



## **SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES COMPANIES ARE USING TO ATTRACT GENERATION Z**

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Received: July 31, 2023

Accepted: Oct 14, 2023

Published: Dec 01, 2023

### **Abstract:**

*This article discusses the marketing mix and focuses mainly on the marketing communication or promotion mix. Digital marketing strategies, especially social media, are crucial. Models and theories of consumer purchase behavior are explored in this article. This article discusses Generation Z, tech-savvy people. This article also talks about how to reach this generation. The paper also reviews Generation Z's social media usage patterns. Most importantly, talk about effective social media strategies to attract Generation Z, as they are digital natives and are used to communicating with people via social media. Companies should capitalize on this opportunity. The study analyzes Generation Zs on social media. A survey questionnaire was used for data collection, and the results indicated that social media plays a significant role in Gen Z's buying behavior.*

### **Keywords:**

Social media, Generation Z, Social media strategies, Marketing strategies, Reaching Generation Z

### **1. Introduction**

Marketing in today's world is more focused than ever before. The audience, their personality, attitude and behavior should be identified. This is crucial for Generation Z. These people grew up with internet access, and most had access to social media at a very young age (Rothman, 2014). They are more knowledgeable than past generations. They are more aware of marketing strategies. To interact with this generation, one must be cautious and refrain from shady acts.

Connecting and marketing to Generation Z should focus on the Internet. The Internet is full of useful information and can be used for research purposes. People can be entertained in many ways. Gen Z mostly needs an interactive platform to interact with friends and family, as well as others. Influencers can be very influential when purchasing products. This is if their connection to products or services is genuine. Social media is another key factor here. All of these interactive connections and following influencers would not be possible without social media. On the internet and especially on social media everything happens simultaneously. Social media can help companies find out what their audience wants and deliver it. In order to market to Gen Zs who spend most of their time online and especially on social media, companies must use multiple social media channels.

### **2. Marketing as a Term**

Companies should look for what customers demand, and see what product or service they desire and will be useful to them. Based on that result they should divide the market into subsets of customers who share common characteristics, and then serve them by providing what they need. This is the key to success and how companies prosper and withstand competition (Brunswick, 2014). Marketing is about connecting with others. It is about supervision and maintenance of a company's relationship with its customers. It is about having a two-sided relationship so both sides can influence each other, so the final product will be much more suited to customers (Gummesson, 1987).

## **2.1. Marketing Mix**

Marketing mix is a combination of key elements that companies use to obtain a better reaction from consumers and lead them to buy the product or service. It consists of four components: product, price, place, and promotion (van Waterschoot & van den Bulte, 1992).

### **2.1.1. Product Mix**

A product can be an item that is offered for sale or it could be a service which is an intangible activity, benefit, or item offered for a price. Without the product, there is nothing to market for (Goi, 2011).

### **2.1.2. Price Mix**

Price in the marketing mix is precious. It is related to financial gain and also what portion of the market is controlled by the brand. It can easily be adjusted to new conditions based on differences in market value. It is in line with how well customer experience meets customer expectations. Reasonable pricing will result in more engagement with the brand and therefore repeated purchases (Ahmed & Rahman, 2015).

### **2.1.3. Place Mix**

The goal in marketing is to provide the consumers with what they need and also deliver it the right way at the right time. When talking about the place mix in marketing, all distribution channels from producer to consumer are considered. In indirect distribution channel the manufacturer sells the product to a wholesaler who acts as an intermediary in the supply chain and buys products in bulk from the manufacturer to sell to retailers, who then sell smaller quantities of the product to the end user. In direct distribution channel manufacturer sell the product directly to end consumer (Thabit & Raewf, 2018).

### **2.1.4. Promotion Mix**

Promotion is essential for every marketing campaign; it shows what is gained by buying the product or service. It is consisted of advertising, professional selling, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotions. In promotion the goal is to engage consumers emotionally, logically, through a trial of a product, or even buying it. It is significant in terms of effect that it has on how successful your marketing plans will be. It is about sharing or exchanging ideas and information with the audience, also it is about leading people into buying a quality product through reasoning or argument, and also it is about motivating people into buying the end product. When companies plan their promotion strategy, they should rely on getting their point across through constant messaging regarding their goods and services, and also using the right media outlets that have the most audience (Khan, 2014).

