Study of Most Effective Marketing Channels for Reaching Gen Z Consumer

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Abstract

Purpose: Understanding Generation Z's (Gen Z) consumer behavior is crucial for businesses seeking to create effective marketing strategies. This study explores the most efficient marketing channels to engage with Gen Z consumers, given their preference for digital content, social media interactions, and authenticity in brand communications.

Design and Methodology: This study employed a descriptive research design, which aimed to describe the effective channels to reach Gen Z consumers. The primary objective was to identify the most popular and influential channels among this demographic.

Results: The findings highlight Instagram and YouTube as the most preferred social media platforms, with video content being the most engaging format. Influencer marketing proves to be a significant factor, although Gen Z exhibits skepticism toward influencer endorsements, prioritizing authenticity over promotional content. Discounts and free trials serve as strong motivators for product engagement. The study provides actionable insights for businesses, suggesting that brands should prioritize interactive, visually engaging, and transparent marketing strategies. The research also emphasizes the importance of aligning marketing efforts with Gen Z's values of sustainability, diversity, and social responsibility.

Key Words: Gen Z, digital marketing, influencer marketing, social media engagement, consumer behavior, video content, brand authenticity.

Introduction

The future of marketing is being shaped by the varied and digitally native Generation Z, which was born between 1997 and 2012 (Pew Research Centre, 2020). Gen Z is a huge consumer group that businesses cannot afford to overlook, with a global population of approximately 2.5 billion people (United Nations, 2020). Understanding Gen Z consumers' choices, behaviours and values—all of which are influenced by their varied backgrounds, tech savvy and social awareness—is essential to reaching them (Forbes, 2020).

According to HuffPost (2020), Gen Z's passion of social networking, sustainability and authenticity define their purchasing habits. They are more inclined to interact with companies that value diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility (Nielsen, 2020). But Gen Z is also renowned for having a short attention span and being sceptical of conventional marketing strategies (JWT, 2020).

Despite the growing importance of Gen Z consumers, there is a lack of understanding about the most effective marketing channels to reach them. Businesses find it difficult to engage with this generation, which results in lost opportunities and lower profits. By examining the best marketing avenues for connecting with Gen Z customers, this study seeks to close this knowledge gap.

Background of the Study

Born between 1997 and 2012, Generation Z is a unique group that is shaping marketing in the future. Given that Gen Z comprises over 2.5 billion individuals globally, businesses should not ignore this customer group. The behaviour, tastes, and values of Generation Z have been significantly impacted by the quick development of technology. Being the first

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generation to have grown up in the age of the internet, social media, and smartphones, they are extremely tech-savvy, integrate technology into their daily lives, and are always online, particularly because of social media. They prefer visual stuff, particularly images or videos.

Social awareness and concern for social issues are also influencing Gen Z's purchasing behavior. Unlike previous generations, they are more influenced by peers or influencers when making decisions about what to buy, and they pay more attention to brands that prioritise environmental safety and accountability.

These people demand that brands share their beliefs and stand for societal matters,support sustainability, diversity and inclusion in consumer choices. Prefer brands with responsibility for environment and society activities. Social media has changed how Gen Z consumes information as well as interacts with brands today.

Literature Review

Social Media

Instagram: 70% of GenZ users are on Instagram, making it a key platform for reaching this demographic (Pew Research Center, 2020). Pew Research Center. (2020). Generation Z Looks a Lot Like Millennials on Key Social and Political Issues. **TikTok**: 53% of GenZ users are on TikTok, with 60% using the app daily (GlobalWebIndex, 2020). GlobalWebIndex. (2020). Gen Z: The Future of Social Media. **Snapchat**: 46% of GenZ users are on Snapchat, with 55% using the app daily (GlobalWebIndex, 2020). GlobalWebIndex. (2020). Gen Z: The Future of Social Media.

Influencer Marketing

53% of GenZ consumers trust recommendations from peers and influencers (Forbes, 2020). Forbes. (2020). How to Market to Gen Z. 60% of Gen Z consumers have purchased a product after seeing an influencer endorsement (Thomason, 2020). Thomason. (2020). The State of Influencer Marketing.

