

The Structural Analysis between Digital Marketing and Buying Behavior of Generation Z

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Abstract

Purpose: The primary objective of the study is to examine the impact of digital marketing on the buying behavior of generation Z. It also reflected the changes that take place in the future based on consumer needs. All digital media tools play an important role in crafting consistency, quickness, and openness that creates a holistic approach in the direction of digital marketing.

Design/ methodology/ approach: The study has undertaken a descriptive research design and collected data from 800 respondents that belong to generation Z comprising of age group between (15-20 years). The non-probability sampling technique was used. The data were collected, tabulated and processed through statistical tools SPSS 16.0 and AMOS 23.0 to deduce the inference with the help of factor analysis, correlation and Structural equationing model.

Findings: Results indicate that generation Z consumers prefer online connectivity to build relations and associations. Findings point out that digital media tools seen as a major variable that influenced the most. This virtual and physical interaction between customer and product is leading to new horizons for customer engagement and creates an opportunity to build long-lasting relationships.

Research limitations: The restricted sample size and sample area.

Practical implication: The digital era upholds many prospective opportunities for retailers as well as for companies. The virtual and physical interaction between customer and product is leading to new horizons for customer engagement and an opportunity to build long-lasting relationships.

Originality/value: The research supplements the somewhat insufficient researches fetching out on Generation Z in India in the context of digital marketing. At present limited researches have been conducted in India which emphasizes digital buying especially from the perspective of Generation Z. So this research focuses on the changing aspirations of Generation Z towards digital media and helps to identify the factors which influence Generation Z buying behavior.

Keywords: Buying Preferences, Digital Media, Digital marketing, Generation Z.

Introduction

India is growing at a very fast speed. Everything is going digital in the current scenario. Digital marketing considers being the future of

marketing. In layman language, digital marketing means the promotion of products and services on digital platforms like social media sites, emails and search engines, etc. The interactive digital channels include WhatsApp, mobile applications, websites, and social media, etc. Moreover, when a requirement arises for any product people find out the information from the internet first and then make a decision (Anand, 2017). The uses of different digital platforms to interact with the customers bring out a change in society. With the advancement in technology, modernization of society and the growth of nuclear families lead to an increase in the consumption of goods and services (Jain, Roy, & Ranchhod, 2015). Recent studies revealed that in India digital marketing growing at the rate of 25-30% annually. Indian population contributes 28% of online retail consumption (Keelery Sandhya, 2019). The digital revolution forced the companies to identify the best channels of communication to cater the needs of Indian customers (Ramanathan Anand, 2017). The government takes an encouraging step and launched the Digital India campaign to boost the economy and empower digital society. Digital media consider being an emerging tool for promotion as compared to traditional media (Verma, D. P. S. and Savita Hanspal, 2000). In society, everyone is using digital methods to manage social communications in one way or another and that creates a real picture of digitalization (K. T. Smith, 2011). Digital marketing creates a long term sustainable model that is the withdrawal from the epitomes of the past retail. Digitalization used by the companies requires an environment of association and assurances to integrate the technology and using customer information to unlock the new opportunities for improved customer value. This research will fill the gap in the review of literature as current researches focus on the digital buying behavior of consumers. At present limited researches have been conducted in India which emphasizes digital buying especially from the perspective of Generation Z. So this research focuses on the changing aspirations of Generation Z towards digital media and helps to identify the factors which influence Generation Z buying behavior.

Background of the study

Meaning of Generation Z

Generation Z also referred to I-generation, True generation, & NextGen. Generation Z belongs to anyone who was born between 1996 to mid-2000s which makes 32% of the global population. Generation Z born after 1996 and its population is 472 million in 2019 (McKinsey report 2017). They are born in the age of digital era where they can find any information through technology. In India, the majority of the population stands between the age group