## **3. Marketing Communication (Promotion Mix)**

A combination of traditional and digital marketing strategies can help marketers reach potential customers. Since many people are not accustomed to the internet and its contents, traditional marketing which relies on methods in use for a long time has its own audience. On the other hand, digital platforms help companies attract new customers. It helps the company keep up with the ever-changing online environment and earn more revenue. Using both methods will make the customer's buying journey smooth and enjoyable (Bist, et al., 2022).

### **3.1. Traditional Marketing**

Traditional marketing includes print, broadcast on television or radio, mail advertising, and telephone. This is a very suitable method to reach a multitude of contacts, especially regional audiences (Yasmin, et al., 2015).

### **3.2. Digital Marketing**

Digital marketing can be through the creation and sharing of online material, using content creators, search engine optimization, social media, and any other online promotion that can help companies to achieve their marketing goals such as e-mail or e-booklets (Desai & Vidyapeeth, 2019).

### **3.2.1. Difference of Digital marketing and Traditional Marketing**

Digital marketing with social media applications can be interactive. Digital marketing can result in directly selling products or services. Ads can target desired segments of the market easily, and search engine optimization can be helpful in this regard. Digital ads are effortlessly editable. Consumers exchange and share information about a product or company through social media. Digital marketing information is easily accessible. Digital marketing methods is especially good for small-size companies that don't have too much money to spend on ads (Taherdoost & Jalaliyoon, 2014).

Digital marketing is more cost-effective than traditional marketing. Digital marketing gets results fast unlike traditional marketing. In digital marketing companies can use multiple social media outlets and reach the audience and have interactive communication with them. Digital marketing reaches a global audience, unlike traditional marketing which mostly relies on a domestic approach. Digital marketing grabs people's attention instantly. In digital marketing, advertisement is personalized and it is based on segmentation, but in traditional marketing, advertisement is forced and unnecessary. In digital marketing, customers can choose the media outlet and skip ads (Sinha, 2018).

### **3.2.2. Social Media**

Social media are websites and applications that help people connect with others through the creation of content and sharing it or conversing. They can only be accessed through an internet connection. People can have personal accounts. It's a two-way information flow between users. Users can communicate with one or more people at the same time (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). There are different social media that can be mentioned. These include social networks like Facebook, media sharing networks like Instagram or YouTube, bookmarking & content curation networks like Reddit, and blogging & publishing networks like Tumblr (Dewing, 2010).

## **4. Consumer Purchase Behavior**

Consumer behavior is a series of actions people take to meet their needs and wants. It includes the desire to obtain, decide on a course of action, acquire, use, assess, or discard a product or service. Two elements are effective here. Elements that are controlled and originate from within, as well as elements that happen and originate from outside. It can lead to concern about feelings that last for a short time, or for a long time. When examining a product or service, this series of actions in consumer behavior is essential (Suelin, 2010).

### **4.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

This model suggests that people's needs are hierarchical, with physiological needs at the bottom and psychological needs at the top. As consumers advance in the hierarchy, their purchase behavior changes from fulfilling basic needs like food, clothing to more ambitious ones like self-esteem and self-actualization. In this theory it is crucial to understand the role of consumers' motivations and needs in forming their purchase decisions (Cui, et al., 2021).

### **4.2. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

This theory states that people's intention influences their purchasing behavior. These intentions are defined by people's attitude towards the behavior, approval and support of behavior by an important person or group of people or getting encouragement for doing something that leads to doing it right, and also perception of ease or difficulty in performing a behavior. Consumers' attitude toward a product or brand, along with perception of shared standards of acceptable behavior by groups or society and their realization about their ability to purchase is crucial in their buying decision (Ajzen, 2015).

### **4.3. Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

This theory shows that individuals may feel unease after the purchase. They look for words of advice and comfort to ease their doubts or fears, as well as information that proves the validity of their purchase. This will end their anxious thoughts and strengthen their positive perceptions of the product or brand (Mosala, 2007).

#### **4.4. The Black Box Model**

This model investigates the operations that occur in mind between marketing stimuli and consumers' responses. These operations include attention, perception, learning, memory, and decision-making. Having a grasp of this model can help marketers design a well-established marketing strategy that relates harmoniously to consumers at various stages of their buying journey (Oliveira & Giraldo, 2014).

