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The future of marketing communication: Insights from gen z consumer behavior

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Abstract

Brand awareness and creation among consumers has been a core theme in earlier studies on marketing and it has been inducing purchase indirectly. It is hence perceived as important for marketers to build brand awareness. However, there is a research gap when it comes to generating brand awareness among Gen Z. To be specific, the study is based on the best suited communication channel for building brand awareness for Gen Z. Hence, this study explicitly analyzes the association between such variables and provides guideline for organizations targeting Gen Z consumers. For deeper knowledge, earlier studies have been reviewed and data has been extensively collected with interviews and surveys to achieve valuable insights and empirical evidence.

By evaluating and combining empirical evidence related to previous theories and research that could identify relationships and patterns which eventually resulted in conclusion and final outcome of the study. As per the initial results, the study underlines the value of brand awareness as it was the initial step for inducing purchases. Additionally, findings of the study had also highlighted the value of building brand awareness to set brand preferences as it will provide for the rise of buying intention. In order to establish brand awareness among Gen Z, Instagram is a preferred mode of communication for brands.

Keywords: brand awareness, Gen Z, Instagram, marketing communication, Gen Z consumers

Introduction

To stay relevant for consumers in this globalized and competitive age of today, it is observed to be important for organizations to allocate resources and time when reaching consumers (Ammari, 2018) ^[1]. Various factors have to be considered when it comes to design effective strategy for marketing, such as when and how a service or product is priced, presented, to whom and where it is directed, and communication channels that must be used (Carson and Gilmore, 2000) ^[2]. Choosing the communication modes for a specific group have got a lot of attention in previous studies both because of effectiveness of marketing plans and because of its complex nature (Erevelles et al, 2016) ^[17].

Another explanation for focusing on channels of communication is associated with progression and advancement of technology. It has resulted in new challenges and opportunities of marketing, especially associated with reaching upcoming segments of targeted consumers and establishing brand awareness (Serpa, 2018; Salfino, 2018) ^[18, 3]. Gen Z was born in 1997 or later and has been a very significant target group for a lot of organizations (Pew Research Center, 2019) ^[4].

Raised in a highly unstable and insecure age and shaped by global financial crisis and a volatile climate, Gen Z is shaped by different other factors as compared to past generations (Serpa, 2018) ^[18]. Some of the examples of factors affecting the values and attitudes of this generation include events which took place during their upbringing and several social structures during this period and includes years of birth (Yigit and Aksay, 2015) ^[5]. Additionally, this generation is grown up when social media was born, where online chats used to serve higher purpose than real life interactions related to both communication and information search (Serpa, 2018) ^[18]. Differences for Gen Z related to attitudes, values, and technology advances might have effect on consumer behavior and, hence, it will result in market changes.

Theoretical Foundation: For researchers and marketers, a core theme of marketing is consumer behavior, which covers several grounds (Solomon et al, 2006) ^[8].