of Generation Y and Z (census, 2011). Generation Z uses digital media for entertainment and shares their knowledge and expertise. While privacy and content, reliability reflected as their major issue of concern. They consider themselves as brand ambassadors and modern culture leaders (D. Shanthi, R., Kanata 2018). They want customized products and services and those brands give personalized offerings to achieve loyalty from their customers. Generation Z undoubtedly influenced the digital retail industry. With the advancement in technology and innovation uplift the overall shopping experience for the youth. As compare to the other generations, they are very open to new offerings and easily adopt new technology. A survey conducted by TCS, 2016 shows the digital habits of youth. The findings of the survey revealed that smartphone for accessing the internet by the age group of 12-18 years account for 83% and rest 17% through desktop and tablets. 86% of teenagers use Facebook and boys are more active as compare to girls. On Twitter, 59% of teenagers follow sports celebrity and 48% followed Bollywood celebrities. 71% of Generation Z used Whatsapp as the most popular and leading instant messaging application. Teenagers are very fast in responding to any notification. 52% respond within 5 minutes, while 48% of teenager's online activities monitored by their parents. All this shows that Generation Z is inclined towards a real live world with wide options and handy information (TCS, 2016). The changing digital environment indicates the differences between Generation Z and other generations. Thus the marketer needs to identify new techniques to interact with the evolving generation that improves the digital experience.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing an emerging platform used by the companies through internet and digital-based technologies that include smartphones, laptops, desktops and tablets. It is a method to interact with the customer and influence virtually. Due to the emergence of digital marketing, accelerated change has been noticed in India. Digital technologies help to recognize consumer cognitive needs, provide visual experiencing through which they can better decide, compare cost online and offline and deliver improved customer service (Mulyani and Andreas Chang, 2019). The rapid adaptation of the internet with countless devices proposed the propagation of digital knowledge (Brinker, 2012). All these emerging technologies have been a substantial contributor to the change and development of the economy. The digital revolution forced the companies to identify the best channels of communication to cater to the needs of Indian customers. In this way, we can say that Digital marketing emanates

boundless opportunity for the business and consider being as the future of marketing.

Moderating effect of digital marketing on buying behavior of Generation Z

A strong relationship occurs between digital marketing and buying behavior of Generation Z as shown by the previous studies. Generation Z described by (Emily Anatole, 2013) as well educated, stylish, open and easily connected with new things. They have the expert power to influence others. The young generation also acts as repulsive buyers (Chauhan, 2017) and their behavior is repulsion for the products. The main factors identified in the study are psychological, usage, lifestyle and opinion. Findings revealed that if the product does not match the social prestige or celebrity endorsing the product is not followed, consumer rejects the product. The study also highlights that repulsive buying behavior turns down the image of the marketer in the eye of the consumer. (Kotlar, 2012) highlights that social media marketing factors impact on impulse buying directly nowadays. These Five factors have been identified i.e. hedonic motivation, website quality, trust, situational variable, variety seeking. The finding shows that hedonic motivation is the main influencing factor in impulse buying. Whereas evaluating the aspects regarding the changeover of buyer attitude leads to a blend of reasons like convenience, prices, variation, offers, fewer expenses and uniqueness (Miller, 2012). Georgiades et. al. (2000) investigated the impact of gender role and profession on digital shopping. Results revealed that there is no difference across gender. It is found that the profession and digital shopping has a significantly positive relationship. (Nancy Nessel, 2015) identified various qualities of Generation Z. They are Imaginative, Philanthropic, Helpful, Adventuresome, Robust and Assertive. As well as they are easily adopting new technology and turned as brand followers. They believe in factual experiences and taking the initiative in updating data regularly (Ian Phau & Lo, 2004). They are devoting a lot of time to connecting new platforms and applications to take out the most benefits from their association. Instagram and Snapchat as consider being their preferred social media application (Xu & Wohn, 2016). Therefore, we can say that digital media plays a significant role in buying behavior and also invoke a positive approach in Generation Z towards digital marketing. From the above theoretical notions, it is assumed that digital media significantly influencing the buying behavior of Generation Z. Therefore, we set the hypothesis given forward.

H1: There is a direct influence of digital media on buying behavior of Generation Z.

Normalizing factors of Generation Z buying behavior

According to the review of literature, it is evident that Generation Z preferred personalization, uniqueness, updated technology and connections. All these traits come into light when we headed towards their personality. (Rintamaki et al. 2006) mentioned a different element named as social prestige. As it is associated with consumer's psychology and lifestyle and they want to be appreciated. Generation Z is well aware of the market; their expectations are also very high as compared to other generations. Generation Z (Rabolt, & Jeon, 2008) looks for those brands which imitate their identity. Exclusivity is also a major factor for buying because they wish to be appreciated as special and unique from others. (Park, (Mallory Schlossberg, 2012) elaborates that this generation is not trusted at all and easily shift from one brand to another. They are being considered as a digital generation and want personalized and reliable brands. These factors such as personalization, social prestige, exclusivity and trust possibly persuade Generation Z and encourage a feeling of attachment that ultimately depicts their lifestyle. Henceforth, we mention the next hypothesis as:

H2: There is a direct influence of lifestyle on buying behavior of Generation Z.