#### **4.5. Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Model (EKB)**

This model shows what it takes for a consumer to become an actual buyer and user of a product. All internal and external factors affect a company's marketing decisions, according to this model. There are five stages in succession. The first step is for the customer to realize what they want or need. Then it is searching for information and other options. As a result, consumers assess each option and rank it according to their preferences. Upon selecting the desired option, the purchase will take place. The last stage is assessing product or service quality after purchase (Osei & Abenyin, 2016).

#### **4.6. Innovation Adoption Model**

Consumers based on readiness to embrace upcoming products or innovations will be divided into five adopter groups. At first is Innovators or people that accept an innovative idea. The next group is early adopters, or people that use a product before the majority of the population does. A third group is called the early majority or the first sizable segment of the population that adopts the innovation. Then there are the late majority or people that adopt an innovative product after seeing what the majority does. And the fifth group are laggards or people that adopt a product last. Early adopters can impact the adoption process of late adopters through conversation or being looked at as an example of imitation (Chau & Hui, 1998).

#### **4.7. Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**

This model suggests two ways to persuade people. First is the central route, which is based on the mental process of consumers. They assess information thoroughly. In this case using data and facts to convince them is valuable. Second is the peripheral route, which is about external or easily observable behaviors that people use to make judgments, and also enables people to discover for themselves. Trustworthiness, emotions and group identity influence this regard. Learning which way consumers choose can help marketers plan successfully (Petty & Briñol, 2011).

#### **4.8. Howard-Sheth Model**

The model presents the consumer's choice of brand. Four variables are emphasized here. First, input variables which are combinations of words, symbols, numbers or pictures that convey information about a product or its use. They can be obtained in three ways. It can be from feeling the quality of the product, from perception of quality in the company's promotion, and from people's social circle. Second is hypothetical constructs. Which is about the perception and response of people to conveyed information. Sometimes the information received may have more than one interpretation and prejudice might also blur vision. It is also about stages that the consumer passes through from the reasons for the purchase to evaluating alternative products to brand awareness to overall perception and attitude towards a brand to the contentment they get from a purchase. Third is response outputs which consist of progressive steps from attention to purchase of a product. Fourth are exogenous variables which are individual or environmental factors that influence consumer behavior like consumer social class (Howard & Sheth, 1969).

In this model there are three stages of decision-making by consumers. Firstly, there is routine response behavior which is for purchases done spontaneously and without prior planning. It's about inexpensive products, recurring purchases, recognizable items and brands, and the lowest level of consumer involvement. The second level is limited problem-solving, involving only quick and straightforward decision-making. In the third level, extensive problem-solving involves pricey products, rare purchases, unknown products and brands, purchases that require considerable consideration, and purchases that require a large amount of consumer involvement (Stankevich, 2017).

## **5. Generation Z**

A group of people born between 1995 and 2010. As of 2019 they became the highest populated generation with 32 % of the world population. Their purchasing power is 140 billion dollars. So, these numbers make them a very exciting generation for marketers to focus on especially considering how young they are. Generation Z grew up on the internet, and they use social media more than any other generation. Through these virtual communities, they are braver and more willing to address crucial issues for society (Wang, 2022).

They understand realness, what is right and what is wrong because they had access to lots of useful information at a young age. They know when somebody is genuine or not (Williams & Page, 2011).

They multitask. They might be watching TV but also surfing the internet on their laptop and checking social media on their phone. They have an 8-second attention span. If they are not interested in the subject, they will lose focus and try something else (Silinevica & Meirule, 2020).

They wish to be part of a group or community. They desire to feel wanted, it could be any social group, like a video game community. They want to be treated right with respect, they know their worth and condemn bad behavior and attitude toward them. They want their voices heard. They have a work-life balance. They are serious about their work but want leisure time to recharge (Barhate & Dirani, 2021).

### **5.1. How to Reach Generation Z**

Nowadays it is obligatory to be socially conscious. Companies should adopt these new morals and principles. Gen Zs gravitate toward companies that believe in this cause (Uche, 2018).

Generation Z know their worth. They want to be rewarded for the time they spend online. Companies reward these consumers by giving them discounts and promotions and also updates on future products. Generation Z looks for a website to get recommendations about a product. However, they also recommend others the product they have experienced before. Companies should build an infrastructure for measuring their products properly. Due to Generation Z's experience with internet's constant change, companies should also be prepared. Generation Z has no problem ditching an outdated company for a better alternative (Giunta, 2020).

