

# A Study on the Influence of Social Media Marketing on the Buying Intentions of Generation Z in Gorakhpur

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**Abstract:-** Scrolling over social media accounts has become one of Generation Z's favourite pastimes. It would not be an exaggeration to say social media has become essential to our everyday lives. In this paper, the researchers have tried to gain a deeper insight into the acceptance of social media as a marketing communication tool among Gen Z in Gorakhpur city and its ultimate impact on their buying intentions. The researchers did a descriptive study of the data collected from the students in Gorakhpur, a town in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, they concluded that social media applications have a high acceptance and have a significant impact on the buying intentions of Gen Z.

**Keywords:-** Social Media Marketing, Gen Z, Buying Intention.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms are internet-based applications that allow users to create and exchange content. It is one of the most trending marketing tools, gaining popularity during the last decade and has helped marketers engage with many customers. People spend a lot of time on social media in the digital world. Social media has gone ahead of being just a platform for online communication. Unlike other online platforms, such as blogs, websites, individuals, and business portals, social media has emerged from which most audiences seek product information. The emergence of social media has benefited all sectors in enhancing brand communication.

Consumers use word of mouth, a form of marketing communication where information about a brand is passed from person to person; they talk about dozens of brands daily.

Over the last decade, the online world has undergone a significant transformation due to the introduction of various social media applications. Some of India's most popular social media applications include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat. Social media has become an excellent platform for promoting a brand and creating awareness. Companies have realised the importance of social media in

reaching large audiences by using trendy hashtags on Twitter and Instagram or by posting insightful video advertisements on Facebook and YouTube to attract customers towards their brands.

Morning Consult, a data-decision intelligence company, recently reported that 35% of Gen Zers (people born after 1996) spend over four hours daily on social media. Social media platforms provide buyers the convenience of purchasing regular-use products from the comfort of their homes, saving time and energy. To keep pace with the ever-evolving marketing methodologies, marketers must go beyond traditional marketing techniques to reach and serve customers before their competitors. According to Yuliantoro et al. (2019), a well-structured marketing strategy, including branding, plays a vital role in addressing consumers' needs when they face similar products from different brands. Brand image, which refers to consumer beliefs about a brand's characteristics, benefits, and services, is crucial for business owners as it significantly impacts consumer purchase decisions (Yuliantoro et al., 2019).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Huang and Benyoucef (2017)** studied the effect of social commerce design on the consumer buying process. Researchers picked 252 undergraduate and postgraduate students from Chinese universities and interpreted the data using structural equation modelling. They identified the functional, usability, and social factors influencing consumer decision-making. It was concluded that all the factors impacted the consumer decision-making process except for the impact of functional features on the awareness stage.

**Wang et al. (2019)** undertook a study on how marketing and social media stimuli affect the hedonic and utilitarian value of social media users that influences them to repost their purchase experiences on social media. The study used the "stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework" by applying structural equation modelling of students using WeChat in China. It was noticed that hedonic and utilitarian beliefs impact users' intent to repost promotional messages on social media. Besides, the study also revealed that social

presence and interactivity are significant in formulating the perceived hedonic value.

(Duffett, 2020) conducted a study on the effects of marketing through YouTube (the largest Online Video Digital Channel) on Generation Z in South Africa, a developing country. The research was published in 2020 under the name 'The YouTube Marketing Communication Effect on Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Attitudes among Generation Z Consumers'. He found that Youtubers are perceived as reliable sources of information and influence young followers by recommending specific products and services.

(McClure & Seock, 2020) using regression analysis, the researcher examined the brand familiarity, quality of information on social media, brand social media involvement, and attitude towards brand social media affect the future purchase intention of 159 US college students. The study observed that information quality and familiarity affect social media brand involvement. It also confirmed that the attitude about a brand on social media is substantially influenced by engagement with the brand's social media, which influences future purchase decisions. The study supports the idea that attitude toward brand social media affects consumer decision-making processes and engagement.

(Shanthi, R., & Kannaiah, D. (2015). A survey of students at Madras University & Madras Christian College found that customer perceptions of online shopping vary from individual to individual and are limited to some extent by the availability of appropriate connectivity and the consumer's exposure to online shopping. Consumer views differ depending on individual factors, including age, gender, and other factors. The study found that middle-aged and older persons are less likely to purchase online than young adults between the ages of 20 and 25. The survey also finds that the most crucial consideration in online purchases is pricing, followed by product security, warranties, guarantees, delivery time, companionship reviews, information privacy, and appealing product descriptions.