Each generation's online buying preferences denote their lifestyle and prerequisite so it is very important for the marketer to understand the different generations' tastes and preferences to predict their behavior. From the findings, it is clear that Generation Z prefers digital tools like smartphones, tablets, and laptops the most to keep them updated and associated with the changing lifestyle. (Chebat et al., 2012) compared generation X, Y and Z preferences towards food and beverages. The study highlights that Generation Z prefers organic food and beverages the most as compared to the other generations. (Rajesh Panda and Biranchi Narayan Swar, 2013) analyzed the determinants of digital marketing. The increasing knowledge of the market and the innovation in the delivery channel creates physical as well as the virtual market place for products and services that boost the marketing experiences. Moreover, Generation Z prefers digital media as a platform for searching and evaluating products offline as well online to get better products and services at the lowest cost (S. Mcquade, R. Waitman, M. Zeisser, and A. Kierzkowski, 2019). To tap generations effectively, retailers must line up their promotion tactics and strategically plan accordingly (Biranchi, 2013). Thus we propose the set of hypothesis below:

H3: There is a direct influence of value for money on buying behavior of Generation Z.

H4: There is a direct influence of convenience on buying behavior of Generation Z.

There is always a trust factor and security apprehensions in the mind of customers while buying online. The ethical issues are also the main consideration of consumers'. Companies have to address the issues against online frauds, attractive websites, etc. to encourage online purchases. (C. Changchit, R. Cutshall, and T. R. Lee, 2014) I identified five factors that have a direct impact on digital shopping are convenience, simplicity, past knowledge, security, and uncertainty. Further studies elaborate that website content reliability is also one of the major factors that possibly will assist them to shop and share their viewpoints and ratings (Chu and J. J. Lee, 2007). Another study (PWC, 2015) reveals the reasons for shifting customer preferences from traditional shopping to digital shopping. The first cause is the technological advancements that develop various opportunities as well as boost innovation in the market ultimately raise customers' expectations. The second reason is the shifting preferences of customers from physical space to virtual space; due to increased complexities, the time factor, increased disposable income

and independent decisions to buy (Hoffman and Novak, 1996). The third reason is the social connectivity. Another study (Baidyaraj, 2011) indicates that the young generation spends a lot of time on social sites and these sites positioning their brands in a very attractive manner. In this way, digital media provides discretion to the buyers and prepares them to take independent decisions. Therefore Companies must properly control market tactics to develop a personal relationship, association and deliver trustworthiness to understand the psychology of innovative generation and their likings. On the foundation of aforesaid past studies, last hypotheses were framed down as follow:

H5: There is a direct influence of independence on buying behavior of Generation Z.

Hypothetical framework

The hypothetical model (Figure 1) is framed through an independent and dependent variable. The dependent variable is the buying behavior of Generation Z and the independent variable was digital media (social media, websites, and mobile applications, etc.) lifestyle, value for money, convenience and independence.

