align with at the ethical level (Rice and Potts, 2024). This indicates that Generation Z's intention to choose sustainable products, such as superfoods, is greatly improved by recognition sustainable consumption (Rubiyanto et al., 2024). Generation Z demonstrates a considerable awareness of sustainable eating (Jakubowska, 2024), a concept that's often aligned with their interest in superfood, which is descriptively regarded as an ingredient rich in nutritional value and good for the environmental wellbeing.

The modern phenomenon of superfoods consumption is well aligned with the growing influence of social media platforms. While selection of food may be a complex decision (Liu et al., 2021) and food consumers represent a profoundly diverse collective in terms of their

perspectives, actions, and practices (Lenart et al., 2022), tools like Instagram may be effective in reaching a larger crowd (Roth and Zawadzki, 2018), provoking a number of secondary effects, like word-of-mouth advertising. Moreover, tools like social media offer to advertisers a large amount of data for analysis for even more precise targeting, though reliability of information is always a concern (Cobos and Díaz, 2023).

Influencer marketing is characterized as the strategic promotion of brands via the engagement of select individuals who possess the capacity to influence the purchasing decisions of prospective consumers (Brown and Hayes, 2008). Micro-influencers can demonstrate effectiveness comparable to that of macro-influencers when disseminating informational content (Misra et al., 2024). Consumers frequently regard influencers with a more limited following as more relatable and credible, thereby enhancing their assessment of the quality of the promoted superfood. It has been noted as well that marketing of superfoods is attuned to the lifestyle of particular social groups and their rhetoric (Sikka, 2019). Influencers' expertise and trustworthiness, which represents their competence and believability, play a crucial role in influencing consumers' mental processes and purchase intentions of superfoods (Kim et al., 2024). Moreover, the extent of competition and trustworthiness are positively correlated with significant effect on food choices, thus emphasizing the importance of influencers with a brand of authenticity (Huang, 2024; Wadhwa et al., 2024).

2.2 Superfoods Content Marketing

The influencers create a wide array of content that aims to attract their audience as they concern on superfoods, utilizing their spaces to advocate for health and wellness. They create visual content on a daily basis — think product images, recipes in the culinary sense, wellness topics, and personal superfood stories (Roth and Zawadzki, 2018). At a more specific level, health influencers, sometimes called body advocates (Bak et al., 2023), produce posts emphasizing fitness, holistic health and self-hyping that are often sponsored and sometimes promote brands whose ideal body images do not fit the normal paradigm of health (Bak et al., 2023). They engage audiences via narrative tactics, interactive posts, and discursive strategies that help to build a community around healthy diets and lifestyles associated with superfood products.

Secondly, influencers often engage in informative posts about the health advantages of superfoods in terms of their relevance in disease prevention and the enhancement of health (Pimprale et al., 2022). Food advertisement is primarily visual in nature and has been for as long as people have had successful marketing strategies, and this holds true for the marketing of superfoods and their use on social media. It is not uncommon to disseminate images of localities, traditions, and contexts (Gonzalez Rodriguez, 2021). They may create infographics and audiovisual materials that break down complicated nutritional facts, making them available to a wider audience.

Beyond the realm of academia, a number of influencers are sending out culinary recipes that contain elements designated as superfoods, encouraging their followers to adjust their personal eating habits accordingly. Such a pragmatic approach helps to explain the concept of superfoods and their potentially diverse applications (Teunissen et al., 2024). Even for

food-types viewers are familiar with with, dynamic illustrations of the processes that facilitated cooking may increase audience participation, encouraging viewers to try new foods for themselves. Moreover, Influencers have the potential to establish a home-cooking disposition through vicarious experiences, prompting their audience to imitate their food creations; Constructive engagement with influencers might promote followers' desire to cook healthier at home (Sokolova et al., 2024).

