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**GENERATION Z's PERCEPTIONS OF DIGITAL
MARKETING TECHNIQUES**

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Abstract

The present study attempts to understand the perceptions of Generation Z on the effectiveness of digital marketing techniques. Three different digital marketing techniques are considered in the study namely, 'influencer marketing', 'email marketing', and 'online reviews'. The effectiveness of all three techniques has been examined based on five different aspects viz. 'engagement', 'clarity', 'relevance', 'attractiveness', and 'customization'. The study employs a descriptive research design wherein the survey method is used to collect the primary data from millennials using convenience sampling. The statistical tests namely one-way ANOVA and independent samples t-test have been used to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings indicate that millennials have varied perceptions regarding the effectiveness of different digital marketing techniques based on different aspects. Moreover, males perceive digital marketing techniques to be more effective as compared to females. The result of the study would contribute to the existing literature that is related to consumer behavior and digital marketing techniques.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Effectiveness, Gender, Generation Z.



INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, technology has advanced to such an extent that traditional marketing techniques are not as effective as they used to be, instead, digital marketing has come out to be one of the emerging ways of marketing different products and services. Thanks to the power and reach of the internet, consumers all around the world have been able to become aware of the various services and products of different organizations and brands (Bala and Madhu, 2018). They have access to information non-stop 24/7. Hence, it is safe to say that the internet has allowed marketers to make a shift from traditional mass communication to digital marketing channels. Digital marketing tends to give an edge over traditional marketing channels because it helps to improve brand awareness and helps in brand management (Kannan, P. K., 2017). The best use of digital marketing channels is that it tends to allow the creative use of images, text, videos, and different animation for demonstrating products and different services at any time and place. With the help of digital marketing, all organizations can score high and maintain a competitive edge in the market and help high returns through low investment (Lies Jan, 2019).

With digital marketing coming into the picture, there is a change in the consumer behavior of individuals. They tend to become more demanding; this is simply because of the flooding of various messages that they get from different brands on a day-to-day basis. This paper is based on the various channels that are used to approach such consumers. In this paper, 3 major digital marketing techniques have been covered which are influencer marketers, email marketing, and reviews. Influencer marketing is a digital marketing technique that involves the use of influencers who are individuals with a high fan following to endorse different products and services. Email marketing involves the use of emails to send commercial messages that involves promoting products and services. Reviews are another form of digital marketing which involves the use of third-person perspectives to promote products and services. Individuals tend to refer to reviews to search for a

particular brand of their interest. Reviews can be found through various online portals or from some other sources such as friends, family, ratings, and other different individuals. All of these channels are covered in the research paper to understand consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is very complex and dynamic which makes it difficult to understand. It is a term that will never lose its importance in the marketing world. The 2 main characteristics of consumer behavior are that is dynamic and that it keeps changing and second to understand the utilization of the big 3 resources which are money, time, and effort of being able to procure a particular product or service. For many years till this date, research has been carried out to get information about consumer behavior and how to anticipate and predict it in a long run (Jacoby and Jack, 1998).

This study aims at understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of 3 different digital marketing techniques in 5 different aspects. As mentioned before the 3 different digital marketing techniques are Email marketing, reviews, and influencer marketing. These channels are evaluated on 5 different parameters namely engagement, clarity, relevance, attractiveness, and customization. Engagement refers to how well a customer is watching the advertisement, the more interesting, creative, and eye-catching an advertisement is, the more engaging it would be considered. Clarity is another parameter that refers to how individuals are understanding and articulating the brand from their perspective. If what the brand is portraying via advertisement is not clear, then chances are that the brand will not succeed. Each of the advertisements that are being made by a particular brand should be relevant. They need to be relevant as they involve the need to match the user's search. Attractiveness refers to what draws the attention of consumers towards that particular brand. It depends upon the various graphics, content, videos, and images that might have been used by the brand to market its product or service. Customization refers to how the various wants and needs of customers are met via advertisements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the years, there have been various research papers been made that are concerned with digital marketing and the various techniques used to impact the consumer behavior of individuals as a whole.