(Salhab et al., 2023) The study found that strong brands with effective social media marketing strategies are more likely to attract consumers, spread positive e-WOM messages, and influence others to purchase or not purchase their products. Specifically, promoting products through Instagram can enhance brand image and build brand trust, increasing consumer engagement and interaction.

#### ➤ *Rationale of the Study*

Social media platforms have become integral to marketing strategies worldwide due to their extensive reach, cost-effectiveness, and interactive nature. However, the acceptance and effectiveness of social media marketing may vary across different regions and demographics. By focusing

on Generation Z in the Gorakhpur district, this study can uncover specific insights that may be unique to the local consumer market. This localised approach can help businesses tailor their social media marketing strategies to better resonate with the region's target audience. This information can guide enterprises in selecting the most suitable social media platforms, crafting compelling content, and addressing potential concerns or hesitations among consumers, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their marketing efforts.

#### ➤ *Hypotheses*

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between gender and the acceptance of social media as a marketing communication tool.

$H_{02}$ : Social media marketing does not have a significant impact on the buying intentions of Generation Z.

#### ➤ *Objectives of the Study*

- To analyse the acceptance of social media as a new channel of promotion among Generation Z.
- To study the influence of social media marketing on the buying intention of Generation Z.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data for the study was collected from 248 respondents, mainly college students in Gorakhpur city. A structured questionnaire was sent to people through email and WhatsApp. Majorly, students were selected as the representatives of Gen Z because people not related to academics generally don't take much interest in filling out questionnaires. Also, if they are not literate enough, it's hard for them to understand what is being asked of them. A Likert scale questionnaire was prepared and circulated among online shoppers from different social classes, genders, educational levels, etc. Regression analysis and Chi-Square tests were used to test the hypotheses.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### ➤ *Acceptance of social media as a marketing communication tool among Gen Z in Gorakhpur district.*

Respondents were asked different questions to indicate their acceptance of social media as a marketing communication channel on a 5-point Likert scale. The following criteria were used for the analysis part:-

- The mean score 1.00-1.79 – Strongly Disagree The mean score 1.80-2.59 – Disagree
- The mean score 2.60-3.39 – Neutral The mean score 3.40-4.19 – Agree
- The mean score 4.20-5.00 – Strongly Agree

**Table 1: Level of Acceptance of Social Media as a Marketing Communication Tool**

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Social Media is an effective tool for marketing communication.	4.15	.994	Agree
Social Media Marketing is more influential than traditional media (TV, Newspaper, Hoardings, etc.)	4.03	.964	Agree
I like to interact (i.e. liking, sharing, and commenting) with sponsored ads or user-generated posts on my timeline related to the product I need.	3.42	1.050	Agree
I rely on information available on social media if I have uncertainties regarding the purchase of a product.	3.77	1.110	Agree
I feel encouraged to share my experience after buying through social media applications.	3.60	.959	Agree
Social Media is a source of information about new products.	3.78	.807	Agree
I am concerned about the security of my personal data while clicking a Social Media advertisement.	3.81	1.272	Agree
I prefer social media for Information about brands over other channels (eg. email, radio, newspapers etc.)	3.89	.987	Agree
Advertisements on social media websites are very effective in capturing attention.	3.92	1.000	Agree

By looking at the mean scores of the respondents for different items on the Likert scale related to the acceptance of social media as a new channel of marketing communication, it can be said that the respondents generally perceive social media as an effective tool for marketing communication and information dissemination. On the question of concern about the loss of personal data in interacting with social media marketing tools, the mean score shows people are concerned about the loss of personal data. Still, in this case, the standard deviation is relatively higher, which shows a lack of consistency among the respondents. When asked if they like to interact with the sponsored ads, their mean score is 3.42, slightly above the neutral category, meaning shoppers don't want to interact with the sponsored advertisements. Overall, the responses from the participants reveal that their buying intentions are significantly impacted by social media marketing. Social media marketing is also more influential than traditional media and plays a significant role as a source of brand information. However, there's some variability and uncertainty regarding reliance on social media for product information and concerns about personal data security.

➤ *Influence of Social Media Marketing on the Buying Intention of Generation Z*

People were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert scale on the statements related to the impact of social media on their buying intentions. Their mean score is as follows. The criteria for classifying the mean score into levels of agreement are the same as above.