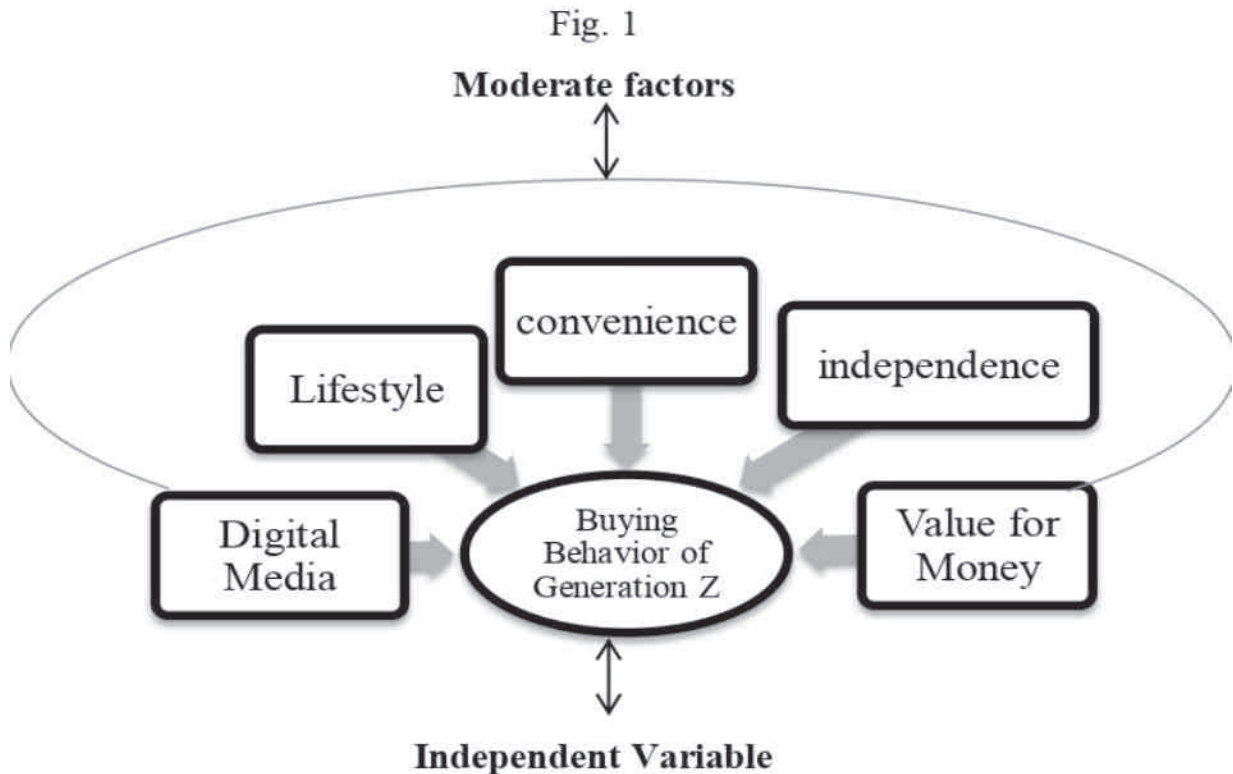


Fig. 1 Hypothetical framework of study proposed by author

Materials and methods

The primary objective of the study is to examine the impact of digital marketing on the buying behavior of Generation Z. The study also reflected the changes that take place in the future based on consumer needs. The dependent variable is the buying behavior of Generation Z and the independent variable was digital media (social media, websites, and mobile applications, etc.) lifestyle, value for money, convenience and independence. The study used a descriptive research design (Watterson, 2010). The population of the study includes 800 respondents belongs to Generation Z comprising of age group between (15-20 years). The study employs quantitative research. Convenience sampling method is used to take the samples from Generation Z. The present study used a self-controlled structured questionnaire. The data analyzed with the help of factor analysis, correlation and SEM.

Results and discussions

Socio-demographic analysis of respondents

Out of 800 respondents, the number of males and females was equivalent: three hundred eighty-eight (48.5%) were males and four hundred two were females (50.2%) respectively. All the respondents belong to the age group of fifteen to twenty years and were students. As the majority of the respondents are dependent on their family.

Instrumentation

This survey was conducted based on the dependent and independent variables and tries to understand the impact of

dependent variables. The questionnaire was constructed and measured using a five-point Likert interval scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The population of this study was Generation Z (students) belonging to India. The data was collected through well-structured deliberately designed questionnaires. A total of 850 questionnaires were distributed with the help of emails and smartphones, out of which 812 were returned and out of which 800 questionnaires were used to interpret the results. The non-probability sampling technique was used. The data was collected tabulated and processed through statistical tools SPSS 16.0 and AMOS 23.0 was used to deduce the inference.

Reliability and Validity

To test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was used. The number of 28 statements measures through Cronbach's alpha the reliability of the individual item as shown in table 1. The values of the following variables are greater than 0.7 and exceed the minimum acceptable level and thus questionnaire is statistically significant (Hoque and Awang, 2019). The value of KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity is .876 which is greater than 0.5; the chi-square value is 476.765 and the significance value is .000 which meets the basic requirements for conducting factor analysis (Hair, Et.al, 2010).