The idea of this study was based on the fact that the world is transforming from analog to digital and that marketing is not an exception. There is an increase in various techniques that are falling under digital marketing such as social media marketing, search engine marketing, and social media marketing (Prajapati, 2015). This is also leading to a change in consumer buying behavior as well and being more inclined toward digital marketing than traditional marketing. The paper focuses on the highlights such as the difference between traditional and digital marketing, the pros and cons, and the importance of digital marketing in today's era. Digital marketing focuses on the marketing of products and services with the help of digital technologies which includes mostly the internet but at the same time includes mobile phones, display advertising, and other digital media (Desai, 2019). There has been a complete change in digital marketing development since the year the 1990s and 2000s. There has been a change in terms of brands and businesses using technology for marketing. There has been a smart integration of digital platforms into the marketing campaigns of the organizations. The paper focuses on understanding digital marketing and how it helps today's businesses with various examples. Digital marketing became the avenue for electronic communication that was used by marketers to promote various goods and services in the marketplace (Sathya, 2015). The paper focuses on how the purpose of digital marketing was concerned with consumers and how it allowed the customers to interact with the product through digital media. The paper is based on secondary data which involves the use of various internet and literature sources. It talks about the radical change in India in terms of digitalization. The study focuses on how digital marketing techniques such as SEO, SEM, content marketing and various other technologies are becoming common in today's advancing technology

(Bala and Verma, 2018). Digital marketing is said to be the most cost-effective and has great commercial impacts on the business. The paper focuses on the use of the internet and social media that have affected and changed how companies can conduct their business (Diwvedi, 2021). With the help of digital marketing, they can offer various significant opportunities to organizations via lower costs, increased brand awareness, and increased sales. The paper focused on bringing together the collective insights that experts have on issues relating to digital and social media marketing as there a be many issues that might have effects on the intrusive and irritating brand presence. The use of digital marketing has increased due to the fast pace of development in technology. There has been an increased usage of digital marketing, social media marketing, and search engine marketing. There is also an increase in the usage of the internet due to increasing internet users on the world wide web which has resulted in profits in digital marketing. And due to the change in consumer behavior, it is observed that they are more inclined towards digital marketing instead of traditional marketing which highlights the pros, cons, and importance of digital marketing in today's times. Promotion via electronic correspondence (digital marketing) tends to be used by various publicists to grasp and understand the product and the organization that is focusing on the. This tends to empower and promote customers to intermix and mingle with digital media businesses (Sudheer and Sivannarayana, 2019). Digital marketing is an umbrella term under which comes social media marketing. Social media marketing has changed business in various ways and being part of a digital era shows how social media has a significant impact on the way consumers tend to behave (Victor and Devi, 2018). Technology has led to a continuous and sudden increase in supply and demand. To meet the demand and supply, automation has to be introduced for all the processes. Specialists have come to the conclusion that individuals should social media along with the traditional methods for marketing products and services. The main focus of the study was to understand how social media tends to affect and influence the growth of digital marketing. Digital marketing has been

sweeping across the world at a quick pace, and the dependence on digital marketing of organizations is built by ideas of online marketing which becomes an important platform (Umamaheswari and Kumawat, 2021). There has also been an increase in the use of mobile and smartphones which has led organizations to restructure their marketing tactics and change their look at various marketing platforms. And it will not be a surprise that after a few years the conventional marketing platforms will be replaced by digital marketing ones. It is quite evident that digital marketing is a key to growth and user loyal strategies. Digital marketing has even gained significant importance in marketing campaigns as it tends to attract and retain internet users. Various methods are used by users which help to gain and retain customers via digital marketing. The Delphi method along with interviews was used in the study to show the important actions for acquiring users and retaining them in the organization (Garcia). A structural equation modelling was utilized to test and assess the consumer's beliefs in three different Eastern Arab Countries in terms of attitudinal and behavioral responses towards permission-based email marketing and the effect of Gender in the same. The male respondents held negative beliefs and attitudes about permission-based DEM and found the approach irritating. Overall, the responders found DEM unreliable, irritating, and have lack of entertainment value. The respondents detest and have negative sentiments about email advertisements (Mahmoud Grigoriou *et al.*, 2019). Email enables proactive, interactive, and personalized communication that satisfies the preferences of a consumer. By enlisting customers as active players in the communication process, sending emails with their permission, and making emails pertinent to the receivers, email marketing may be utilized to empower customers (Hartemo, Mari, 2016). The quickest option for sales is direct email marketing. Email is incredibly adaptable and manageably straightforward, provided that the database is in decent form. This type of media can open up new business opportunities and increase sales the quickest (Jeshurun, Subramania Bala, 2018). One of the most effective digital marketing strategies for this