Brand personification is also very important, Generation Z wants to see what their brand or company represents and what set them apart from others. Companies have to carefully create a persona for their brand that connects them to their audience, and make them want to know more about the company (Ninan, et al., 2020). Community projects like podcasts are also very important. Generation Z, want to feel they are part of a group or community. Hosting events, ambassador programs, and supporting a social cause are the tactics that are involved in community marketing. Creating entertainment to engage Generation Z, like using entertaining content on social media is imperative (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018).

Authenticity is imperative. Generation Z monitors every action. They know when companies are not honest and trustworthy. A company should use an influencer or celebrity who is a true representative of them if they wish to promote their product on social media or advertise with a celebrity. Another thing to consider is that this generation has trust issues. They do not want their information to get into the hands of the wrong people, so companies have to make sure the website and application are safe and secure (Thomas, et al., 2018).

Companies should personalize their products and services. Generation Z people want to embrace their individuality by having a more refined product optimized for their taste. They want everything to be accessible. Companies should implement the internet into their activities, and prepare the required infrastructure for a suitable website and application. This connects people to their businesses and also simplifies the process of ordering and receiving products and services (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

### **5.2. Social Media usage Patterns of Generation Z**

Generation Z uses the internet more than any other generation. Social media and instant messaging apps provide the information they need. They mostly use the internet for entertainment purposes but it also gives them valuable information work and study related. Nowadays, everything is connected to the internet, so it is crucial for companies to transition into a more digital format (Evita, et al., 2023).

For Generation Z, the online and offline world is meshed together. They mostly use social media to establish relationships with their real-life friends that they met in person. Social media creates an internet persona that obscures individuals' private and public lives (Tórkés, 2014).

Gen Zs use social media to connect socially with others, learn how to be more artistic and visionary, and buy products and services through this outlet. It helps them identify themselves, not only through who they are and what they represent but also through their connections with friends and people in their inner circle (Joe, et al., 2020).

### **5.3. Effective Social Media Strategies for Generation Z**

In this part effective social media strategies for engaging digital natives Generation Z will be discussed.

#### **5.3.1. Influencer Marketing**

Influencers are people who become famous through social media. They have a loyal follower base around them that wants to see every aspect of their lives. So, this brings us to the big point about how crucial their role is in today's society. Marketers can also benefit from using them. Influencers can show interest in brand products or services through videos or Vlogs. Marketing through influencers is a targeted (Nadanyiova, 2023).

Influencers should create content that reflects a brand's essence. Advertising through influencers should feel organic, not forced and viewers should not feel uncomfortable (Sammis, et al., 2015).

#### **5.3.2 User-generated Content**

Web 2.0 helps people create information, spread it, and exchange it. This new information produced is called user-generated content. User-generated content brought diversity and now not everything should be created by experts. Electronic word of mouth which is sharing and exchanging information about a product or company via the internet back up the user-generated content (Thao, 2020). Generation Z grew up with the internet so they are acquainted with the concept of Web 2.0 and user-generated content and they began to create this kind of content at a young age (Vasan, 2023).

People in today's world have access to an unlimited amount of data and can understand the quality of products or services without purchasing them first thanks to user-generated content (Persada, et al., 2020).

#### **5.3.3. Micro-Moments**

They are intent-rich moments when people become determined and prefer something over alternatives. And it happens when people without conscious thought turn to a device most likely their cell phone to act on a need for buying, learn new things, watch, and discover something. An intimate moment occurs when people are willing to consider or accept marketing messages. People are always online thanks to their phones so it is beneficial for companies to give them the right message at the right time based on how people act or conduct themselves (McStay, 2017).

#### **5.3.4. Ephemeral Content**

Ephemeral content is video content that lasts online for a short time before disappearing. It can be shown in different formats like video images or GIFs. These contents cannot be found on social media again. Instagram stories are one of its examples which is very well-liked among Generation Z and connected to the most relevant topics. Ephemeral content not only gives the required data or plays a reminiscence part in consumers' minds but it can send a customized message from the company to its audience (Bulumulla & Gamage, 2022).

People get satisfaction from purchasing products or services promoted via ephemeral content. Ephemeral content gets people motivated and ultimately creates a bond between consumers and brands (Chen & Cheung, 2019).