Influencers are instrumental in nurturing brand awareness and consumer loyalty which is imperative for superfood marketers looking to engage with health-conscious consumers (Huang, 2024). This is essential to the Gen Z cohort which places a high premium on authenticity, and where credible and relatable influencers activators increase purchase intentions significantly (Dharma et al., 2024). As people tend to follow trends created by influencers (Kim et al., 2024), herd behavior could potentially enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Evidently, the herding model embraces variables like price variation, the level of familiarity with the product, the presence of uncertainty, information worth and the quality of the product (Ali and Amir, 2024).

3. Research Methods

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data through sampling from 300 Generation Z participants who are active in social media settings related to superfoods consumption behavior. The questionnaire included close-ended questions and questions using Likert scale, with a focus on consumer behavior, social media engagement, and purchasing decisions that were influenced by social media personalities. Data collection was conducted through online platforms to maximize reach and boost engagement.

To gather a well-rounded dataset for this inquiry, we engaged 300 Gen Z participants through digital avenues, mainly Instagram and Facebook, along with university mailing lists and student discussion platforms. The recruitment methodology emphasized voluntary participation, specifically targeting individuals who actively engage with social media and digital content pertinent to health and wellness. Focusing on the sample's diversity, measures were implemented to engage individuals from an array of socioeconomic conditions, genders, and geographical regions. Although the study primarily represents digitally engaged consumers from Generation Z, the results should be interpreted within this framework, recognizing the potential bias stemming from the heightened engagement of social media users within the sample.

3.2 Data Analysis

The amassed data were subjected to analysis via binary logistic regression to investigate the correlation between independent variables (including gender, frequency of superfood consumption, daily engagement with social media platforms, and exposure to superfood promotional content) and the propensity to purchase superfoods as influenced by recommendations from social media influencers. To summarize the dataset, we applied statistical approaches, covering frequency distributions and percentages. The adequacy of the

model was assessed through the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients, the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test, and the Nagelkerke R^2 statistic, thereby affirming the rigor of the analytical approach. A preliminary testing of the questionnaire was carried out, involving the collaboration of two scholars and three social media users to validate the content of the instrument.

The selection of Binary Logistic Regression was predicated upon the characteristics of the dependent variable, which categorizes consumer responses into two discrete outcomes: acquisition versus non-acquisition of superfoods as influenced by endorsements from social media personalities. Competing statistical methodologies, including Multinomial Logistic Regression, were contemplated; nevertheless, these models are more suitably applied to scenarios involving multiple categorical outcomes. Further, employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) could have been advantageous for probing causal ties with additional nuance, albeit it requires more extensive sample sizes and a more intricate arrangement of latent variables. In our evaluation, Binary Logistic Regression emerged as the most fitting analytical framework, given its straightforwardness, clarity in interpretation, and effectiveness in analyzing the impact of independent variables like gender, social media involvement, and exposure to influencer marketing, on binary decision-making among consumers.

4. Results

4.1 Frequency Statistics

The sample comprises 42.0% male and 58.0% female zoomers, implying that females are disproportionately represented in the research. This gender distribution is pertinent for evaluating potential variances in reactions to advertising exposure, engagement with social media, and purchasing behaviors associated with superfoods. The frequency of superfood consumption exhibited variability within the sample, with the predominant occurrence being three times per week (46.7%), succeeded by once per week (28.0%). Only a tiny percentage of surveyed individuals stated that they consume superfoods on two occasions weekly (9.3%) or four occasions weekly (9.3%), with 6.7% revealing that they never partake in these items. These outcomes suggest that the majority of participants integrate superfoods into their dietary practices at least sporadically, which may affect their responsiveness to marketing strategies and influencer endorsements.