sector is still email marketing. Companies must comprehend the consumer choice journey to influence consumer behavior and capture revenue. The decision-making processes vary among the generations, while Generation Z is thought to have the highest purchasing power after the Millennials. Primary data was collected through an online survey given to Vietnamese Generation Z consumers between the ages of 15 and 26. The results of the study demonstrate that email marketing has the automation, customization, and contextual engagement capabilities to influence the buyer's journey and influence their choice to make a purchase. Additionally, the findings point to several touchpoints based on Vietnamese consumers' preferences for email marketing, including personalization, privacy, a professional but approachable appearance, added value, and awareness of a company's commitment to social responsibility and the environment (Munsch, Alison, 2021).

To test the differences in Generation Z's perceptions regarding the five aspects of the three digital marketing techniques, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: Generation Z's perceptions regarding the 'Engagement' aspect differ significantly across the three digital marketing techniques

H1b: Generation Z's perceptions regarding the 'Clarity' aspect, differ significantly across the three digital marketing techniques

H1c: Generation Z's perceptions regarding the 'Relevance' aspect differ significantly across the three digital marketing techniques

H1d: Generation Z's perceptions regarding the 'Attractiveness' aspect differ significantly across the three digital marketing techniques

H1e: Generation Z's perceptions regarding the 'Customization' aspect differ significantly across the three digital marketing techniques

To test the gender-wise differences in the perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness of the three digital marketing techniques, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: The overall perceptions regarding the effectiveness of 'Influencer Marketing' significantly different between males and females

H2b: The overall perceptions regarding the effectiveness of 'Email Marketing' significantly different between males and females

H2c: The overall perceptions regarding the effectiveness of 'Online Reviews' significantly different between males and females

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive research design wherein the survey method was used to collect the primary data. The target respondents for the study were Generation Z belonging to the age group of 18 to 21 years. The convenience sampling method was used to select the respondents. The data was collected during February - April 2022 with the help of a structured questionnaire which was circulated online via Google Forms. The questionnaire included 15 items on 5 different aspects (i.e., engagement, clarity, relevance, attractiveness, and customization) of 3 digital marketing techniques. All the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 138 valid responses were received that constituted the final sample. The average age of respondents in the sample was 19.5 years. There were 74 females and 64 males in the sample.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analyzed using MS Excel. Table 1 displays the mean scores (perceptions) of the respondents on all five aspects of the three digital marketing techniques. Table 2 indicates the gender-wise overall mean scores on the effectiveness of the three digital marketing techniques.

Table 1: Mean Scores (Perceptions)

	Influencer Marketing	Email Marketing	Online Reviews
Females	3.59	2.92	3.50
Males	3.77	3.24	3.76

Source: Author's Calculations

Table 2: Gender-Wise Overall Mean Scores (Perceptions)

	Influencer Marketing	Email Marketing	Online Reviews
Engagement	3.68	2.72	3.72
Clarity	3.24	3.27	3.66
Relevance	4.10	3.30	3.66
Attractiveness	3.93	3.62	2.88
Customization	3.41	3.17	3.45

Source: Author's Calculations

To test hypotheses H1a-H1e, a one-way ANOVA test was used. The results of one-way ANOVA (see Table 3) indicate that there were significant differences in millennials' perceptions across the three digital marketing techniques regarding all five aspects i.e. 'Engagement' (F=44.29, p<0.05), 'Clarity' (F=8.32, p<0.05), 'Relevance' (F=22.99, p<0.05), 'Attractiveness' (F=38.74, p<0.05), and 'Customization' (F=3.15, p<0.05). Hence the hypotheses H1a-H1e were supported.

