RESEARCH ARTICLE

Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention of Gen Z

K. S. Deepika[*], Ajay Massand

Abstract
Brand marketing activities on social media (SM) are becoming more innovative and attractive. With the growth of the internet and generation Z being the most likely users of internet technology(www.statista.com) and the potential market for products and services online, the study considers this group for analysis. The study aims to determine the factors impacting the purchase intention of Gen Z based on the social media marketing activities (SMMA) of the brand. The critical points analyzed are how Gen Z perceives brands marketed on SM and what characteristics they consider before their purchase. A sample size of 250 Gen Z customers is considered for the analysis. The research uses a purposive sampling technique amongst Gen Z as they are primarily into social media usage. The outcome of the research indicates to the marketers the most important aspects of social media marketing (SMM) that they have to focus on. Factor Analysis and Multiple Regression on the two factors obtained-customer engagement and trendiness has been employed. This research helps the brands design their SMMA focusing on the most vibrant factors that attract most of the specified target segment. It is of practical importance as Gen Z is the fresh entrant to the customer base of all brands. Gen Z's changing behavior of adapting to new and trending social media platforms and leveraging of maximum time on social media along with easy access to the same makes it much more important for the marketers to focus on this research results.

Keywords: Customer engagement, Trendiness, Brand, Purchase intention, Gen Z, Social media marketing.

Introduction

Gen Z are those born between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s (Priporas *et al.*, 2017; Djafarova *et al.*, 2020; Liu *et al.*, 2021; Zafar *et al.*, 2021). They have grown in the era of iPhones and at times of recession. According to the Pew Research Centre classification studies, anyone born after 1997 is Gen Z. They are also called digital natives (Prensky, 2001). The cell phones were already there when they were born. According to a data decision intelligence company- Morning Consult, about 4 hours a day is spent by Gen Z on social media and 68% of them use it for just scrolling and entertainment. Statistically, the digital well-being index (DWBI) is a measure of Gen Z's online psychological well-being. India scores 68. With over 100 million Gen Z consumers in India, they hold a significant sway over the social media landscape.

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The awareness, interest, desire, action (AIDA) model has been a fundamental framework in marketing and advertising for over a century. It was given by E. St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 to explain personal selling, Figure 1. It has evolved accommodating the changes in the marketing landscape and consumer behavior. Awareness (A), interest (I), desire (D) and action (A) are the steps in the purchase model for a product or purchase cycle for a customer (Li & Yu, 2013). While the model remains the same for the stages in the process, there has been the use of different mediums for communication with modern advertising. The digital and online media have transformed the model. It focuses on the online customers who also are the offline customers for the brands.

There are multiple touchpoints for a brand before taking action. The AIDA model still remains relevant, but the importance given to each stage varies. Customers plunge into action with awareness generated, thus making Interest and Desire less important. With a lot of online brands coming in and social media marketing in its boom, a slight awareness will help in reaching the desired action. It mostly happens for the low-involvement products. Customers tend to search and compare less before making buying decisions. Thus, the factors impacting the buying decision-making through social media marketing become vital to be known for marketers to sustain in the market and be market leaders.
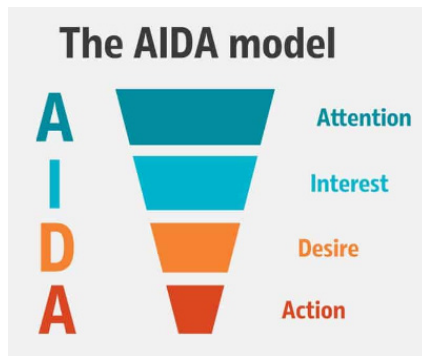
The AIDA model

Figure 1: AIDA model

With the advent of technology and its cravings for usage by Gen Z, creating interest and desire to persuade people to make buying decisions becomes important. Thus, the AIDA model was justified (Li & Yu, 2013). Gen Z has become a technology geek, and the internet penetration has enabled marketers to reach out to the minds of their target segment. The omnipresence of social media has changed the dynamics of consumer behavior. In this era of digital immersion, brands have both the positive and negative sides of their synergy with customers. It has changed the way of marketing, positioning, and content creation to frame the images in the customer's mind (Tsai & Men, 2013). It is not only to persuade customers but also to maintain and manage online communities. Online brand communities nurture brand loyalty and positive electronic-Word Of Mouth. Customers feel an association with the group or the brand by being involved in the community. Online community experiences indirectly impact product purchases in a positive way (Li *et al.*, 2017).