Table 1 Reliability statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital media tools	0.983
Entertainment	0.965
Convenience	0.881
Lifestyle	0.923
Value for money	0.917
Independent	0.803
Buying Behavior of Generation Z	0.876

Source: authors' calculation

Factor analysis and variable loadings

Table 2: Identified by exploring factor analysis

Table 2: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Components	initial eigenvalues			Sum of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
(Factor-1, Digital media tools)						
1	4.56	79.017	79.607	4.56	79.607	79.607
2	0.46	11.274	90.881			
3	0.44	6.375	97.256			
4	0.23	3.334	100			
Factor-2, Entertainment						
1	3.26	71	71	3.26	71	71
2	0.41	11	82			
3	0.34	10	92			
4	0.22	8	100			
Factor-3, Convenience						
1	3.56	69.97	69.97	3.56	69.97	69.97
2	0.4	10.97	80.94			
3	0.24	10.98	89.02			
4	0.21	8.08	100			
Factor-4, Lifestyle						
1	3.59	80	80	3.587	80	80
2	0.38	10	90			
3	0.41	2	92			
4	0.23	8	100			
Factor-5, Value for money						
1	3.96	71.01	71.01	3.96	71.01	71.01
2	0.4	12.12	83.13			
3	0.4	9.42	92.55			
4	0.2	7.45	100			
Factor-6, Independence						
1	4.11	80.17	80.17	4.11	80.17	80.17
2	0.39	10	90.17			
3	0.34	7.63	97.8			
4	0.31	2.2	100			
Factor-7, Buying Behavior of Generation Z						
1	4.16	78.01	78.01	4.16	78.01	78.01
2	0.37	9.32	87.33			
3	0.39	7.35	94.68			
4	0.47	5.32	100			

Seven factors were identified by exploring factor analysis as shown in Table 2. The first factor labeled as digital media tools that include smartphones, computers, laptops and tablets. It explained 79.607% of variance loaded on four variables and Scale reliability alpha of the first factor is .983. The second factor named as entertainment and loaded on four attributes. It explained 71% of the variance in the data, with an Eigenvalue of 3.602. The third factor is connected with another four factors and entitled as Convenience. This has explained 69.97% of the total variance in the factor analysis. The fourth factor is correlated with four factors. This has explained 80% of the total variation in the factor analysis and termed as Lifestyle. The fifth factor is linked with another four factors i.e.

marketing tactics and promotional offers. This has explained 71.01% of the total variation in the factor analysis and indicates the importance of this factor. The factor labeled as value for money. The sixth factor is interconnected with another four factors i.e. Freedom to buy anything from anywhere, anytime. This has explained 80.17% of the total variance with an Eigenvalue of 4.11. The last factor labeled as buying behavior of Generation Z and interrelated with again four factors that mainly include perception, intention, frequency, and preference. It contains 78.01% of total variance with an eigenvalue of 4.16.

Table 3 (factors influencing Generation Z buying behavior)

Correlation between the variables

Factors	Digital media tools	Entertainment	Convenience	Lifestyle	Value for money	Independent	Buying Behavior of Generation Z
Digital media tools	1						
Entertainment	.786**	1					
Convenience	.746**	.857**	1				
Lifestyle	.676**	.775**	.987**	1			
Value for money	.565**	.676**	.873**	.407**	1		
Independent	.598**	.556**	.762**	.406**	.878**	1	
Buying Behavior of Generation Z	.596**	.545**	.612**	.412**	.814**	.811**	1