**Table 2: Impact of Social Media Marketing on Buying Intentions of Gen Z**

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Agreement
Social media advertisements, reviews etc. increase my likelihood of finally purchasing a product.	3.62	1.003	Agree
Advertising over social media affects my purchase decisions	3.57	1.039	Agree
A product's presence on social media increases its Brand Value for me.	3.56	1.020	Agree
Social media marketing convinces me to buy a product I like.	3.77	1.038	Agree
I feel influenced to buy a product randomly when I see its advertisement or recommendation on social media.	3.71	1.137	Agree
Social media advertisements are capable to lead individuals to finally buy the product.	3.50	1.087	Agree
I feel more confident in my decision to purchase a product when i see content related to it over Social Media.	3.71	.950	Agree
I can recall a specific advertisement while finalising my purchase.	3.54	1.029	Agree

The responses indicate a generally positive perception among Gen Z regarding the influence of social media marketing on their buying intentions. Respondents feel influenced by social media ads and content, suggesting they are susceptible to the persuasive nature of marketing on these platforms. The ability to recall specific advertisements while finalising a purchase indicates the lasting

impact of social media marketing on consumers' minds.

➤ *Hypotheses testing*

**H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between gender and the acceptance of social media as a marketing communication tool.**

**Table 3 Gender of Respondent \* Level of Acceptance**

		Level of Acceptance				Total
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Gender of respondent	Male	0	15	57	40	112
	Female	1	19	82	34	136
Total		1	34	139	74	248

Chi-Square						
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance(2-sided)	Exact Sig.(2-sided)	Exact Sig.(1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	4.170a	3	.244	.207		
Likelihood Ratio	4.540	3	.209	.213		
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.327b	1	.127	.144	.076	.024

Since the p-value (0.244) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between gender and the acceptance of social media as a marketing communication tool. Therefore, we can conclude that males and females have equally accepted social media as a marketing communication channel.

**H0<sub>2</sub> Social media marketing does not have a significant impact on the buying intentions of Generation Z.**

Participants were asked the following questions to measure their exposure to Social Media Marketing

- Every day, I spend time on social media.
  - I like to interact with sponsored ads or user-generated posts on my timeline related to the product I need.
  - Number of social media platforms I use.
  - To what extent do you rely on social media for news and information
- Regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis:

**Table 4 Model Summary**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.230 <sup>a</sup>	.053	.049		.704

a. Predictors: (Constant) Exposure to social media

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.824	1	6.824	13.761	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	121.979	246	.496		
Total	128.802	247			

a. Dependent Variable: level of impact on consumer buying intention

b. Predictors: (Constant) Exposure to social media

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.090	.191		16.181	.000
Exposure to social media	.239	.064	.230	3.710	.000

a. Dependent Variable: level of impact on consumer buying intention

Since the p-value is less than 0.001, it indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis. Therefore, the researchers have sufficient evidence to suggest that exposure to social media significantly impacts Generation Z's buying intentions. In conclusion, based on the results provided by the regression analysis, the null hypothesis can be rejected, and it can be concluded that social media marketing significantly impacts Generation Z's buying intentions.

## V. FINDINGS

The study reflects that Gen Z has a positive attitude towards social media marketing. On all the statements related to the acceptance of social media as a tool for marketing communication, the combined average score of the respondents demonstrated that Gen Z has accepted social media as a new tool for marketing communication. However, they are also concerned about data security while interacting with social media advertisements. The study also revealed that respondents like value-added content over sponsored advertisements. In the statements meant to measure the impact of social media on their buying intention, young people in the town also revealed that their buying intentions are favourably influenced by social media marketing. Researchers also found that social media is equally accepted between males and females.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study also reinforces that exposure to social media has a favourable impression on Gen Z and their buying intentions. Researchers believe that consumers have accepted social media as a marketing communication tool but are still hesitant to interact with sponsored advertisements.

Therefore, marketers and policymakers should run awareness campaigns and assure customers of the security of their personal information. Moreover, the study reveals that social media significantly impacts the buying intentions of young people in the town. Despite concerns about data security, the influence of social media marketing on purchasing decisions remains strong among Generation Z. Importantly, the acceptance of social media as a marketing tool is consistent across genders, suggesting a universal appeal among young consumers.

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