#### **5.3.5. Leveraging Storytelling and Narratives**

Narratives are about transmitting your message to others. Your goal should be to create an intriguing story. It is about communicating your thoughts and feelings as well as convincing and performing. Storytelling is about making a believable story that explains a particular occurrence or issue (Namaso, et al., 2022).

Storytelling in advertising evokes emotion. It can put people in customers' shoes. People tend to retain information in their minds story-based. Storytelling shows the depth and complexity of characters and events integration. It

shows what will happen if this product or service is used with an engaging story. Storytelling makes people believe in products or services either through reasoning or temptation. It also raises people's spirits (Tabassum, et al., 2020).

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1. Aim of the Study**

Generation Z grew up with internet and had access to social media at a young age it is crucial for companies to focus on marketing on social media. Therefore, a study of Generation Z's pre- and post-purchase behavior on social media was planned. Information about their personalities, beliefs, and preferences was also collected.

### **6.2. Data Collection Method**

A survey questionnaire is used for gathering data. The questionnaire has three parts. The first part is demographic questions, which are about Generation Z's personality and mindset about their social media usage. In the second and third parts questions about pre-purchase and post-purchase behavior on social media were asked respectively. The second and third questions are based on a 5-point Likert scale. The Alpha Cronbach reliability test was done before that with 30 respondents. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency or reliability for a scale or set of items. It assesses to what degree the items on a scale measure the same attribute or underlying construct. It provides a single reliability coefficient ranging from 0 to 1. Higher values show better internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.7 is considered acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). For 10 pre-purchase behavior questions and 9 post-purchase behavior questions, the results were 0.724 and 0.739, respectively.

### **6.3. Sample and Population**

Generation Z was the target for data collection. Two sampling techniques were used. All schools in Iran are for boys or girls, and there are no mixed schools. The majority of data was collected from two all-boys high schools. They were the same gender as the author, so data collection was easier. Purposive sampling was used to collect data from 11th-grade and 12th-grade students because they are more mature and have a better understanding of the world around them. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method that involves deliberately choosing particular individuals or groups based on predefined criteria or specific characteristics related to the research objectives. Participants are chosen purposefully to provide the researcher with the required information (Etikan, et al., 2016). The study couldn't be completed without female opinions on this matter. So, convenience sampling was used to gather data from a class of 12th-grade students at another high school. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are chosen based on their accessibility. In this technique time and money will be saved more than in other methods (Stratton, 2021).

Data was collected in June from two Naft high schools as well as Shahid Beheshti high school, all three in Ahvaz, Iran. Every respondent is considered Generation Z. Some questionnaires were incomplete. After removing them there were 300 survey questionnaires to analyze.

### **6.4. Limitations**

The results of this survey heavily rely on the beliefs and judgments of students at two Naft high schools and Shahid Beheshti High School. Most of the respondents are male and all of them are from Iran. Social media usage is restricted in Iran, and people are forced to utilize VPNs to connect to most social media outlets. If they don't want VPNs, they must use Iranian social media. Social media restrictions have also affected online sales.

## **6.5. Findings**

### **6.5.1. Data Analysis**

For the survey questions, 4 demographic questions were included. Question number 2 was designed to ensure respondents were Generation Z. In this study, questions 5 through 9 of this work (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015) were used. Questions 10 and 11 were added based on significant concerns and beliefs about Generation Z. Questions 12-17 were added from this article (ARSLAN, 2017). IBM SPSS 27 was used to analyze the survey data.

Hypotheses:

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- H1: Before purchasing products, I search social media.  
H2: I am more likely to buy a product based on recommendations given on social media by people I know who have used the product in the past.  
H3: I consider the recommendations of popular media users when making a purchase.  
H4: When it comes to buying products, I prefer purchasing them from businesses I like on social media.  
H5: I share on social media if I like the product I purchased.  
H6: If I am not satisfied with the product I have purchased, I share it on social media.  
H7: If I am not satisfied with a product, I recommend not buying it on social media.  
H8: I may change my opinion if a business contacts me if they see I am not pleased with the product.