** signifies that correlation is significant at 0.01 level (two-tailed)

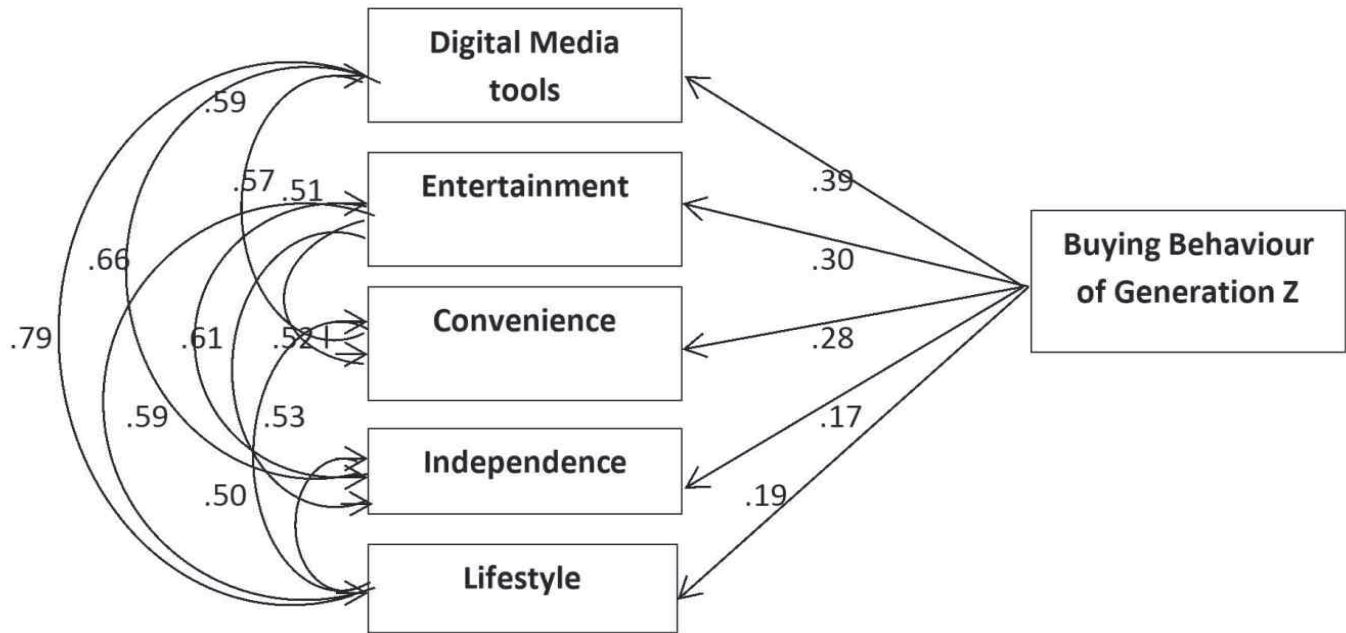
Table 3 analyzes the correlation among the variable that shows all the variables are significantly correlated to each other. The correlation among the summated scale is greater than 0.5 signifies correlations are valid and justify the constructs.

Confirmatory model of factor influencing buying behavior of Generation Z

To analyze the relationship between the variables a structural model was proposed in the following figure 2.

The structured equationing model (SEM) is a supplementary cohort method of the multivariate analysis procedure and thus SEM works well in this study. (Siddiqui & Hoque, 2018). The structural equation model indicates the path diagram that indicates the reflective and informative indicators of the study. For this purpose, SEM Amos software was used.

Fig 2: Author proposed path model indicating the factors



The results of figure 2 show that digital media tools (factor 1) loading is highest in comparison to all other variables that ranged from .52 to .79. Lifestyle is the dominant variable in buying behavior. On the outer side, digital media tools and buying behavior loading is .39, which indicates the most influential factor in the study. The second-factor entertainment with the path loading ranged .59 to .61 and in the outer portion Entertainment and buying behavior loading is .30. Convenience labeled as the third

factor with the path loading ranged .57 to .66 and in the outer portion Convenience and buying behavior loading is .28. The fourth factor independence with the path loading ranged .59 to .66 and in the outer portion independence and buying behavior loading is .17. The last factor labeled as a lifestyle with the path loading ranged .52 to .79 and in the outer portion Entertainment and buying behavior loading is .19.

Table 4 CFA results

The goodness of fit Indices	Guidelines Criterion	Model Values
Chi-Square (CMIN)		502.84
Probability Level		0
Normed Chi-Square (CMIN/D.F)	≤ 3 (Hair et al., 2010)	2.247
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	≥ .8 (Hair et al., 2010)	0.819
Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR)	≤ .10 (Wu, 2009)	0.036
RMSEA	≤ .08 (Hair et al., 2010)	0.054
Adjusted GFI	≥ .80 (Hair et al., 2010)	0.849
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	≥ .90 (Hair et al., 2010)	0.964
TLI	≥ .90 (Hair et al., 2010)	0.953

Table 4 shows that the intended values and that all the factors are within the acceptable limits and validates the individuality of the hypotheses. The above table shows the value of Chi-square =502.84; df = 97; GFI = .819; TLI = .953; CFI = .964; RMSEA = .54 and RMSR =.36. The value

of Chi-square/ df ratio is 2.247 indicates that it is under the permissible limit and CFI and other incremental fit indices validate the goodness of fit index limits (Browne and Cudeck, 1992).

