



A Study of the Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision: A Study of Gen Z Consumers

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ABSTRACT:

The research investigates the changing effects of social media marketing (SMM) on purchasing decisions made by consumers within the digital era. This research defines specific research questions and objectives to identify SMM's impact on consumer preferences while evaluating its effect on trust as well as brand perception before customers make buying decisions. The study used a descriptive research method, while simple percentage analysis served as the primary statistical technique for interpreting consumer response trends.

The critical role of social media in modern consumer culture. It offers recommendations for marketers and businesses to leverage SMM strategies effectively, such as using targeted content, collaborating with influencers, and actively engaging with consumers online. The study also acknowledges its limitations and suggests areas for further research, including longitudinal studies and exploring the impact of emerging platforms. Overall, the project provides a comprehensive overview of how social media marketing is reshaping consumer behavior, offering valuable insights for academics and industry practitioners alike.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Media Marketing is the modern means through which businesses reach consumers, and as such, it has become a vital part of marketing today. New homeschoolers in digital media have added Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter; thus, presenting immediate access via direct marketing to an audience that interacts with digital content invites participation from the marketer through this medium.

Out of all the potential consumer sections, Generation Z is by far the greatest segment to decide on currently shifting trends in digital marketing. Gen-Z refers to individuals who were born between 1997 and 2012. This generation has been distinguished by a high level of engagement in social media and a preference for authentic, engaging, and visually appealing content. Differently from their previous generations, Gen Z is very influenced by user-generated content, influencer recommendations, online reviews, and brand involvement on social media. Thus, businesses should know how much social media marketing affects Gen Z consumers' buying decisions for their digital marketing strategies to target Gen Z and improve brand engagement.

This study aims to explore the influence of social media marketing on Gen Z's purchase decision intentions, trust-building mechanisms, and platform preferences.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

- A Study Of The Influence Of Social Media Marketing On Consumer Purchase Decision: A Study Of Gen Z Consumers
- To evaluate consumer perceptions of brand authenticity and engagement strategies on social media platforms.

1.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study relies on online surveys, which may exclude non-active social media users or individuals less likely to respond.
- The study is limited to Gen Z consumers and may not reflect the behaviours of older generations.

1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY

- Gen Z being the most prolific generation in social media usage, it becomes fundamental to analyse how marketing activities affect their purchasing behaviour.

- Online reviews, likes, shares, and recommendations from influencers are pivotal in creating consumer trust; however, the quantifiable impact they have on purchasing decisions is ambiguous.
- This study will provide actionable insights for businesses, marketers, and brands looking to enhance their social media engagement and conversion strategies.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The study focuses on Gen Z consumers aged 18-26 who actively use social media for product discovery, brand interactions, and online purchases.
- The study can be conducted globally or within a specific country, depending on data availability and sample representation.
- The research will analyse the impact of Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat on consumer behaviour, as these platforms are widely used by Gen Z.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- This study contributes to understanding how social media impacts Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions and preferences.
- The study offers insights on how businesses may improve their social media marketing tactics to increase client engagement and sales.
- Businesses may assess the impact of influencer endorsements on customer trust and brand loyalty by researching their efficacy.
- Understanding the aspects influencing customer trust in social media marketing may help companies form deeper, more real relationships with their target audience.

2 - REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Priya (Research Scholar) Dr. Vijay Agrawal (Associate Professor) Vol. 20 No. 1 (2024)- Investigation of The Impact of Digital Platforms on Gen Z Purchase Behaviour: This study aims to investigate the impact of digital platforms on Gen Z's purchase behavior, particularly focusing on influencer marketing. It seeks to provide insights into Gen Z's perceptions and responses to influencer marketing on digital platforms.

Ekta Lalwani, G Uday Kumar , Ms Meena Rani , PJAEE, 18(9) (2021): The Influence Of Social Media On Buying Behaviour Of Generation-Z - Z, In the era of digital boom, social media marketing is being embraced by numerous organisations to tap their clients and build associations. One important target market for brands in this case is Generation Z because they are digitally advanced and possess technological literacy that's fairly new to the market.

Stephanie L. Jacobsen, Nora Ganim Barnes, Vol. 14(3) 2020: Social Media, Gen Z and Consumer Behaviour: Instagram Made Me Do It. These findings in this study suggest that with the influence of social media, Generation Z's misbehaviour in the marketplace.

Aivin Chakola (2022). The Impact of Social Media Influencer on the Buying Behaviour of Gen Z in India: Generation Z has been the most targeted customer segment for marketers on digital platforms due to their continual presence on the internet and social media (Budac, 2015). In the Gen Z generation, online buying has become one of the hottest trends (Hinduan et al., 2020).