A considerable majority (84.0%) of respondents indicated prior exposure to advertisements pertaining to superfoods, whereas merely 16.0% reported a lack of engagement with such promotional content (Figure 1). This observation emphasizes the omnipresence of marketing endeavors within this sector and implies that the majority of zoomers possess a certain level of familiarity with messaging related to superfoods. The frequency of social media engagement was markedly elevated among respondents, with 90.0% affirming daily usage and merely 10.0% reporting irregular engagement with social media platforms. This implies that digital mediums assume a pivotal role in shaping zoomers' exposure to marketing materials, especially in the realm of superfood promotions.
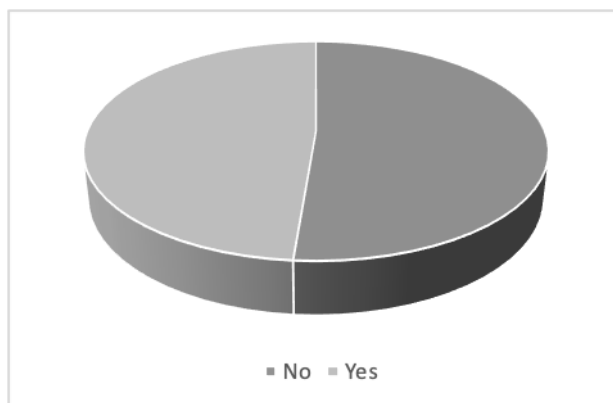
Figure 1. Superfood purchases driven by influencer promotions

In spite of the increased engagement with social media, only 29.7% of respondents acknowledged purchasing products via social media promotions, while a significant majority (70.3%) did not. This signifies that while social media functions as a prominent platform for brand visibility and consumer interaction, it does not invariably result in direct purchasing actions among all zoomers. These findings may reflect disparate levels of trust in digital advertising, the perceived authenticity of influencer endorsements, or consumer skepticism regarding sponsored content. The analysis reveals that 48.7% of zoomers engage in the acquisition of superfoods when endorsed by influencers, conversely, 51.3% abstain from such purchases. This indicates a nearly balanced distribution, with a marginal majority exhibiting resistance to purchasing behaviors stimulated by influencers. These findings illuminate the moderate yet impactful role of influencers in shaping consumer inclinations towards superfoods.

4.2 Binary Logistic Regression

Logit regression aims to enhance the probability of the occurrence of a specific event to exert influence. This analysis was performed to investigate the impact of gender, the promotion of superfoods, the frequency of superfood consumption, daily social media engagement, and purchasing behavior influenced by social media on the probability of a consumer buying superfoods when recommended by an influencer (dependent variable).

$$\text{Logit}[\Pr(BSFI_i = 1)] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \, Gender + \beta_2 Exposuretoads + \beta_3 Superfoodsconsumption +$$
$$\beta_4 SocialMediausage + \beta_5 SocialMediainfluencedtobuy + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

BSFI: the zoomer i is willing to buy superfoods if an influencer suggests it, Gender is a dummy variable accounting for 1 if the respondent is female and zero if male; Exposure to advertisements is a dummy variable taking the value 1 if the respondent is exposed and zero if not. Superfood's consumption is a dummy variable accounting for 1 if the respondent consumes superfoods and zero otherwise; Social media usage is a dummy variable accounting for 1 if the respondent uses social media daily and zero otherwise; Social media

influence a dummy variable accounting for 1, if the respondent buys products when promoted through social media, and zero otherwise.

The Omnibus test of model coefficients yielded statistically significant results ($\chi^2(5) = 48.523$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the predictors collectively contribute substantially to elucidating consumer behavior. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test was not significant ($\chi^2(8) = 11.048$, $p = 0.199$), suggesting that the model fits the data well. The Nagelkerke R^2 value was calculated at 0.199, suggesting that the model accounts for approximately 19.9% of the variability in the likelihood of purchasing superfoods based on influencer recommendations. The overall classification accuracy was 68.0%, with 79.2% of non-buyers correctly classified, but only 56.2% of buyers were accurately predicted, indicating a moderate level of predictive accuracy.

