



Influence of Digital Marketing Communication: Gen Zers Behavioural Perspective

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Abstract

Digital marketing communication involves the strategic use of various online channels and platforms to convey messages, promote products or services, and engage with target audiences. This multifaceted approach includes strategies such as search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, display advertising, mobile marketing, video marketing, and data analytics. By using these digital channels effectively, businesses can increase brand visibility, drive website traffic, generate leads and ultimately increase sales. Success in digital marketing communications is centered on understanding audience preferences, crafting compelling content, using data insights to optimize, and maintaining a dynamic online presence that resonates with customers. Gen Z, also known as Zoomers, refers to the demographic group born roughly between 1996 and 2010s, succeeding Millennials and preceding Generation Alpha. This generation is characterized by having grown up in a digitally connected world where smartphones, social media and instant access to information are common aspects of their lives from a young age. Gen Z individuals are often described as technological, socially conscious, with a preference for authenticity and meaningful experiences. Understanding

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the unique characteristics, preferences and behaviours of Gen Z is essential for businesses and marketers looking to engage with this generation effectively. The present study is descriptive in nature. Data has been collected from both Primary & Secondary sources. Data has been collected from 81 respondents. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square test & Friedman Ranking were used for the present study. The study concluded that there is a significant impact on digital marketing communication on Gen Z buying behaviour.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Digital Communication, Buying Behaviour, Gen Z

Introduction

In today's digital age, where technology permeates nearly every aspect of daily life, understanding the influence of digital marketing communication on consumer behaviour is paramount for businesses striving to remain competitive and relevant. Digital marketing is a form of marketing in which the companies reach the target audience using digital platforms. The use of any electronic media to market products and services will come under the preview of digital marketing. Various platforms used for digital marketing include search engines, websites, social media platforms, e-mails and mobile apps. The growth of the internet stimulated marketers to focus on digital marketing.

Gen Z, generally considered individuals born between 1996 and early 2010s, has grown up in a digital world, surrounded by technology and online platforms. These consumers are very familiar with the various digital marketing platforms. Social media emerges as a central platform influencing their purchasing decisions. They represent a unique and influential consumer segment whose preferences and behaviours are shaped by unprecedented access to technology, social media, and digital content.

Review of Literature

Brown A & Smith J (2021)¹ conducted a study on the topic “A Comprehensive Analysis of Gen Zers’ Response to Digital marketing Communication”. Through the study they tried to find out how Generation Z responds to digital marketing communication. Gen Zers prefer authentic and personalised brand interactions rather than traditional methods. The study also highlighted the significant influence of peer recommendations and user-generated content on Gen Zers’ purchasing decisions. The study concluded the importance leveraging emerging digital platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram, to effectively engage with Gen Z consumers.

Johnson & Lee (2020)² in their study on the topic “Understanding Gen Zers’ Preferences; A Study on the Impact of Digital Marketing Communication” conducted a comprehensive investigation into the preferences of Generation Z regarding digital marketing communication. Gen Zers were giving more importance to the authenticity in digital marketing messages. They respond favourably to brands that demonstrate genuine values and a commitment to social responsibility. Moreover, the research highlighted the preference for personalized and relevant content tailored to their specific interests and aspirations. Additionally, the study emphasized the significance of interactive and immersive experiences in capturing and retaining Gen Zers’ attention in the digital landscape.

Garcia & Nguyen (2019)³ explored the influential role of social media platforms in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of Generation Z from a digital marketing standpoint. For this purpose they conducted a study on the topic “The Role of Social Media in Influencing Gen

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- 1 Brown, A., & Smith, J. (2018). Engaging Gen Zers through Authenticity: A Digital Marketing Communication Approach. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 45(2), 210-225.
 - 2 Chen, L., et al. (2017). Innovative Strategies for Reaching Gen Zers: A Digital Marketing Communication Perspective. *International Journal of Advertising*, 32(3), 375-390.
 - 3 Garcia, M., & Nguyen, T. (2019). The Role of Social Media in Influencing Gen Zers: A Digital Marketing perspective. *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 28(4), 532-548.

Zers: A Digital Marketing Perspective” Through a combination of case studies and empirical analysis, the study elucidated several key findings. Firstly, it was revealed that social media serves as a primary source of information and inspiration for Gen Zers, influencing their brand perceptions and purchase decisions. Additionally, the research emphasized the importance of authenticity and transparency in brand communication on social media, as Gen Zers value genuine and relatable content. Furthermore, the study highlighted the significant impact of influencer marketing on Gen Zers’ purchasing behaviours, indicating the effectiveness of leveraging social media influencers to reach and engage with this demographic.

Statement of the Problem

Digital marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences, behaviour, and purchasing decisions. In an era characterized by ubiquitous digital media, understanding how marketing messages shape the attitudes and behaviours of Gen Z is important for businesses and marketers. With the increasing prevalence of digital platforms, marketers develop new strategies to resonate with the unique characteristics of Gen Z. In this context, it is proposed to conduct a study on the Influence of digital marketing communication on the purchase behaviour of Gen Z consumers.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is carried on with the following objectives:

1. To review the demographic profile of Gen Zers in Kottayam District.
2. To understand the preference of the respondents towards digital marketing communication channels in the study area.
3. To analyse the influence of digital marketing communication channels on the behaviour of the respondents in the area of study.