**Table 1. Demographic questions**

What is your gender?	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	268	89.3	89.3
Female	32	10.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
Were you born between 1997 and 2012?			
Yes	300	100.0	100.0
What is your occupation?			
Student	274	91.3	91.3
Unemployed	0	0.0	91.3
Working	26	8.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
How many members does your household consist of?			
1	2	0.7	0.7
2	9	3.0	3.7
3	30	10.0	13.7
4	130	43.3	57.0
5	78	26.0	83.0
6	37	12.3	95.3
7 or more	14	4.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
I am open to working with a group.			
Strongly agree	105	35.0	35.0
Agree	100	33.3	68.3

Neutral	48	16.0	84.3
Disagree	32	10.7	95
Strongly disagree	15	5.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
<hr/>			
I am connected to faith			
Strongly agree	128	42.7	42.7
Agree	98	32.7	75.3
Neutral	56	18.7	94.0
Disagree	9	3.0	97.0
Strongly disagree	9	3.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
<hr/>			
I am patient			
Strongly agree	98	32.7	32.7
Agree	119	39.7	72.3
Neutral	46	15.3	87.7
Disagree	26	8.7	96.3
Strongly disagree	11	3.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
<hr/>			
I am cautious about everything.			
Strongly agree	80	26.7	26.7
Agree	116	38.7	65.3
Neutral	66	22.0	87.3
Disagree	30	10.0	97.3
Strongly disagree	8	2.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
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I am respectful of all ideas and behaviors.			
Strongly agree	144	48.0	48.0
Agree	98	32.7	80.7
Neutral	35	11.7	92.3
Disagree	16	5.3	97.3
Strongly disagree	7	2.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

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What social issues do you feel most passionately about?

LGBTQ+ rights	25	8.3	8.3
Racial injustice/equality	92	30.7	39.0
Women's rights/equality	56	18.7	57.7
Environmental sustainability	42	14.0	71.7
Other	85	28.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

What do you think are the biggest challenges facing your generation today?

Economic instability	137	45.7	45.7
Climate change	18	6.0	51.7
Political Polarization	24	8.0	59.7
Social media addiction	82	27.3	87.0
Other	39	13.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Social media membership  
(More than one option is allowed)

Facebook	48	16.0	
Twitter	57	19.0	
Instagram	219	73.0	
TikTok	28	9.3	
Other (LinkedIn, Myspace, etc.)	91	30.3	

How many hours a day do you spend on websites that you have membership?

None	36	12.0	12.0
Less than 1 hour	94	31.3	43.3
1-3 hours	114	38.0	81.3
4-6 hours	43	14.3	95.7
7-9 hours	13	4.3	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

How many hours a day do you spend on traditional media (television, newspaper, radio, etc.)?			
None	69	23.0	23.0
Less than 1 hour	124	41.3	64.3
1-3 hours	107	35.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	
Do you shop through social media?			
Yes	190	63.3	63.3
No	110	36.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

All participants are Generation Z. 68.3 % of participants like working in groups. 75.3 % of participants responded favorably to believing in faith. 65.3 % of respondents consider themselves cautious. 80.7 % of participants respect all ideas and behaviors. Gen Zs accept all ideas and do things their way. It comes down to whether they distinguish themselves from others or comply with standards (CASTILLO, et al., 2021). 30.7 % chose racial injustices as the most significant social issue, which was the first choice among the options. Also, 18.7 % of respondents chose women's rights as their main social issue. This was the most popular choice among female respondents at 59.3 %. They stand for human rights, they also embrace people from different cultures and ethnicities and are against racism, they accept all sexual orientations and the LGBT community, and they also respect feminism (White, 2017). Regarding the biggest challenges facing Generation Z, economic instability was the top pick at 45.7 %. Gen Z grew up during a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy. This is believed to make them doubtful and afraid of the future. It even forces them to accept low-salary jobs to cope with the economic burden. They are also more likely to thrift and save money than previous generations and show refined taste or sound judgment when it comes to financial matters (Xie, Osińska, & Szczepaniak, 2023). Social media addiction/mental health was the second choice by 27.3 %. Instagram is the most popular social media platform with 73.0 % usage. Instagram is an application that lets people share photos and videos with others. It is a really effective tool for marketers to promote their products and services to Generation Z. This is because it is a very popular application for them (Riedler, 2020). 88 % of respondents use social media daily. 31.3 % visit websites for less than 1 hour, and 38.0 % for 1-3 hours. 77 % of respondents use traditional media, but 41.3 % spend less than 1 hour on traditional media. 63.3 % of respondents shop via social media. Gen Zs are more accepting of online shopping compared to their parents so the use of applications and online platforms is a positive thing (Lina, et al., 2022).