Wenju Gao, Lingling Liu, Zulnaidi Yaacob, Vol. 28 No. 2 (2022): Volume 28, Number 2, June, 2022: A Study of Consumer Opinion Leaders' Impact on Generation Z Youth Consumer Behaviour and Its Educational Significance: The focus of the article is on the impact of consumer opinion leaders on the purchasing habits of Generation Z youth and their educational implications.

Kseniia Sokolova (2023): A Comparative Investigation into Social Media's Impact on Generation Z and Millennial Consumer Choices,: The research follows by investigating the generational differences of Generation Z and Millennials and consumer behaviour models that are common for these generations. Lastly, the study covers the role of social media platforms, concentrating on communication theories and following with platform effectiveness.

3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive research design is used for this study.

3.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Convenience Sampling Technique is used for the study.

3.3 SOURCES OF DATA.

Primary data is collected directly from respondents using an online questionnaire. This data collection method is suitable for reaching a wide range of Gen Z consumers while ensuring ease of participation.

- Method of Collection: The questionnaire will be distributed using Google Forms, social media platforms (Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn), and email surveys.

Secondary data includes existing literature, industry reports, and case studies that provide background information and theoretical support for the research.

Sources of Secondary Data:

- Academic Journals & Research Papers: Google Scholar.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

The study collected responses from 130 Generation Z customers.

3.5 HYPOTHESIS

3.5.1 Regression Analysis: Impact of Brand Interaction on Consumer Trust and Purchase Behaviour

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant relationship between brand interaction on social media and consumer trust and purchase behaviour.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There is a significant relationship between brand interaction on social media and consumer trust and purchase behaviour.

4- DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

4.1.1 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.174 ^a	.030	.023	.835

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Interaction

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.782	1	2.782	3.985	.048 ^b
	Residual	89.342	128	.698		
	Total	92.123	129			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Credibility

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Interaction

Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.253	.168		13.451	.000
	Brand Interaction	.168	.084	.174	1.996	.048

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Credibility

(**Alternative Hypothesis Accepted**), the regression analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.048$) between **brand interaction on social media** and **brand credibility**. This suggests that increased interaction with brands on social platforms positively influences how credible Consumers perceive the brand to be. The model explains approximately **3% of the variance** in brand credibility ($R^2 = 0.030$), indicating a small but meaningful impact.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a statistically significant positive relationship between brand interaction on social media and perceived brand credibility.

5-FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 FINDINGS

1. Instagram is the most used platform (85%), followed by YouTube (76%) and Snapchat (60%).
2. 67% of Gen Z consumers are more likely to engage with video content (e.g., reels, YouTube shorts) over static posts.
3. 74% of respondents trust product recommendations from social media influencers, especially micro-influencers.
4. Product reviews (82%) and user-generated content (70%) are major trust factors before making a purchase.
5. 72% are more likely to purchase when limited-time offers or discounts are promoted via stories or reels.
6. Brands maintaining a consistent tone and visuals across platforms are more likely to be remembered (62%).
7. **Regression Analysis** revealed a positive impact of brand engagement (likes, comments, and shares) on the likelihood of making a purchase.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

1. Collaborate with micro and nano influencers who have stronger trust and engagement with Gen Z. Focus on authentic and value-based promotions rather than overt advertising.
2. Focus on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, which 85% of respondents engage with. Design campaigns suited to each platform's algorithm and content style.
3. Enable in-app purchases through Instagram Shop or TikTok Storefront. Reduce purchase friction by allowing seamless checkout within social platforms.
4. Design campaigns optimised for mobile screens, as 90% of Gen Z uses smartphones for social browsing. Prioritise vertical video formats and tap-friendly layouts.

6: CONCLUSION

This study concludes that social media marketing has become a powerful tool to influence consumer behaviour in the digital age. With an increase in the use of platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat, consumer-especially the young demographic-brand materials, impressive publicity and user-related reviews are exposed to, which gives considerable shape to their purchase decisions. Research findings show that visual materials, authentic customers' reviews and interactive Engagement are the major elements that influence consumer trust and purchasing intentions. While Social media marketing has been proven to increase brand awareness, engagement and loyalty, direct conversion in the purchase remains moderate, indicating that the oppressive needs to build deep trust and provide more value-powered materials.

Finally, social media marketing has an immense ability to influence consumer behaviour when implemented strategically. Businesses that understand their audience, maintain authenticity, and embrace continuous conversations are more likely to be successful in taking advantage of social media power to buy behaviour effectively.

7- REFERENCES

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