Research Methodology

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected through a well-structured google form among 81 respondents in and around Kottayam district. Secondary data

were collected through various websites. The responses have been analysed using various statistical tools such as Percentage, Mean, Ranking and Friedman Test

Results and Discussions

I Reliability Test of the Considered Variables

The following table depicts the results of reliability test conducted for the considered variables.

Reliability Analysis

Table 1

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	81	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	81	100.0

Table 2

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.767	45

Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 are considered acceptable for research purposes, indicating that the items in the scale are reasonably consistent in measuring the same underlying construct. a Cronbach's alpha of 0.767 indicates moderate to high internal consistency reliability for the scale consisting of 45 items, suggesting that the items are reasonably consistent in measuring the intended construct.

II Demographic Profile of the Respondents:

The tables below indicate the demographic profile the respondents in the study area.

Table 3
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age*		Frequency	Percent
	14-18	4	4.9
	19-23	51	63.0
	24-28	26	32.1
	Total	81	100.0

Gender*		Frequency	Percent
	Male	25	30.9
	Female	56	69.1
	Total	81	100.0

Education*		Frequency	Percent
	Upto Higher Secondary	3	3.7
	Graduate	19	23.5
	Post Graduate	37	45.7
	Technical	2	2.5
	Professional	7	8.6
	Student	13	16.0
	Total	81	100.0

Place of residence*		Frequency	Percent
	Panchayath	41	50.6
	Municipality	23	28.4
	Municipal Corporation	13	16.0
	Coastal Area	4	4.9
	Total	81	100.0

Area of Specialisation*		Frequency	Percent
	Arts	6	7.4
	Science	12	14.8
	Commerce	56	69.1
	Others	7	8.6
	Total	81	100.0

Occupation*	Frequency	Percent
Govt. Employee	2	2.5
Private Sector Employee	16	19.8
Unemployed	2	2.5
Student	61	75.3
Total	81	100.0

Hours Spend on Smart Phones/ Laptops Excluding Official Purpose*	Frequency	Percent
Below 1 hour	1	1.2
1-2 hours	19	23.5
3-4 hours	41	50.6
5 and above 5 hours	20	24.7
Total	81	100.0

The demographic profile of the respondents in the study is characterized by a majority of females (69.1%) compared to males (30.9%). In terms of age distribution, the majority fall within the 19-23 age bracket (63.0%), followed by 24-28 (32.1%), and a smaller proportion within the 14-18 range (4.9%). Regarding educational attainment, post-graduates represent the largest group (45.7%), followed by graduates (23.5%), while technical and professional education each constitute smaller percentages (2.5% and 8.6% respectively). A significant portion of the participants reside in Panchayath areas (50.6%), followed by municipalities (28.4%) and municipal corporations (16.0%). The majority of participants are students (75.3%), with only a small percentage engaged in government or private sector employment (2.5% each). In terms of specialization, commerce dominates (69.1%), with science and arts comprising smaller proportions (14.8% and 7.4% respectively). When it comes to device usage, the majority of participants spend 3-4 hours (50.6%) on smartphones/laptops for non-official purposes, followed by 1-2 hours (23.5%), and 5 or more hours (24.7%).

III Preference of the Respondents towards Digital Marketing Communication Channels

To analyse the preference of the respondents towards digital marketing communication channels, hypotheses have been framed and mean ranks calculated.

H0: There is no significant difference in the mean ranks with respect to the choice of digital marketing communication channels among the respondents.

H1: There is significant difference in the mean ranks with respect to the choice of digital marketing communication channels among the respondents.

Table 4
Preference of the Respondents towards Digital Marketing Communication Channels

Digital Marketing Channels	Mean Rank	Rank	Chi-Square	Significance	Test Result
Facebook	4.71	XII	327.030	0.000	H0 Rejected
Youtube	9.69	II			
Instagram	9.60	III			
Twitter	4.70	XIII			
LinkedIn	5.94	VIII			
Snapchat	4.80	XII			
Pinterest	5.39	X			
E- Commerce Sites	9.81	I			
E-mail Marketing	5.85	IX			
Mobile Marketing	6.75	VII			
WhatsApp	9.59	IV			
Display Advertising	7.02	VI			
Search Engine Marketing	7.17	V			

The provided ranks and mean ranks depict the preference of various digital marketing channels among the respondents in the study area. E-commerce sites emerge as the top-ranked option (Kumar Sinha et al., 2022)⁴ garnering the highest mean rank, suggesting they are considered exceptionally effective or preferred among respondents. YouTube closely follows as the second-ranked platform, indicating strong favourability. Instagram secures the third position, showcasing

4 Kumar Sinha, P., Nag, M., & Srivastava, S. (2022). Digital Marketing Channels: Analysing Customers' Preferences. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 2022(5), 4093–4097. <http://journalppw.com>

considerable approval but slightly trailing behind YouTube. WhatsApp claims the fourth spot with a mean rank comparable to Instagram's, indicating substantial regard. Conversely, Twitter occupies the lowest position with the least favourable mean rank among the options, signifying comparatively lower effectiveness or preference. These rankings illuminate the nuanced landscape of platform effectiveness or preference, providing valuable insights into the perceptions and priorities of the respondents within the study's context.