**Table 2. Analyzing pre- and post-purchase behavior on social media**

	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Pre-Purchase Consumer Behavior on Social Media</b>		
I search social media before buying a product.	4.20	1.08
I believe that I can find reliable information on social media about the product I	3.85	1.05

plan to buy.

If the information about the product I plan to buy is provided by a consumer who is also a social media user, I trust that information.	3.35	1.09
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If the information about the product I plan to buy is provided by a seller who is also a social media user, I trust that information.	3.15	1.04
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I value recommendations shared on social media by people I know about the product that I plan to buy.	3.64	1.04
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I value recommendations by popular media users when deciding on a product to buy.	3.46	1.06
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I prefer buying the products of businesses that I have liked on social media.	3.44	1.04
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When a business contacts me through social media, this affects me positively to buy the product.	3.02	1.14
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Social media sites are appropriate places for consumers to get into contact with businesses.	3.50	1.08
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I prefer attending campaigns on social media provided by businesses.	3.10	1.12
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### **Post-Purchase Consumer Behavior on Social Media**

If I am satisfied with the product I have bought, I share this on social media.	3.34	1.25
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If I am satisfied with the product I have bought, I share this on the pages of the businesses on social media.	3.17	1.13
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If I am not satisfied with the product I have bought, I share this on social media.	3.04	1.24
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If I am not satisfied with the product I have bought, I share this on the pages of the businesses on social media.	2.92	1.19
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If I am satisfied with the product I have bought, I recommend that other consumers buy that product through social media.	3.47	1.09
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If I am not satisfied with the product I have bought, I recommend the consumers not to buy that product through social media.	3.42	1.17
When a business which has seen that I am satisfied with the product recognizes me, it increases my satisfaction.	3.28	1.16
When a business which has seen that I am not satisfied with the product and got into contact with me, this may change my opinions.	2.95	1.22
When a business does not see that I am not satisfied with the product and does contact me, this increases my dissatisfaction.	3.36	1.26

### 6.5.2. Results

In the beginning, it was necessary to perform the normality test and check if the data were normally distributed. Therefore, skewness and kurtosis normality tests were selected. Skewness is a measure of probability distribution asymmetry. It depends on the mean to median ratio. If the mean and median coincide it's a symmetric distribution, otherwise it's an asymmetric distribution. Kurtosis measures the heaviness of the tails of a probability distribution. And it is relative to the closeness of data to the mean. It depends on the standard deviation. If the standard deviation is low, it is short-tailed and the distribution concentrates most of its mass at a single point, and if it is high, it is long-tailed and data points are spread out over a wide range (Demir, 2022). A skewness value of -2 to +2 is considered acceptable for normality and the normal Kurtosis value ranges from -7 to +7 (Hair, et al., 2010).

**Table 3. Normality Testing - Skewness and Kurtosis**

Hypotheses	Skewness	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kurtosis
	Statistic	St. Error	Statistic	St. Error
Hypothesis 1	-1.588	.141	2.033	.281
Hypothesis 2	-.644	.141	.011	.281
Hypothesis 3	-.428	.141	-.373	.281
Hypothesis 4	-.359	.141	-.248	.281
Hypothesis 5	-.426	.141	-.844	.281
Hypothesis 6	-.089	.141	-.934	.281
Hypothesis 7	-.384	.141	-.630	.281
Hypothesis 8	-.101	.141	-.970	.281

For testing hypotheses, a one-sample T-test was used. This test determines if there is a significant difference between the mean of a sample and a known or hypothesized population mean. It is ideal if there is one set of data and if there is a need to compare its mean to a specific value. This test calculates a t-statistic which measures how many standard errors the sample mean differs from the hypothesized population mean. The t-statistic is then compared to a critical value from a t-distribution to evaluate how substantial the difference is. In this method the null hypothesis (H0) proposes there is no statistical significance between population mean and hypothesized population mean. Alternative hypothesis (H1) suggests the opposite is true, that the population mean and hypothesized population mean are not

equivalent. This test provides a p-value as a result (Al-kassab, 2022). A P value is a measure of the likelihood that the results will be as extreme or more extreme than the observed data if the null hypothesis is true. The null hypothesis represents no effect or difference between the compared groups. If the P value is small, it is doubtful that the results occurred by chance alone. Therefore, the null hypothesis will be rejected in favor of an alternative hypothesis. P value under 0.05 is considered statistically significant (Dahiru, 2008). A test value of 3 as the hypothesized mean was chosen for a one-sample T-test of all hypotheses. 3 represents the midpoint of a 5-point Likert scale. So, it indicates whether responses tend to be significantly higher or lower than the midpoint.