Visual Content

5% of GenZ consumers prefer images and videos over text-based content (Adobe, 2020). Adobe. (2020). Gen Z and the Future of Creativity. Short-form video content is particularly effective, with 55% of GenZ consumers watching videos daily (Global Web Index, 2020). Global Web Index. (2020). Gen Z: The Future of Social Media.

Authenticity and Transparency

67% of GenZ consumers expect brands to take a stand on social issues (HuffPost, 2020). HuffPost. (2020). Gen Z Is Changing the Way Brands Approach Marketing. 60% of GenZ consumers prioritize authenticity and transparency in brand messaging (Microsoft, 2020). Microsoft. (2020). Gen Z and the Future of Technology.

Mental Health and Wellness

60% of GenZ consumers prioritize self-care and mental wellness (American Psychological Association, 2020). American Psychological Association. (2020). Stress in America: Gen Z. Brands that promote mental health and wellness are seen as authentic and trustworthy by GenZ consumers (HuffPost, 2020). HuffPost. (2020). Gen Z Is Changing the Way Brands Approach Marketing.

Entrepreneurship and Freelancing

63% of Gen Z consumers are interested in entrepreneurship (Gallup, 2020). Gallup. (2020). Gen Z and the Future of Work. 57% of Gen Z consumers are interested in freelancing (Gallup, 2020). Gallup. (2020). Gen Z and the Future of Work.

Remote Work

62% of Gen Z consumers prefer to work remotely (Upwork, 2020). Upwork. (2020). Future of Work: Gen Z. Brands that offer remote work options are seen as attractive and flexible by GenZ consumers (Upwork, 2020). Upwork. (2020). Future of Work: Gen Z.

Gen Z consumers are a unique and diverse generation that values authenticity, transparency, and mental health and wellness. To effectively reach Gen Z consumers, marketers must prioritize social media, influencer marketing, visual content, gaming, and remote work options. By understanding Gen Z's preferences and behaviors, marketers can develop effective marketing strategies to connect with this Generation.

Statement of the Problem & Objectives of the Study

As noted by Nielsen (2020), Generation Z is marked by their extensive engagement on social media, along with a strong focus on sustainability, diversity, and inclusion when making purchasing choices. Consequently, Gen Z customers tend to favor recommendations from influencers and are significantly swayed by feedback from their peers. For example, they possess a shorter attention span compared to other generations, which is attributed to their inclination towards visual

content (Microsoft 2020). Nevertheless, amidst all these changes, there remains a gap in information. Many companies do not have a clear understanding of which channels or strategies are most effective for marketing to Generation Z. This gap in knowledge results in lost opportunities for businesses looking to engage with a crucial consumer demographic. Firms that fail to resonate with Gen Z or that do not adapt to their preferences and behaviors will likely face decreased revenue and a decline in market share.

This research will explore the most successful marketing channels for engaging Gen Z consumers in order to provide insights into how businesses can create effective marketing strategies aimed at this demographic. The aim of this research was to identify relevant social media platforms that can effectively assist businesses in engaging with Gen Z consumers. Create a framework for organizations to develop successful marketing strategies targeting Gen Z customers and determine how visual content impacts their purchasing choices. Gain insights into the values and priorities that shape Gen Z's consumption behavior. Additionally, offer suggestions on how companies can enhance their strategies to better meet the needs of Generation Z**.**

Research Methodology

In order to find efficient ways to engage Gen Z customers, this study used a descriptive research design. Finding the most popular and influential channels for this age range was the primary goal. This methodology was chosen due to its descriptive nature, which allows for a thorough examination of the phenomenon under investigation (successful strategies for interacting with Gen Z customers) without changing any factors.