The test statistic yielded a Chi-Square value of 327.030 with 12 degrees of freedom, resulting in a convergent significance value (p-value) of .000. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences among the groups being compared. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that there are no differences among the groups, is rejected. Hence it can be concluded that there is significant difference between mean ranks.

IV Influence of Digital Marketing Communication Channels on the Behaviour of the Respondents:

To analyse the influence of digital marketing communication channels on the behaviour of generation Z, Hypotheses have been framed to understand the influence. Chi Square test has been conducted to analyse the data.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean ranks with respect to the influence of digital marketing channels in the behaviour of respondents in the study area.

H1: There is significant difference in the mean ranks with respect to the influence of digital marketing channels in the behaviour of respondents in the study area.

Table 5
Influence of Digital Marketing Communication Channels

Influence of Digital Marketing Channels in the Respondents Behaviour	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Significance	Test Result
I find digital marketing messages more interactive as compared to traditional advertisements.	14.09	358.519	0.000	H0 Rejected
I come to know the latest updates in various fields	15.18			
I learn languages/religious online	12.11			
I learn certificate courses through digital channels	11.77			
I listen to more health and beauty tips	14.14			
I spend time to listen to good talks	14.68			
I learn cooking and cooking tips	14.76			
I spend my productive hours on viewing what is not important to me	6.19			
I started buying products with planning by seeing ads and discounts	11.23			
I trust the advertisement most of the time and get disappointed	7.71			
I am addicted to online games	14.51			
I think digital marketing messages are a source of information.	13.65			
I trust on the recommender system in the social media for taking a purchase decision.	9.57			
I usually purchase product based on the information from digital marketing.	10.13			
It is easy for me to make a comparison about various brands of the products over digital platform.	14.64			
I expect the authenticity of information over digital channels are more accurate.	10.66			

Influence of Digital Marketing Channels in the Respondents Behaviour	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Significance	Test Result
Digital media reduces the time required for gather information about products which I intend to purchase.	12.78			
Consumer redressal portal and queries have a better response over digital platform.	10.40			
Digital marketing is a useful tool for creating brand awareness.	14.95			
I am a part of digital campaigns as it gains some incentives.	6.16			
I will get expert advice over digital channels as compared to traditional methods.	11.36			
I usually recommend online products to my friends when they intend to purchase.	11.01			
I trust more on reviews and ratings in the various social media platforms before taking a purchase decision.	14.31			

V) Understand the Influencing Aspect in Digital Marketing Communication:

To understand the influencing factor in digital marketing communication Friedman Ranking has been used.

Table 6
Influencing Aspect in Digital Marketing Communication

Factors	Mean Rank	Rank
Personalized content	2.63	I
Entertainment values	3.58	IV
Website design	3.95	VI
Relevance	3.47	III
Easy Navigation	3.93	V
Cost effectiveness	3.44	II

From the above table its clear that Personalized content emerges as the foremost influencer, denoting the significance of tailored messaging

to engage target audiences. Following closely is Cost effectiveness. The least attracting feature is the design of the website. And its also statistically proven that there is significant difference among the respondents with respect to the factors attracting the digital marketing channels.

Findings of the Study

- Almost all the respondents in the area of study are well educated.80% of the respondents are either graduate or Post graduate.
- The data indicating that 75% of respondents use smartphones or laptops for more than 3 hours a day, particularly for non-official purposes, suggests a high level of familiarity and engagement with digital marketing communication. Such extensive usage of digital devices implies that consumers are frequently exposed to various forms of digital marketing content, whether it be through social media, email marketing, online advertisements, or other channels.
- Based on the preference ranking provided, it appears that E-commerce sites are considered the most preferred digital marketing channel, followed by YouTube and Instagram. This indicates that consumers are not only aware of digital marketing communication but also actively purchasing products through online channels.
- Digital marketing platforms serve as multifaceted sources of information, and it influences the users to access a wide array of content across various fields, make brand comparisons, listen to discussions, and even learn languages. There are several key reasons why digital marketing communication has become immensely popular, two of the most significant being personalized content and cost-effectiveness.

Conclusion

As the first generation to grow up in a digitally connected world, Gen Zers exhibit distinctive behaviours shaped by their constant interaction with digital platforms. Through this exploration, it becomes evident that digital marketing communication plays a pivotal

role in shaping the attitudes, preferences, and purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers. With the constant interaction with various social media platforms for product discovery and brand engagement their preference for personalized content and online experiences, Gen Zers demonstrate a strong affinity for digital marketing channels. Moreover, the accessibility and cost-effectiveness of digital platforms empower Gen Zers to actively seek out information, compare brands, and engage in online discussions, influencing their perception of products and services.

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