More specifically, from Table 1, it can be observed that, based on 'engagement', the respondents perceived 'online reviews' (mean score=3.72) to be the most effective marketing technique followed by 'influencer marketing' (mean score=3.68). 'Email marketing' (mean score=2.72) was not considered to be much effect based on 'engagement'. With regards to 'clarity', 'online reviews' was considered to be the most effective (mean score=3.66), whereas the other two techniques were considered to be less effective. The respondents considered 'influencer marketing to be very effective based on 'relevance' (mean score=4.10) as well as 'attractiveness' (mean score=3.93). The 'attractiveness' of 'online reviews' (mean score=2.88) was not

perceived well by the respondents. With regards to were found to be most effective, whereas 'email 'customization', 'online reviews' (mean score=3.45) marketing' (mean score=3.17) was found to be the least followed by 'influencer marketing' (mean score=3.41), effective.

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F critical
Engagement						
Between Groups	88.17	2	44.08	44.29	0.00***	3.01
Within Groups	409.04	411	0.99			
Total	497.22	413				
Clarity						
Between Groups	15.20	2	7.60	8.32	0.00**	3.01
Within Groups	375.18	411	0.91			
Total	390.38	413				
Relevance						
Between Groups	44.79	2.00	22.39	22.99	0.00**	3.02
Within Groups	400.39	411.00	0.97			
Total	445.18	413.00				
Attractiveness						
Between Groups	79.19	2.00	39.60	38.74	0.00**	3.02
Within Groups	420.07	411.00	1.02			
Total	499.26	413.00				
Customization						
Between Groups	6.18	2.00	3.09	3.15	0.04*	3.02
Within Groups	403.43	411.00	0.98			
Total	409.61	413.00				

Source: Author's Calculations

To test the hypotheses H2a-H2c, independent samples t-test test was used. The results (see Table 4) indicate that males and females have significantly different perceptions regarding the overall effectiveness of all three digital marketing techniques, i.e. 'influencer marketing' ($t=-2.00$, $p<0.05$), 'email marketing' ($t=-2.03$, $p<0.05$), as well as 'online reviews' ($t=-2.18$, $p<0.05$). Hence the hypotheses H2a-H2c were supported.

More specifically, from Table 2, it can be observed that, as compared to females, males have better perceptions of the effectiveness of all three digital marketing techniques (mean scores of males > mean scores of females).

Table 4: Independent Samples t-test

	t statistic	p-value
Influencer Marketing	-2.00	0.044*
Email Marketing	-2.23	0.027*
Online Reviews	-2.18	0.030*

Source: Author's Compilation

DISCUSSION

This study seeks to comprehend and assess the efficacy of 3 various digital marketing tactics on 5 various factors. The three different digital marketing strategies are influencer marketing, reviews, and email marketing, as previously mentioned. These channels are evaluated on the 5 key factors including engagement, clarity, relevance, attractiveness, and customization. From the data analysis, mean scores were derived from the ANOVA test and it was found that Online reviews had the **highest engagement, and highest clarity, and the highest score** was found in **customization** which was **3.72, 3.66, and 3.45**. The highest score in **relevance and attraction** was found in **Influencer marketing** with scores of **4.10 and 3.93**. For the method of email marketing, the scores ranged from **2.72 to 3.62**, however, there were no high scores from the same.

Looking at each of the methods in terms of **Gender** it was found that in terms of the methods of **Influencer marketing, Email Marketing, and Online reviews**, the highest score was **3.77, 3.24, and 3.76 respectively**. This highest score was found in the gender "**Male**".