**Table 4. T-Test results for analyzing pre- and post-purchase behavior on social media**

Hypotheses	Mean	St. Deviation	T-Test	P value	Result
H1: Before purchasing products, I search social media	4.20	1.08	19.340	<.001	Supported
H2: I am more likely to buy a product based on recommendations given on social media by people I know who have used the product in the past.	3.64	1.04	10.631	<.001	Supported
H3: I consider the recommendations of popular media users when making a purchase.	3.46	1.06	7.617	<.001	Supported
H4: When it comes to buying products, I prefer purchasing them from businesses I like on social media.	3.44	1.04	7.385	<.001	Supported
H5: I share on social media if I like the product I purchased.	3.34	1.25	4.735	<.001	Supported
H6: If I am not satisfied with the product I have purchased, I share it on social media.	3.04	1.24	.649	.517	Rejected
H7: If I am not satisfied with a product, I recommend not buying it on social media.	3.42	1.17	6.270	<.001	Supported
H8: I may change my opinion if a business contacts me if they see I am not pleased with the product.	2.95	1.22	-.706	.481	Rejected

As can be seen in the table above, six hypotheses were supported and two rejected. Hypothesis 1 shows that Gen Zs like to search social media before buying. Hypothesis 2 asserts that recommendations from actual users of the products influence buying decisions. Hypothesis 3 indicates the importance of influencers and their opinions as a driving force for purchasing. Hypothesis 4 indicates there is a positive relationship between purchasing, liking and

following the brand online. Hypothesis 5 demonstrates Gen Zs are interested in sharing good products they bought online. Hypothesis 6 is rejected. It implies that the results do not support a meaningful relationship between not being satisfied with a purchased product and sharing it on social media. Hypothesis 7 shows they recommend others not to buy poor quality products via social media. Hypothesis 8 indicates there is no association between being contacted by a business after expressing dissatisfaction and the likelihood of changing one's opinion.

## 7. Conclusion

Generation Z is a significant revenue source for companies. They have high purchasing power and influence family decision-making, so companies should target them accordingly. They have an on-demand lifestyle and it is difficult to satisfy their needs. Gen Zs care about the environment and social rights, and they hope companies share their ideals. They also want transparency from companies. Companies must act ethically and morally. Marketing for Generation Z shouldn't only focus on conventional methods; advertising should be entertaining to grab their attention.

Generation Z grew up on the internet, so online advertising is useful. As found in the survey results Instagram is popular among Gen Z so it should be a high priority for companies. Social media is entertaining and customizable, and it is based on preferences. Generation Z can connect better with companies through social media. Companies can give reliable information about their products or services and get feedback. Brand awareness can also be achieved through social media easier than other methods. Another key factor in online advertising is using a relatable influencer. If the connection of influencers with the company is genuine, marketing through them will succeed massively.

Survey results showed 88 % of Generation Z use social media daily. 63.3 % of Generation Z shop through social media. They hunt for products to buy online. They look for recommendations from their relatives and social media influencers. This is not limited to pre-purchase behavior. When they like a previously bought product, they share it on social media. However, there was no evidence that they would do that for a product they didn't enjoy. They recommend others not to buy poor-quality products. It wasn't proven when Gen Z didn't like the product in the first place, being recognized by the company may change their minds.

### 7.1. Recommendations and Future Research

Companies should focus on Generation Z. Their differences in personality, view of life, and what motivates them should be considered. Social media is a valuable asset in marketing for Generation Z. They shop through social media and are always seeking information about the products that they want to buy. Recommendations are very helpful for them, especially if it comes from their peers. Companies should invest heavily in social media if they want to engage more Gen Zs.

In this study there were some limitations due to people in Iran not having access to social media properly. Future research should be done in an environment where internet and social media access is unlimited. Popular social media channels can be explored in terms of marketability and ease of use. Also, social media strategies like influencers should be examined more.

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