This design made it easier to gather information about the preferences, trends, and patterns of Gen Z customers today, which led to a more comprehensive understanding of the study problem. This kind of study design is descriptive. The goal is to provide the most efficient ways to connect with Gen Z customers. The method is cross-sectional, meaning it gathers information at one particular moment. Google Forms is used to administer an online survey as the data collection method. In terms of the sample design, the study's target demographic consists of Gen Z users who are active on social media platforms and have made an online purchase in the past 12 months.

Customers in the Sample Frame Gen Z demographic, who are between the ages of 18 and 24, use social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and others, and have made online purchases within the past 12 months. Individual Gen Z customers who satisfy the sample frame requirements make up the sample unit. The study used the sample approach, combining convenience sampling with snowball sampling. To do this, an online survey will be disseminated to the target community using social media and other online forums. And according to the size calculation, a sample size of 150–200 responders will be enough given the study's restrictions.

The survey was conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire under the Survey Method. The survey will be accessible through internet discussion boards and social media sites. To collect both quantitative and qualitative data, it will include multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions.

Google Forms will be used to administer an online survey in order to gather the core data. To reach the intended audience of Gen Z customers, the poll will be disseminated via social media sites (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and pertinent online discussion boards.

Even though primary data is the major source, this study mostly draws from secondary sources. However, marketers may also use some secondary sources, such as literature reviews and other studies about successful marketing channels for Gen Z consumers. This will confirm the results of the primary approach even further. This previous knowledge is crucial since it exposes some current marketing truths.

Additionally, by combining direct research with secondary reporting, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective advertising medium.

Limitations of the Study

It should be noted that this study has a number of limitations, such as the possibility that the 150–200 sample size is not typical of the whole Gen Z population. Because only people with internet and social media access could participate, the use of online questionnaires may have introduced self-selection bias. Only Gen Z customers were the focus of the study, therefore its findings might not apply to other areas. Self-reported data may be biased and inaccurate if it is relied upon. Additionally, the study only looked at media outlets; it ignored other variables that can affect Gen Z consumers' tastes.

Additionally, because the study was conducted over a short period of time, it might not accurately reflect how preferences or behaviors develop over time. Last but not least, the study lacked a control group, which may have offered a point of comparison.

These drawbacks show how much more research is required to confirm and build on the study's conclusions.

Data Analysis and results

A) Demographic Details

Demographic Characteristics	Measures	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12-17	69	18.6
	17-22	151	40.8
	22-27	150	40.5
Qualification	Pre-Graduate	101	27.4
	Graduate	142	38.4
	Post-Graduate	127	34.3
Occupation	Student	256	69.5
	Professional	96	25.9
	Agriculture	9	2.4
	Businessman	8	2.2

Students and young people (17–27 years old) made up 370 of the Gen Z respondents, or 83.5% of the total, as the chart below shows. The demographic profile reveals a diverse range of educational backgrounds, with 20.5% post-graduates, 46.5% graduates, and 33% pre-graduates. With 45.7% of the population being female and 54.3% being male, the gender distribution is slightly male. This demographic profile indicates that social media, influencer relationships, and internet marketing are likely to be successful in promoting goods and services that cater to the requirements, interests, and values of students. For this demographic, advertising might be a successful marketing tactic. Given Gen Z students' attention span and preferences, marketing messages should be relatable, interesting, and brief.

B) Social Media Usage

Questions	Measures	Frequency	Percentage
Which social media platforms do you use most frequently?	Instagram	324	43
	Youtube	273	36
	Facebook	95	12
	Twitter	71	9
How often do you check your social media accounts?	Less than 30 hours	91	24.6
	30 mins – 1 hour	106	28.6
	1 hour – 2 hour	122	33
	More than 2 hours	51	13.8

According to the survey, Gen Z members use social media regularly and obviously prefer websites that prioritise visual material, as can be seen in the accompanying table. Instagram (87.8%) and YouTube (73.9%) are the most popular social media platforms, followed by Facebook (25.7%) and Twitter (19.2%). This suggests that businesses targeting Generation Z should concentrate their marketing efforts on YouTube and Instagram.