Online reviews have the highest engagement, highest clarity, and highest score in customization due to many reasons. Online reviews are the biggest source of social proof that tends to drive purchases from consumers. Many organizations tend to offer a discount to customers after they write an online review about their company which leads prospective customers to feel that the product or service is credible. A large number of online reviews makes customers feel that the service and product provided by the customers are more credible and helps in building trust between the organization and customers. Online reviews are indeed one of the best methods to increase engagement between customers and the business. according to a

study about 77% of customers are willing to leave customer reviews for a company if given the chance.

Influencer marketing involves the endorsement of products and services via influencers, people, and organizations that have an expert level of knowledge or social influence in their field. It is a method that helps in amplifying the brand awareness of the organization's products and services. These parties have high followers and the power to reach a large number of people in one go. Each of their posts tends to gain a high amount of recognition and is taken into account by their followers which helps them to stand out and attract new followers which leads them to increase their visibility and gain more recognition which leads to more traction. With the help of influencer marketing, organizations tend to attract real followers who are the target audience and have views that are similar to the brand image of the organization. Just like online reviews, influencer marketing partnerships help to improve credibility and trust between customers and the brand. One of the most important powers of influencers is the trust that their followers have in their opinion. Through collaborations of organizations with different influencers who are considered trustworthy and relevant, they can build a strong brand reputation and improve their credibility.

Email Marketing had the lowest score in terms of all factors which were engagement, clarity, attractiveness, customization, and relevance. This might be because of various reasons such as commercial mail or spam mail which tend to irritate consumers. Individuals tend to delete those emails and unsubscribe from the email. These emails need to be targeted to consumers who want to receive these emails, hence organizations should accordingly create their strategies for targeting individuals via the means of email marketing. Many emails tend to cause size issues in terms of attachments and images. If an email has many images and attachments then it might take a long time to load which can make it frustrating for the audience leading them not to read the content of the email. One of the major reasons why an email marketing campaign is not successful is that many organizations don't have the right copy and design for the same. They don't have

enough time or skills which leads them to outsource the above-mentioned aspects to create a successful email campaign. These are the reasons why email marketing has the least engagement, clarity, attractiveness, customization, and relevance concerning the other digital marketing techniques taken into consideration for the research paper.

There are many practical implications and use for marketers for these marketing techniques. Taking into consideration the results from the Anova test, we can conclude that out of all the three marketing techniques that are researched, online reviews and influencer marketing are the best techniques for marketing-related activities. Online reviews have a huge practical implication. They tend to provide free advertising and content for businesses on other websites that publish online reviews. There is an improvement in prospect conversion rate as there is an increase due to improvements in trust and confidence. Along with an improved conversion rate it also provided an edge over competitors who don't use the method of online reviews. There is improvement in the search engine rankings as well, as online reviews involve using the company's name, the more the usage of the organization's name, the more the number of appearances of business names in the search engine. Online reviews also provide the ability to take into account various areas of improvement for the order process. Looking at influencer marketing, this method also has practical implications and uses for marketers. Just like online reviews, influencer marketing helps individuals to make a better and more positive reception of the brand. This is because people who follow influencers tend to trust and respect their favorite influencers. This often leads individuals to make purchases, generate sales and drive more conversions. Influencer marketing is one of the most effective methods of digital marketing, because of which it leads to a reduction of costs for marketing. Businesses tend to find it difficult to promote products as costs for other methods such as paid advertising costs, billboards, radio ads, and television are becoming costlier. However, influencer marketing is only effective if the influencer has a large audience size and the niche that the brand is

targeting as their audience which then leads to huge ROIs, more sales, and saving money. Furthermore, it not only saves cost but saves time as well as it shortens the time of building the fan following count of the organization. For a marketing campaign, it takes a lot of time to produce images, create of advertising schedule, partnerships and collaborations, and so on. With the use of influencer marketing, organizations tend to save time as the brand is promoted on various channels by individuals with a huge fan base. These are some of the practical implications of influencer marketing. Since the results of the test for email marketing method were low, it is a method that would not be recommended as a digital marketing technique, however, it has some of its practical implications such as time and cost saving, wider reach, generating traffic to the website via the help of link and collecting feedbacks through the help of online surveys. Though email marketing has some benefits, it is a technique that would not be recommended as it does not have the impact that would draw customers for making sales according to the ANOVA test conducted.

