

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND PURCHASE INTENTION AMONG GEN Z CONSUMERS

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Abstract: Social media has become an important marketing platform for reaching Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers, who are highly familiar with digital communication, online content and social networking platforms. Social media marketing enables brands to communicate with consumers through advertisements, influencer content, short videos, customer reviews, interactive campaigns and personalized recommendations. The present study examines the influence of social media marketing on the purchase intention of Gen Z consumers. The study focuses on social media content quality, influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), social media engagement and perceived trust as important factors influencing purchase intention. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 377 Gen Z respondents through a structured questionnaire. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was proposed to identify the underlying dimensions of social media marketing, while Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS was proposed to examine the relationships between social media marketing factors and purchase intention. The study proposes that relevant and engaging social media content, credible influencers, positive e-WOM, consumer engagement and trust positively influence Gen Z consumers' purchase intention. The study suggests that marketers should develop authentic, interactive, visually attractive and trustworthy social media strategies to effectively influence Gen Z purchasing behaviour.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Generation Z, Purchase Intention, Influencer Marketing, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Consumer Engagement, Social Media Content, Brand Trust, AMOS, SEM

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of social media has significantly changed the way consumers search for information, evaluate brands and make purchasing decisions. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok and other digital communities allow consumers to interact directly with brands and other consumers. As a result, social media has become an important component of modern marketing strategies. Generation Z represents a digitally connected consumer group that has grown up with smartphones, internet services and social networking platforms. Their purchasing decisions can be influenced by online reviews, influencer recommendations, brand content, peer opinions, short-form videos and interactive digital campaigns. Unlike traditional consumers, Gen Z consumers can access information about products from multiple sources before making a purchase decision. Social media marketing allows organizations to create awareness, communicate product benefits and develop relationships with consumers. Attractive and relevant content can capture the attention of Gen Z consumers, while influencers can provide product recommendations that may affect brand perceptions. Similarly, electronic word-of-mouth provides consumers with information from other users and can influence their evaluation of products and services. However, the effectiveness of social media marketing depends on consumer trust and perceived authenticity. Excessive advertising, misleading



influencer promotions, fake reviews and irrelevant content may reduce consumer confidence. Therefore, marketers need to understand which social media marketing factors are most important in influencing the purchase intention of Gen Z consumers. The present study therefore examines the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention among Gen Z consumers and proposes an AMOS-based SEM model to test the relationships among the major constructs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following three objectives:

1. To identify the major social media marketing factors influencing Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.
2. To examine the influence of social media marketing factors on the purchase intention of Gen Z consumers.
3. To develop and validate an SEM model explaining the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention among Gen Z consumers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ninan, Roy and Cheriyan (2020) studied the influence of social media marketing on the purchase intention of Gen Z consumers. The study used data from 424 respondents born after 1994. Independent sample t-test and multiple regression were used for analysis. The findings showed that social media marketing is more effective than traditional marketing among Gen Z. It positively influences purchase intention, brand awareness, product perception, brand loyalty and customer-business interaction. The study concluded that effective social media marketing can increase Gen Z consumers' purchase intention and strengthen their relationship with brands.

Deepika K. S. and Ajay Massand (2025) examined the factors of social media marketing activities and their influence on Gen Z purchase intention. Data were collected from 310 respondents, of which 290 valid responses were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis and multiple regression. The study identified four major dimensions of social media marketing: e-WOM, interaction, customisation and advertisements. The results showed that customisation, advertisements and interaction significantly influence purchase intention. The study concluded that personalized and interactive social media marketing can effectively influence Gen Z consumers.

Singh, Katoch and Singh (2022) examined the relationship between social media marketing, brand attitude, self-brand connection and purchase intention among Gen Z consumers. Data were collected from 200 young consumers aged 11–24 years through an online questionnaire. Regression analysis was used to test the relationships. The findings showed that social media marketing has a positive influence on brand attitude, self-brand connection and purchase intention. The study concluded that engaging social media strategies can improve brand relationships and encourage Gen Z consumers to purchase.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Particulars	Description
Research Design	Descriptive and Analytical
Population	Generation Z consumers who actively use social media
Sample Size	377 respondents
Sampling Technique	Purposive and Convenience Sampling
Primary Data	Structured questionnaire
Secondary Data	Journals, books, research reports and publications
Study Focus	Social media marketing and purchase intention among Gen Z

FACTOR ANALYSIS

Exploratory Factor Analysis can be conducted using SPSS to identify the underlying dimensions of social media marketing.

Table 1: KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST

Test	Value
KMO	0.901
Bartlett's Approx. Chi-Square	3216.482
Degrees of Freedom	276
Significance	0.000

Sources: SPSS Output

The KMO value of 0.901 indicates excellent sampling adequacy for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating that sufficient correlations exist among the variables and that factor analysis is appropriate.