Among the independent variables examined, gender did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor ($p = 0.398$), indicating that male and female consumers exhibit analogous tendencies regarding the acquisition of superfoods based on influencer recommendations. Nonetheless, the promotion of superfoods produced a significant negative effect ($B = -1.224$, $p = 0.001$, $Exp(B) = 0.294$), indicating that heightened exposure to superfood promotions diminishes the likelihood of purchasing superfoods upon influencer suggestion. In a different light, the occurrence of superfood eating was pinpointed as a key positive predictor ($B = 0.346$, $p = 0.005$, $Exp(B) = 1.413$), hinting that zoomers with a frequent superfood diet are 1.4 times more apt to purchase superfoods due to influencer suggestions.

The most salient predictors were associated with engagement in social media activities. Daily social media utilization ($B = 1.648$, $p = 0.001$, $Exp(B) = 5.196$) significantly augmented the odds of purchasing superfoods when suggested by an influencer, rendering individuals over five times more likely to engage in such behavior. Additionally, purchasing behavior influenced by social media ($B = 1.315$, $p < 0.001$, $Exp(B) = 3.725$) also had a strong positive effect, meaning that consumers who generally make purchase decisions based on social media recommendations are 3.7 times more likely to buy superfoods when suggested by an influencer.

5. Discussion

The results of this investigation offer invaluable perspectives into consumer behavior with respect to superfoods, particularly regarding the influences of advertising exposure, engagement on social media, and endorsements from influencers, especially for Gen Z. The gender composition within the sample, which exhibited a predominance of female participants, did not prove to be a statistically significant predictor of superfood purchasing influenced by recommendations from influencers. In line with Chetioui et al. (2023), although gender may exert an influence on attitudes toward health and wellness influencers as female followers might exhibit greater susceptibility to the perceived congruence and attractiveness of influencers, it does not necessarily result in a substantial intent to purchase superfoods. This finding was not expected as research demonstrates a beneficial impact of gender congruence between social media fitness influencers and participants on purchasing

decisions, suggesting that gender constitutes a pivotal variable in shaping consumers' choices pertaining to supplement acquisitions, encompassing superfoods (Kumar et al., 2024). However, as observed by Tran (2023) while female consumers may be more inclined to interact with specific types of content, their purchasing decisions are concurrently influenced by additional factors such as the trustworthiness and perceived utility of the influencer. In this context, this finding indicates that both male and female consumers demonstrate similar behaviors in this domain, emphasizing that marketing strategies designed to sway superfood purchases ought not to be excessively gender-targeted but rather should appeal to a wide-ranging demographic spectrum.

Apart from that, the prevalence of superfood consumption among participants indicates that a substantial majority incorporate these products into their dietary habits at least intermittently. Franco Lucas et al. (2023) argue that consumer perceptions regarding superfoods exhibit considerable variability, encompassing groups from "superfoodies" who enthusiastically adopt these products to "skeptical consumers" and "rejectors" who remain unconvinced of their advantages, thereby implying diverse consumption patterns across distinct demographic segments. A significant segment of the respondents (46.7%) consumes superfoods on a thrice-weekly basis, reflecting a moderate degree of habitual engagement. This pattern is particularly pertinent given the favorable correlation between the frequency of superfood consumption and the propensity to purchase superfoods based on endorsements from influencers. Research indicates that enhanced interaction with content correlates positively with heightened intentions for repurchase among consumers (Rozamuri et al., 2022). In line with Añaña and Barbosa (2023), individuals who engage in more frequent consumption of superfoods appear to be more amenable to influencer promotions, potentially attributable to their pre-existing interest in health and wellness trends.

A considerable proportion (84.0%) of respondents acknowledged exposure to advertisements for superfoods, highlighting the ubiquity of marketing endeavors within this sector. This finding validates what has been previously noted, that superfoods are extensively marketed via digital platforms to augment their prominence and attractiveness, emphasizing the nutritional advantages while linking them to disease mitigation and comprehensive well-being (Pimprale et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the outcomes of the binary logistic regression analysis reveal that high exposure to superfood marketing is negatively associated with purchases driven by influencers. This discovery suggests that an excessive presence of marketing may result in consumer skepticism or fatigue, consequently reducing the effectiveness of influencer endorsements. As noted by Cheah et al. (2024), a plethora of endorsements might undermine the perceived reliability of influencers, thereby shaping the buying habits of consumers. In fact, the ongoing transmission of marketing messages may generate a skeptical perspective among consumers, which in turn may curtail their receptivity to endorsements (Gökerik, 2024). Consequently, brands should contemplate the optimization of their promotional strategies to avert the risk of diminishing returns resulting from excessive exposure. As Brüns ans Meißner (2023) argue advertisements have the potential to erode positive perceptions of brands and foster a climate of skepticism, indicating that an overabundance of marketing efforts may indeed cultivate consumer skepticism, consequently