The art of social media marketing has become a path to the digital success of brands. It was a new tool introduced in the early 2000s. The potential of different social media platforms given a wide path for brands to make their way. This has led to the introduction of a fifth P to the marketing Ps-"Participation" through social media (Tuten & Solomon, 2015).

Novelty

Social media marketing activities have become progressively significant in affecting the purchase intention of brands (Mittal and Kaur, 2020). Different examinations have exhibited the positive effect of social media marketing on brand awareness (Putri, 2021). These examinations have shown that social media marketing permits advertisers to make content custom-made to the requirements of their main interest group, bringing about a more grounded association and higher purchase intention among customers. Moreover, social media marketing gives amazing open doors to customers to participate in co-creation and content creation, further enabling their buying decisions. Moreover, social media platforms empower shoppers to

access and share reviews and ratings, which have been found to decidedly impact their purchase intention (Dieudonne *et al.*, 2016). In general, Social media marketing is viewed as a principal wellspring of data for buyers while making purchasing decisions. As Gen Z are investment beginner customers, it is highly prioritized to focus on them**.** Hence, the impact of SMMA on Gen Z is the present need to be done by the brands.

Research Gap

The impact of SMMA on brand trust, love, loyalty, equity, and experience has been extensively studied (Bilgin *et al.*, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2020). The influence of Social media on consumer behavior is studied but not from a marketing perspective. Content sharing, interaction, e-WOM, customization, and experience have been identified as important marketing activities by organizations (Beig and Khan, 2018; Wibowo *et al.*, 2021; CHEN *et al.*, 2019; Godey, B., *et al.*, 2016; Masa'deh *et al.*, 2021; Alalwan *et al.*, 2017; Bilgin *et al.*, 2018). These are the various activities that the brand has to consider to attract customers and create an intent to purchase so that the customer base increases. The target segment that these studies have focused on is the millennials and mostly product category-wise (Masa'deh *et al.*, 2021). With the growth of the internet and Gen Z being the most likely users of internet technology and the potential market for products and services online, this study considers this group for analysis. The outcome of any SMMA is the purchase for which intent to purchase becomes important. A customer might add a product to the cart but there is no guarantee of them completing the transaction in all cases. So, the intent to purchase has to be so strong that the final action is completed. Hence, the analysis of SMMA and its influence on the Purchase Intention of Gen Z is the focus of study in this paper.

Objectives

- To identify the factors of SMMA influencing brand purchase intention of Gen Z
- To analyze the influence of identified factors on the brand purchase intention of Gen Z

Materials and Methods

An empirical study with a cross-sectional approach is used for the research. The samples used in this research belong to Gen Z as this is the generation that uses the internet and is familiar with most social media networking sites and adapts to them very easily. The oldest of them are entrants to the workplace and voting centers (Gaidhani *et al.*, 2019; Francis *et al.*, 2018). A sample size of 250 is considered for analysis collected through an online questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used for data collection. The responses were analyzed using SPSS Version 21. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done where only factors with loading more than

0.5 were considered (Hair *et al.*, 2006) followed by multiple linear regression modeling for the obtained factors to establish a relationship between them.

Reliability Testing

A total of 20 items were considered for preparing the questionnaire, which was taken from the existing literature. A 5-point Likert scale was used where 1= "Strongly Disagree," and 5 = "Strongly Agree." A pilot study on 5 items was conducted to check the reliability of the questionnaire.

A Cronbach Alpha value of 0.78 was obtained, which validated the reliability of the questionnaire as in Table 1 (Reliability Statistics).

Observation/Results

The demographic details, such as gender and time spent on social media sites details are given in Table 2 (Demographic details).

Gen Z uses social media networking sites for an average of 1 to 2 hours per day. Instagram is the most used social media application. Most

The Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sample adequacy of 0.931 from Table 3 (KMO and Bartlett's Test)

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.78	0.78	5

Table 2: Demographic details

Features	Frequency	Percent
Female	83	33.2
Male	167	66.8
Average time Spent		
1 to 2 hours	127	50.8
2 to 3 hours	65	26.0
Less than an hour	29	11.6
More than 3 hours	29	11.6
Platform used		
Instagram	152	60.8
WhatsApp	49	19.6
YouTube	34	13.6
Others	15	6.0

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		*0.931*
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2918.723
	df	190
	Sig.	0

confirms that the sample size considered for the research is adequate. Bartlett's test of sphericity shows the model to be significant with Sig.= .000 < 0.05.