Results of SEM and Hypothesis Testing

Table 5
Coefficient of variables in SEM analysis

Variables			unstandardized coefficient	S.E	standardized coefficient	t value	p-value	Hypothesis decision
Buying Behavior	<-- -	Digital Media tools	0.643	0.189	0.348	4.354	<0.001 **	Accepted
Buying Behavior	<-- -	Entertainment	0.542	0.165	0.289	3.678	<0.001 **	Accepted
Buying Behavior	<-- -	Convenience	0.621	0.147	0.291	3.214	<0.001 **	Accepted
Buying Behavior	<-- -	Lifestyle	0.698	0.159	0.321	3.987	<0.001 **	Accepted
Buying Behavior	<-- -	Value for money	0.611	0.201	0.221	3.190	<0.001 **	Accepted
Buying Behavior	<-- -	Independence	0.602	0.169	0.301	2.890	<0.001 **	Accepted

Note: 1. ** Indicates 1% significant level

Table 5 indicates the p-value of all the five variables i.e, Digital Media tools, Entertainment, Convenience, Lifestyle and Value for money is statistically significant as all their p-values are <0.01. It shows that there is a positive relationship between the coefficients of all the variables, therefore, signifying a positive effect. The standardized coefficient value of factor one labeled as digital media tools is 0.348 shows the most significant factor. Lifestyle considers being the second influencing factor for Generation Z. It shows the changing lifestyle and taste of Generation Z and the standardize coefficient value is 0.321. While the least influencing factor is value for money and the standardized coefficient value is 0.221.

Managerial Implications of digital marketing

The digital era upholds many prospective opportunities for retailers as well as for companies. It allows companies to bring such kind of platforms that bring proficiency and a customer-centric approach in their businesses. Digital technology is all about the electronic world where people buy; order anything and from anywhere. Apart from that companies should focus on social media for promoting their goods such as Facebook, Instagram, Hashtags, etc. Big companies now have dedicated influencers for

providing information regarding the latest trends, engaging customers and taking their reviews regularly and creating 'Buzz' in the market. Additionally, Facebook analytics could help in providing valuable insights about consumer attitudes and feedback, thus companies positioning their products according to customer preferences. India as a developing nation, digital technology is more equipped for international players but the rising demographic dividend of Generation Z pushes Indian companies to be more committed towards digitalization. However, the country is promptly overcoming the traditional methods related to performance. In the future, all digital media tools play an important role in crafting consistency, quickness, and openness that creates a holistic approach in the direction of digital marketing.

Conclusion

Generation Z is said to be a digital generation and come into contact with digital technology from birth wherein their attitudes towards information, relations, and privacy have significantly changed. Therefore it is very essential to understand Generation Z's taste and preferences. About digital buying, it is observed that most of the goods purchased online were related to the lifestyle of Generation

Z. The objective of using a Structural equation model is to measure the digital buying behavior of Generation Z. An empirical analysis was conducted to study the influencing factors namely, digital media tools, entertainment convenience, independence, lifestyle and value for money. The above outcomes show a high level of reliability in the dataset and the proposed structural model. Results indicate that Generation Z consumers prefer online connectivity to build relations and associations. Results indicate that digital media tools seen as a major variable that influenced the most. Generation Z seems to be very different as compared to other generations.

Limitations and Future Research directions

The research analyzes factors influencing the buying behavior of Generation Z in the digital Era. Digital offers chances for a thorough restructuring of the value chain from physical stores to virtual. The future needs to be the last stop that is entirely incorporated with the consumer's digital excursion right from the awareness building to searching, comparing and creating long term relationships, all this required is convenience and continuous operations assisted by digital technologies. The need of the hour is to expressively absorb, immobilize traditional practices of business and rejuvenate their business strategies that only concentrated on improving consumer's attitude through the effective use of digital technology.

The study searches out some limitations. The sample size selected randomly and restricted to 800 therefore results cannot be generalized; a larger sample size surely increases generalization in the study. In this topic future research could be done by using qualitative and quantitative techniques both so that to get a clear picture of Generation Z's behavior. The research gives more meaningful insights if we compare it with other generations and cross cultures.

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