undermining the efficacy of endorsements by influencers, especially when individuals activate their persuasion knowledge.

The research underscores the pivotal role of social media in influencing zoomers' behaviors pertaining to superfoods. In line with Rini et al. (2024) social media exerts a profound impact on the behaviors of food consumers, linking social media engagement with food intentions and behaviors, thereby influencing consumer perceptions and decision-making processes. With an impressive 90.0% of users active on social media daily, digital platforms emerge as a vital medium for marketing messages. However, despite the significant amount of social media interaction, merely 29.7% of participants reported that they made purchases influenced by social media promotions, pointing to the notion that just being visible does not guarantee actual sales. The journey from visibility to engagement is a long one. This examination highlights the need for brands to develop trust and authenticity within their digital marketing efforts, as well as to form partnerships with influencers. As stated by Barsby et al. (2023), the heavy usage of deceptive promotional methods, especially in the light of social media, leads to a pervasive distrust of all claims related to superfoods. This has naturally given rise to skepticism levels among consumers, which vary according to their understanding and beliefs about superfoods, with large segments of the population reporting skepticism or indifference (Franco Lucas et al., 2022).

Endorsements from influencers had close to an equal impact on consumer purchase behavior, with 48.7% of participants being influenced to buy superfoods, while 51.3% said they would resist such influences. This finding implies that even though influencers play a major role in shaping the taste of customers, other factors like individual health perspectives, brand trustworthiness, and the perceived reliability of influencers substantially impact buying decisions too. With respect to these features, Kim et al. (2024), personality influence features essential attributes like skillfulness, credibility, and attractiveness, and significantly alters the attitude consumers have towards superfood commodities. Further, perceived homophily, defined as similarity between the influencers and their followers, is suggested to improve this engagement and boost the chances of followers trusting and recommending the products (Kumar et al., 2024). The subjective norm and perceived behavior control considerably influence shopping decisions in live-streaming commerce by generating the attitudes and intentions of consumers. As Long et al (2024) argue in the context of the theory of planned behavior, social media influencer streamers amplify these determinants, resulting in heightened consumer engagement and a greater propensity to purchase through live-streaming platforms. Positive social pressures and perceived control enhance consumer trust and willingness to buy promoted products (Putra & Dewi, 2024).

The logistic regression analysis revealed that daily engagement with social media platforms and purchasing behaviors influenced by social media serve as the most substantial predictors of acquiring superfoods subsequent to influencer recommendations. Daily social media users often find themselves more influenced by the suggestions of influencers, with this impact exceeding fivefold, while individuals who usually trust social media endorsements for their purchases reveal a 3.7 times higher inclination concerning superfoods. The results underscore how significant social media is as a marketing avenue and point out the need for thoughtful

partnerships with influencers that correspond with what consumers value and their sense of reliability. Research substantiates that employing marketing strategies that utilize influencers can lead to a marked increase in the consumption of promoted products, particularly superfoods (Packer et al., 2022; Tran, 2023).

Influencers possess the capability to captivate audiences through meticulously constructed arguments and verifiable information, resulting in a transformation of attitudes through the central route of persuasion. For example, Pramesthi et al. (2024) demonstrated that the caliber of arguments has a substantial impact on consumer purchasing intentions, suggesting that reflective processing can be facilitated by influencer endorsements. The elaborate likelihood model influencer marketing usually takes advantage tamper whereby the definition and nature of the influencer can shape consumer's disposition without the need for deep cognition with the fundamental message (Moradi & Zihagh, 2022). The same can be observed on social media where emotional resonance and visual beauty are at the highest value point.