The above-mentioned are some of the practical applications of the digital marketing techniques that have been chosen for this study.

LIMITATIONS

The research might provide some valuable inputs to the existing literature and marketing implications for marketers, however, there are still some limitations. These are some limitations that would give some directions to future research for related topics.

Firstly, the data collected for the research paper is solely based on Google forms. A limited number of questions were made based on 5 different criteria for understanding the perception of millennials toward digital marketing techniques. There is also a lack of extensive experience in data collection methods. No qualitative method was adopted for the study. Furthermore, there can be a misunderstanding of questions such as questions going unnoticed by the respondents or the available responses not fitting the response of respondents. The previous answers to the

questions may be influencing their answers to the other questions. The sample size considered for the research paper is small. It is a survey conducted with over 139 different individuals that fall under the age group of millennials. Secondly, different studies of the past have been considered as references for the research paper. However, there haven't been any studies that have been specifically aimed at the perception of millennials concerning digital marketing techniques. There are studies available on a similar topic as that of this research paper, but none of them have data related to Generation Z's perception of digital marketing techniques.

Thirdly, the writer of the research paper does not have much experience in conducting research and producing papers in the field of academics of this size. Hence the scope for discussions in the paper has concessions at different levels as compared to the works of experienced scholars. Fourthly, this study was only conducted on individuals who fall under the age group of Generation Z. Since the sample taken for this study is catering to a particular age group, there is a possibility that there can be a sampling bias. Factors such as gender and age group can lead to playing a role in the perception of digital marketing techniques and their influence on buying decisions.

Finally, this study is only analyzing five factors for the three digital marketing techniques that are being studied in this research paper. There can be studies in the future which would analyze marketing channels such as video marketing, and display advertising to understand more about their roles which tend to affect the consumer decision-making process.

FUTURE SCOPE

The study on "**Generation Z**" perceptions of digital marketing techniques" sheds a light on the different digital marketing techniques namely, 'influencer marketing, 'email marketing, and 'online reviews, and how these digital marketing techniques leads to engagement. These digital marketing techniques are evaluated based on five different aspects viz. 'engagement', 'clarity', 'relevance', 'attractiveness',

and 'customization'. With the help of the quantitative data collected from the sample, different data analysis techniques were used to analyze the data and draw insights into the different criteria that were selected to evaluate the different digital marketing techniques.

With help of the insights gained from the analysis, marketers can use this research for their different marketing campaigns. They can choose the most effective approach for their campaign based on the result of the data analysis which has been conducted in this study. Marketers can use this study to improve the effectiveness of digital marketing techniques on the above-mentioned criteria of 'engagement', 'clarity', 'relevance', 'attractiveness', and 'customization' to make their digital marketing techniques more effective and efficient. This research can also be used to craft a marketing strategy that can be used to attract good-quality leads and improve conversion rates. This study would further help marketers in understanding the effectiveness of their digital marketing techniques for different campaigns.

In terms of theoretical ramifications, there isn't any research online that addresses the subject of digital marketing strategies like email marketing, online reviews, and influencer marketing and their impact on Generation Z. The research is specific in terms of the target audience and the digital marketing techniques used, hence providing a broad understanding to the readers about the topic. As a result, this research paper will contribute to the body of literature by describing how Generation Z perceives digital marketing strategies. The study's findings can also be used as a reference point by marketers or anybody else interested in learning more about influencer marketing, online reviews, or email marketing and their effect on the perception of Generation Z and the outcomes of the same.

CONCLUSION

In a technologically advanced world, there has been a sharp increase in the internet over the years along with the rapid implementation of various digital marketing techniques by organizations all over the world, which

render a specific study to be conducted regarding the same topic. In addition, the body of knowledge in this area has come from research on the direct effects of email marketing, influencer marketing, and online reviews on consumer purchase decisions. Particularly, the results have a theoretical significance by offering empirical support concerning the connections between the aforementioned platforms and customer purchase decisions. Moreover, this investigation has identified several beneficial applications for marketers and business professionals.

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