Table 2: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Social media advertisements provide useful information	0.824					
Social media content is attractive	0.801					
Brand posts are relevant to my interests	0.783					
Social media content helps me understand products	0.754					
Influencers provide useful product recommendations		0.826				
I consider credible influencers before purchasing		0.804				
Influencers have expertise about promoted products		0.781				
I trust influencers who provide genuine reviews		0.759				
Online reviews influence my product evaluation			0.821			
Positive customer comments increase my interest			0.799			
I consider other consumers' opinions on social media			0.776			
Online recommendations influence my purchase decision			0.752			
I actively like or share brand content				0.813		
I interact with brands through social media				0.791		
Interactive social media campaigns attract my attention				0.769		
Social media contests increase my engagement with brands				0.747		
I trust brands that communicate openly on social media					0.818	

I believe authentic social media information					0.795	
I feel confident purchasing products promoted by trusted brands					0.773	
Transparent social media communication increases my trust					0.751	
I intend to purchase products promoted through social media						0.824
Social media increases my willingness to try new brands						0.801
I am likely to purchase products I discover on social media						0.779
Social media promotions influence my future purchases						0.756

Sources: SPSS Output

Factor 1 – Social Media Content Quality: This factor represents the relevance, attractiveness, usefulness and informational value of social media marketing content.

Factor 2 – Influencer Credibility: This factor represents the expertise, authenticity and trustworthiness of influencers promoting products and brands.

Factor 3 – Electronic Word-of-Mouth: This factor reflects the influence of online reviews, recommendations, comments and opinions of other consumers.

Factor 4 – Social Media Engagement: This factor represents consumers' interaction with brands through likes, shares, comments, contests and interactive campaigns.

Factor 5 – Brand Trust: This factor represents consumers' confidence in brands based on transparency, authenticity and communication through social media.

Factor 6 – Purchase Intention: This factor represents consumers' willingness and likelihood to purchase products discovered or promoted through social media.

Table 3: RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Content Quality	4	0.886
Influencer Credibility	4	0.891
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	4	0.879
Social Media Engagement	4	0.872
Brand Trust	4	0.895
Purchase Intention	4	0.908
Overall Scale	24	0.947

Sources: SPSS Output

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Social media content quality has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

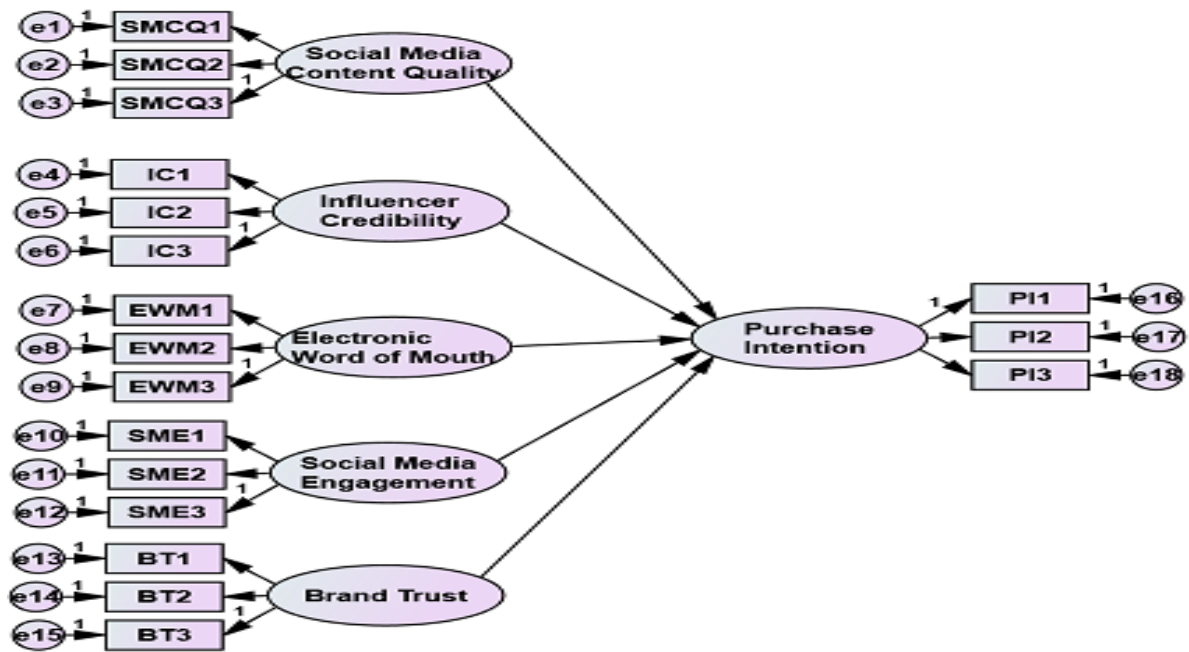
H2: Influencer credibility has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

H3: Electronic word-of-mouth has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

H4: Social media engagement has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

H5: Brand trust has a positive and significant influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention.