Yet, the effectiveness of influencer marketing shows considerable differences between countries and cultural background due to varying consumer behaviors, cultural values, and community traditions (Nanevi et al., 2022). More specifically, in individualistic cultures, the emphasis is on the importance of individual choice and self-expression, resulting in a different locus of analytical focus in relation of consumers to influencer marketing, whereas in collectivist cultures, the emphasis is on the value placed on group agreement and social confirmation, leading to a more wary perspective on the adoption of purchases inspired by social media personalities (Chavda and Chauhan 2024; Kikumori et al., 2025). While the underlying heterogeneity of effect sizes concerning the impact of social media influencers can be greatly affected by geographical context (Han and Balabanis, 2024), the findings suggest that a diverse range of factors - related to the geographical context and potentially to other factors, mediate the relationship between influencers and marketing. As a result, brands are forced to adapt their content strategy, find culturally relevant influencers, and use localised messaging to resonate effectively with diverse global target audiences.

Although influencer marketing is a strong means of getting consumers engaged, too much video marketing can lead to advertisement fatigue and decrease the effectiveness of endorsements. The engagement with influencers markedly elevates the perceived value of a brand and fosters consumer trust, which is in accordance with the Brand Equity Theory articulated by Aaker (1991). Brands can alleviate consumer skepticism by leveraging micro-influencers. In contrast to macro-influencers, micro-influencers cultivate a heightened sense of audience trust and engagement, attributable to their perceived authenticity (Chen et al., 2024). Moreover, motivating consumers to produce and disseminate personal testimonials and experiences related to superfoods enhances credibility and promotes organic engagement (Pimprale et al., 2022). Apart from building upon user-generated content, the exploitation of practices such as live q&a sessions, real-time interactions via stories, and comment engagement facilitate the development of more robust consumer relationships, rendering influencer promotions more authentic (Buckley et al., 2025; Mardani et al., 2024). Explicitly disclosing sponsored collaborations and refraining from excessive promotion aids in maintaining trust and the credibility of influencers (Cao and Belo, 2024).These strategies are

consistent with recent research indicating that consumers exhibit a more favorable response to relatable, community-oriented marketing approaches as opposed to overt advertisements (Gökerik, 2024).

While the research predominantly centers on immediate purchasing behaviors, a crucial aspect to consider is the extent to which influencer marketing engenders sustained brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers. Prior investigations suggest that ongoing interactions with influencers can foster brand affinity over time, resulting in repeat transactions and enhanced brand relationships (Pandit et al., 2024; Sudirjo et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the ephemeral nature of digital phenomena may present obstacles in nurturing enduring consumer attachment. Given the transformation of social media, brands should realign their influencer relationships to uphold their significance (Qi, 2024). Subsequent research should examine whether prolonged collaborations with influencers facilitate brand advocacy and recurring consumer behavior, especially within health-oriented sectors such as superfoods.

6. Conclusion

This inquiry provides substantial elucidation regarding the complexities inherent in the behaviors associated with superfood consumption, the ramifications of marketing exposure, and the crucial influence exerted by social media influencers in the modulation of consumer purchasing tendencies. Research shows that while influencer marketing can deliver impactful results, its success is inconsistent in the varied consumer environment. Considerations including ingrained purchasing behaviors, the dominance of marketing strategies, and the trustworthiness of online ads are pivotal in guiding buying decisions.

Moreover, the findings further emphasize that, although social media serves as a vital channel for enhancing brand visibility, the direct conversion of this visibility into tangible purchases presents a considerable obstacle. This scenario highlights the imperative of authenticity and consumer trust within the frameworks of digital marketing. Brands are encouraged to formulate a unified strategy that aligns influencer marketing with additional trust-promoting practices, including transparent dialogue and the incorporation of content from users.