All items with factor loading less than 0.5 are not considered for the further analysis process.

The factors are named as

Factor 1: Trendiness

Factor 2: Customer Engagement

Factor 1 explains 44.741% of the variance and both factors inclusive explain a total of 66.046% of variance, as shown in Table 4 (Total Variance Explained). The linear regression is run to establish a relationship between the factors and the dependent variable, purchase intention.

From the regression output in Table 5 (Regression Model Summary), 40.4% of the variation in purchase intention is explained by the two factors of the model. A Durbin- Watson value of 1.981 indicates there is no autocorrelation between the factors. The ANOVA Significance value indicates that the model thus formed is fit.

From the coefficients Table 6 (Coefficients), the linear regression equation can be written below:

Purchase Intention = 0.579 + 0.239 * Trendiness + 0.564 * Customer Engagement

Both trendiness and customer engagement have a significant impact on the purchase intention (Sig. < 0.05) and thus confirm the fitness of the model. The model developed from the analysis can be represented in Figure 2 (Author's model).

Results and Discussion

Most of the Gen Z spends 1 to 2 hours on social media daily. A considerable time is spent by Gen Z on social media which

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	5.816	44.74	44.74
2	2.77	21.31	66.05

Table 5: Regression Model Summary

R Square	Durbin- Watson	ANOVA Sig
0.404	1.981	0

Table 6: Coefficientsa

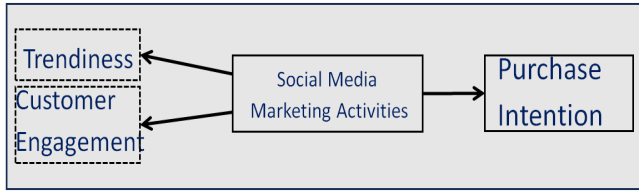| Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	0.579	0.227	2.551	0.011
Trendiness	0.239	0.067	3.575	0
Customer Engagement	0.564	0.065	8.671	0

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Figure 2: Author's model

provides an opportunity for marketers to advertise online and grab their attention. This span of time is good enough for the marketers to create an image for their target segment. As compared to a traditional TV ad, where the exposure can be 3 to 4 times a day, social media communication during the most used 1 to 2 hours of time is effective as it has a self-paced realization impact. It is possible to revisit the communication on social media. It is also easier to measure the reach of a social media ad than a traditional advertisement. This time spent on social media is more effective than on traditional media as it reaches the right target and not the mass target. Instagram is the most used social media platform. This reveals that Gen Z is looking for a platform where they can share, search, socialize, and also get exposed to advertisements. Such platforms motivate the users to spread the communication to the required ones much more easily than the traditional media.

Gen Z looks for the latest things in their life and asks for involvement. Hence, the research on this target group reveals two important factors of consideration- *Trendiness and Customer Engagement*. The results of this research are in compliance with those conducted by Kim and Ko, 2012 and Seo and Park, 2018 for the entertainment factor and Seo and Park, 2018 for the trendiness factor. Many other factors have been considered in other research like customization, e-WOM, interaction, and entertainment (Bilgin *et al.*, 2018; Godey *et al.*, 2016). Gen Z wants communication to be interesting and fun-loving. They get more into it if they have Celebrity Endorsers. In total, they should be engaged with the brand. This engagement with the brand creates a positive brand image in the minds of the customers (Seo and Park, 2018). All these items are considered as a customer engagement factor. Customers prefer to have much of a storyline and reels as their communication content and are price sensitive, too, as they look for sales and discounts being offered. Customers thrive on being updated and look for the latest and updated content. They develop the purchase intent based on the reviews and ratings. All these items are put under the factor of trendiness.

The research holds the limitation of Gen Z coverage over different geographical locations with reference to their lifestyle, disposable income, and internet infrastructure. However, social media marketing has become the major tool for marketers to reach out to their customers at every stage of their decision-making.

Social media marketing holds the top position in Integrated Marketing Communication strategies. With the vast options of such marketing activities, a brand cannot neglect the potential of social media. Managers need to know the implications and set the stage right for their company. This research gives a direction for the managers to know what is the area of focus in social media marketing and the critical factors to be considered. Further research can be done to identify the impact of social media activities on the various stages of the consumer decision process. It can be extensively studied for different demographic features and for specific categories of products.

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