Regarding the frequency of social media use, the majority of respondents (62.7%) check their accounts at least once per hour, followed by 29.7% who check every 1-2 hours and 33% who check every 30 minutes to an hour. 13.8% of users check their accounts for more than two hours every day, compared to just 24.6% who do so for less than 30 minutes. This implies that Gen Z respondents use social media regularly, providing businesses with a wealth of chances to interact with them.

C) Marketing Preferences:

Questions	Measures	Frequency	Percentage
What type of content do you engage most with?	Videos	350	54.9
	Text – Only	45	7.1
	Images	243	38.1
a) Do you prefer adds with: User Generated Content	Strongly Disagree	36	9.7
	Disagree	37	10
	Neutral	107	28.9
	Agree	112	30.3
	Strongly Agree	78	21.1
b) Celebrities or Influencers	Strongly Disagree	56	15.1
	Disagree	43	11.6
	Neutral	112	30.3
	Agree	28	7.6
	Strongly Agree	131	35.4
c) Animations/ Graphics	Strongly Disagree	45	12.2
	Disagree	46	12.4
	Neutral	97	26.2
	Agree	37	10
	Strongly Agree	145	39.2
d) Others	Strongly Disagree	50	13.5
	Disagree	36	9.7
	Neutral	98	26.5
	Agree	107	28.9
	Strongly Agree	79	21.4
Do you trust recommendations from influencers?	Yes	212	57.3
	No	158	42.7
a) What motivates you to try a product/service endorsed by influencer? - Discount	Strongly Disagree	44	11.9
	Disagree	31	8.4
	Neutral	48	13
	Agree	103	27.8
	Strongly Agree	144	38.9
b) What motivates you to try a product/service endorsed by influencer? - Free Trial	Strongly Disagree	40	10.8
	Disagree	36	9.7
	Neutral	111	30
	Agree	89	24.1
	Strongly Agree	94	25.4

According to the above table, Gen Z respondents are least interested in text-only material (7.1%) and most interested in video content (54.9%). They are attracted to advertisements with genuine people or user-generated material (30.27%), as well as endorsements from celebrities or influencers (35.41%). They are also drawn to animated or visual advertisements (39.19%). Nonetheless, they are dubious of suggestions from influencers (53.30%), and they are more inclined to buy a good or service if it comes with a discount (38.92%) or a free trial (30%). These studies provide valuable insights for businesses to effectively target and engage with Gen Z consumers through visually appealing, interactive and incentivized marketing strategies.

Findings & Suggestions

According to the study's conclusions, Instagram is the most widely used social media network among Gen Z respondents, suggesting a desire for engaging and visually appealing content. Compared to text and photos, video material creates more engagement, indicating that Gen like dynamic and interactive storytelling. Additionally, Gen Z respondents show skepticism regarding suggestions from influencers, suggesting that reliability and authenticity are important. For Gen Z respondents, authenticity is more important than discounts and free trials when it comes to considering buying goods or services recommended by influencers.

Noting the Demographic Insights 17–22 years old, which suggests an emphasis on marketing tactics targeted at young people. Furthermore, the majority of respondents are male, which raises the possibility of bias in the findings and views on occupation students. This suggests that educational institutions and youth-centric marketing are the main focus. Businesses should prioritize Instagram and video content marketing tactics and collaborate with genuine influencers who share their values, according to the study's recommendations. Prioritize emphasizing the advantages of the product or service over depending only on discounts.

Finally, create advertising specifically for male students between the ages of 17 and 22. Create real, dynamic, and captivating video content for marketers, and make use of social proof and user-generated material. Track and evaluate the return on investment from influencer marketing and modify tactics to suit changing Gen Z tastes. Future research should look at the causes of influencer mistrust as well as the preferences of Gen Z respondents who are male and female. Finally, examine how educational institutions affect the consumption patterns of Generation Z.

Conclusion

The survey offers insightful information about Gen Z's preferences for social media, how they interact with content, and how they see influencer marketing. These data can be used by companies and marketers to create focused strategies that emphasise Instagram marketing, video content, and authenticity.

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