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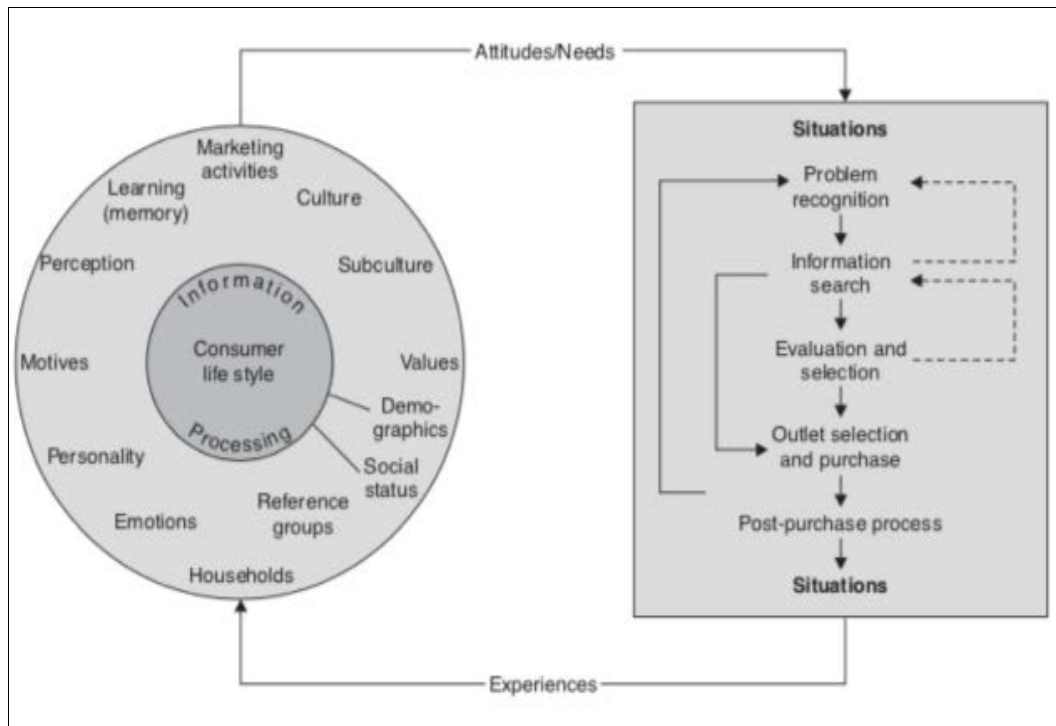
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This term is really hard to define. According to the “American Marketing Association”, consumer behavior refers to the dynamic interaction of cognition and effect, environment, and behavior with which humans conduct exchange of their lives (Ekström, 2010. Khan (2007) ^[6, 7] further simplified the definition of consumer behavior as

various processes of decision-making consist of appraising, procuring, using, and disposing a service or goods. Khan (2007) ^[7] suggests the whole process and it forms the consumer behavior (Figure 1). Figure 1 illustrates the process of buying a service or goods starts in the mind of consumer before actually buying a product (Khan, 2007) ^[7].



Source: Khan (2007) ^[7]

Fig 1: Process of Buying a service or product

Khan (2007) ^[7] further simplified the definition of consumer behavior as various processes of decision-making, which consists of appraising, procuring, using, and disposing a service or goods. Khan (2007) ^[7] illustrates the whole process and forms consumer behavior in depth. In Figure 1, the circle shows consumers’ lifestyle affected by various internal and external factors, redefining their needs and attitudes (Khan, 2007) ^[7]. On the basis of these external and internal factors, consumers react in certain way affecting their process of decision-making. The square illustrates this process, such as, information search, problem recognition, selection and evaluation, outlet purchase and selection, and at the end, the process after purchase. Solomon et al (2006) ^[8] provided a different view, mentioning that consumers don’t always pass through this whole process of decision-making and usually the buying behavior is conducted spontaneously without prior consideration and planning. When it comes to make buying decision, consumers usually engage in internal searches where they have their own experiences and memories to collect data (Solomon et al, 2006) ^[8]. It is partly on the basis of earlier experiences and also by just being part of consumer culture. It is evident that consumers are widely exposed to incidental knowledge. It takes place when consumers have huge exposure to advertising through different means, gathering data passively which is being stored and considered for buying decision. Building up awareness and knowledge is

accordingly a core aspect for several marketers engaging in activities to build awareness and establish their products and brands. According to Romaniuk et al (2017) ^[9], brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers can be nostalgic or identify a specific brand which is related to a specific category. It consists of everything from recalling the brand name to recognizing logos, symbols, and so on (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002) ^[11]. Brand awareness is known to have a huge effect on decision-making of consumers as it is widely used as heuristic of decision (Clark et al, 2009) ^[10]. After establishing brand awareness, consumers may achieve brand knowledge. Keller (1998) ^[12] suggests how brand knowledge includes attributes, awareness, images, feelings, benefits, thoughts, attitudes and experiences. Brand knowledge consists of declarative (knowing meaning of brand) and procedural data (data related to brand use) related to a company (Brucks, 1986) ^[13]. Having brand knowledge may further improve the buying intention among buyers (Hui, 2010) ^[14]. In addition, following the building of knowledge and awareness related to specific brand, affective commitments are set, making people building tendencies to behave regularly in either unfavorable or favorable way (Lutz, 1985) ^[23]. A theory has been developed on the basis of above factors in decision-making process by Lavidge and Steiner (1961) ^[15]. It consists of six steps of purchase decision.