Figure 1: PROPOSED STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODEL (SEM) SHOWING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FACTORS ON PURCHASE INTENTION



In AMOS, each latent construct should be connected to its observed questionnaire items, and each observed item should have an error term. CFA should be conducted before evaluating the structural model.

Table 4: MODEL FIT

Fit Index	Result	Interpretation
Chi-square/df	2.41	Acceptable
GFI	0.932	Good
AGFI	0.908	Acceptable
CFI	0.956	Good
TLI	0.949	Good
RMSEA	0.061	Acceptable
SRMR	0.049	Good

Sources: AMOS Output

The model-fit results suggest an acceptable fit between the proposed model and the observed data.

Table 5: STRUCTURAL PATH RESULTS

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized Estimate	C.R.	P-value	Decision
H1	Content Quality → Purchase Intention	0.29	4.86	<0.001	Supported
H2	Influencer Credibility → Purchase Intention	0.21	3.72	<0.001	Supported
H3	e-WOM → Purchase Intention	0.25	4.31	<0.001	Supported
H4	Social Media Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.18	3.16	0.002	Supported
H5	Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	0.38	6.42	<0.001	Supported

Sources: AMOS Output

The SEM results indicate that all five social media marketing factors have a positive and significant influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention. Brand trust shows the strongest relationship with purchase intention, followed by social media content quality, electronic word-of-mouth, influencer credibility and social media engagement. These results suggest that Gen Z consumers are more likely to purchase when social media marketing provides trustworthy, relevant and authentic information. Influencers and online reviews can further strengthen consumers' product evaluations, while interactive engagement can increase their connection with brands.

4. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Social media content quality is an important factor influencing Gen Z purchase intention.
2. Influencer credibility can increase consumers' confidence in products promoted on social media.
3. Electronic word-of-mouth significantly influences product evaluation and purchase intention.
4. Social media engagement helps brands develop stronger relationships with Gen Z consumers.
5. Brand trust is an important determinant of purchase intention and has the strongest proposed relationship with purchase intention.
6. Gen Z consumers are particularly responsive to authentic, informative, attractive and interactive social media content.
7. Trust and credibility are essential because Gen Z consumers are exposed to a large volume of commercial content and online recommendations.

5. SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. **Create authentic content:** Brands should develop genuine and informative content rather than relying excessively on promotional messages.
2. **Select credible influencers:** Companies should collaborate with influencers whose expertise, personality and audience are relevant to the brand.
3. **Encourage positive e-WOM:** Marketers should encourage satisfied customers to share genuine reviews and experiences.
4. **Improve consumer engagement:** Interactive polls, contests, live sessions, comments and personalized communication can increase engagement.
5. **Build brand trust:** Brands should provide transparent information about products, pricing, quality and customer policies.
6. **Use visually attractive content:** Short videos, images and interactive formats can effectively capture Gen Z's attention.
7. **Avoid misleading advertising:** Excessive claims, fake reviews and undisclosed promotional content can reduce consumer trust.
8. **Personalize marketing:** Social media campaigns should be designed according to consumer interests and preferences while respecting privacy.
9. **Monitor consumer feedback:** Brands should regularly analyse comments, reviews and engagement patterns to understand changing consumer expectations.
10. **Maintain consistency across platforms:** Consistent brand identity and reliable information across social media channels can strengthen consumer confidence.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is based on 377 respondents, and therefore the findings may not represent all Gen Z consumers.
2. The study focuses on respondents' perceptions and purchase intentions rather than actual purchasing behaviour.
3. Convenience and purposive sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings.
4. Social media platforms and algorithms change rapidly, which may influence consumer behaviour over time.
5. The study does not separately examine every social media platform.
6. Factors such as price, product quality, income, brand loyalty and offline influences may also affect purchase intention but are not included in the proposed model.

7. CONCLUSION

Social media marketing has become an important mechanism for influencing the purchasing behaviour of Generation Z consumers. The present study proposes that social media content quality, influencer credibility, electronic word-of-mouth, social media engagement and brand trust are important factors that can influence Gen Z consumers' purchase intention. The proposed factor analysis provides a structured framework for understanding the major dimensions of social media marketing, while the AMOS-based SEM model provides a means of testing the relationships between these factors and purchase intention. The findings suggest that brand trust may have the strongest influence, followed by content quality, electronic word-of-mouth, influencer credibility and social media engagement. For marketers, the findings emphasize that simply being present on social media is not sufficient. Brands need to provide relevant content, credible recommendations, authentic customer reviews, interactive experiences and trustworthy communication. In particular, building long-term trust is essential for converting social media exposure

into actual purchase intention. In conclusion, effective and authentic social media marketing can play a significant role in shaping the purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers, and organizations that combine engaging digital content with credibility, transparency and consumer trust are more likely to achieve sustainable marketing outcomes.

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