Additionally, the observed inverse relationship between increased exposure to superfood advertisements and actual purchasing behavior indicates that an overabundance of marketing may incite consumer skepticism. Consequently, forthcoming marketing strategies ought to prioritize personalized and targeted advertising as opposed to broad-spectrum promotional endeavors.

In summation, this research highlights the imperative for a sophisticated approach to superfood marketing. Subsequent investigations could examine further elements such as the credibility of influencers, the efficacy of various content formats, and strategies for fostering long-term consumer engagement to enhance marketing initiatives within the superfood sector.

6.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings enrich the current academic discourse regarding digital marketing and e-commerce by exploring the connections among social media,

influencer marketing, and consumer behavior in the superfood market, especially for Gen Z. The conclusions are congruent with well-founded theories of social proof and online influence, the proposition that consumer preferences are considerably swayed by digital engagements. Furthermore, the study enhances our understanding of trust dynamics within the scope of digital marketing, demonstrating that perceived authenticity and credibility are crucial factors in shaping purchasing behavior. These insights provide a foundation for future research exploring the evolving role of influencers and digital advertising strategies in e-commerce.

For marketers and enterprises, the findings of the research suggest that authenticity and strategic targeting are essential for the effectiveness of influencer campaigns. Instead of utilizing broad promotional tactics, brands should focus on:

1. Joining forces with micro-influencers, known for displaying significant credibility within their unique audience groups.

2. Utilizing storytelling-based marketing. Rather than employing conventional product placements, brands ought to concentrate on narrative-driven content where influencers illustrate personal experiences and tangible advantages of utilizing superfoods.

3. Encouraging user-generated content. Consumer engagement through testimonials, reviews, and social media challenges amplifies interaction and fosters trust.

4. Integrating captivating media formats (such as consumer testimonials, unique visual content, and real-time dialogues).

5. Embracing personalized marketing strategies targeted at superfood consumers, thereby enhancing engagement as opposed to relying on broad-spectrum advertising methodologies.

6. Focusing on interactive content. Elements such as polls, q&a sessions, and live streams augment consumer engagement and brand interaction.

7. Avoiding Over-Promotion as excessive exposure to influencer marketing may induce advertising fatigue. Brands should curtail superfluous promotional initiatives and prioritize genuine consumer connections.

In a nutshell, authenticity, interaction through experience-based content and sustainability messaging may ensure a well-designed framework for influencers and businesses to promote superfoods and penetrate in market.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

Although this study offers considerable insights, certain limitations regard at first the sample, which, although representative for the Generation-Z population, may not adequately capture cultural or regional differences in superfood purchasing behaviors. The participants were predominantly recruited from various social media platforms, thereby indicating that the results are primarily relevant to digitally engaged Generation Z consumers. It is plausible that individuals who consume superfoods yet exhibit lower engagement with digital marketing may demonstrate distinct purchasing patterns. What is more, the utilization of self-reported

survey data engenders the potential for social desirability bias, wherein respondents may exaggerate or minimize their interactions with influencer promotions. The research captures consumer behavior at a singular temporal juncture but fails to monitor the longitudinal shifts in brand loyalty or the progression of digital trends. Subsequent inquiries should contemplate longitudinal studies to evaluate the impact of influencer marketing on consumer retention over protracted durations.

Furthermore, factors such as trust, health consciousness, and economic limitations were excluded from the regression analysis, notwithstanding their potential significant impact on purchasing behaviors. It is vital that forthcoming research integrates both longitudinal studies and qualitative methodologies to enhance the understanding of consumer decision-making processes in this domain for both zoomers and other segments.

Ultimately, the research highlights that while influencers and social media engagement considerably affect consumer purchasing behaviors, their effectiveness is influenced by variables such as historical purchasing patterns, levels of market saturation, and confidence in digital marketing strategies. Future research endeavors could investigate the intricate relationships between influencer credibility, content quality, and brand transparency on consumer trust and purchasing intentions within the superfood sector.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Macrothink Institute.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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