Source: Lavidge and Steiner (1961) ^[15]

Fig 2: A model of hierarchy of effects

These six steps are further divided into three subcategories by Lavidge and Steiner (1961) ^[15].

- **Think:** Cognitive component, where awareness is build first related to the brand or product;
- **Feel:** an affective component where likes and preferences are set; and
- **Do:** A part from motivation which consists of conviction of a buying process.

On the basis of “Hierarchy of Effects” model, marketers are more likely to adopt and design their promotions differently related to various steps and are designed to move up the ladder (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961) ^[15].

Research Gap

According to McCarthy (1960) ^[16], after analyzing the preferences of targeted consumer group completely, it is possible to develop effective marketing strategy on the basis of various resources available. However, there is limitless blend and number of potential strategies that can be adopted. To make the process of making effective strategy in marketing smoother, a well-known framework has been developed by McCarthy (1960) ^[16] related to promotion, dealing with issues related to advertising, sales promotion, training, development, and use of sales force. However, there is a rise in possibilities of marketing which followed the emergence and technological advancements of communication (Erevelles et al, 2016) ^[17].

Gen Zs are becoming highly central for marketers, who are entering marketplaces, which should be addressed (Serpa, 2018) ^[18]. As there is a lack of addressing Gen Z in earlier studies, marketers have lack of expertise on advertising to them well, due to various aspirations differ from earlier generations (Kupec, 2017) ^[19]. Hence, current strategies related to channels of communications are getting highly outdated as they cannot be relevant for Gen Z (Kupec, 2017) ^[19]. Gen Z is defined by the qualities related to values, experiences, and demographics, which are affecting

impressions of marketing and consumer behavior (Williams and Page, 2011) ^[20].

Gen Z have combined traits which mean that they are urged to fit in. Hence, produce placement is effective on television and traditional media (Williams and Page, 2011) ^[20]. Gen Z has always been able to gather data easily with the internet and has been in relation with others through social media and other channels (Spears et al, 2015) ^[21]. With the rise in communication, marketing strategies must consider the same.

Research Purpose

As per the research problem identified above, this study is aimed to provide in-depth knowledge of traits of Gen Z related to different channels of marketing communication for building brand awareness. This study will find out the best suited communication channels to establish brand awareness with Gen Z and has highest potential to increase sales.

Research Questions

To serve the purpose of this study, here are some of the research questions

- Which channel of communication is most suited to build brand awareness for Gen Z?
- How to use different channels of communication for building brand awareness among Gen Z?

Limitations of the study

The study is limited to Gen Z and to consumers who were born in 1997 or later as they might be entering job markets eventually and highly relevant for marketers due to their rise in purchasing power. In addition, the study is limited to traditional channels of marketing communication and social media marketing, such as TV, newspapers, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, etc.

Methodology

This section discusses methods used for the study, such as research design, research approach, data collection approaches, quality of research, sampling, data analysis methods, and ethics, and brief connection and conclusion between methodological approaches.

Research Approach

When it comes to research approach, this study adopts quantitative and qualitative approach which includes collection of both primary and secondary data to gather meaningful insights to serve the purpose of this study. This approach is considered because it is needed to analyze what and how questions related to specific context, i.e., choosing marketing communication channels for Gen Z.

Research Design

This study adopts cross-sectional research design to collect data and processes where there are multiple cases involved. With cross-sectional design, the focus is based on finding patterns and trends among various variables and cases and to represent a phenomenon being tested. In addition, this research design is related to collecting data through an online survey for mapping a phenomenon.

Data Collection

When it comes to data collection, there are two different approaches for data collection, i.e., conducting online survey among groups related to Gen Z and collecting secondary data. The study is focused on a smaller section of participants, where survey questions were asked, even though with more open-ended method. On the basis of secondary data, a self-structured questionnaire was designed for primary data collection.

Initially, a literature survey of scholarly studies, books, articles, and other sources was conducted among Gen Z, related to consumer behavior and advertising, especially through communication channels and brand awareness. We have given a structured definition, critical evaluation, and summary of those works. Literature review has provided a schematic illustration of sources which enabled theoretical foundation when building solid knowledge for organizations targeting Gen Z population.

Sampling Method

In order to collect primary data from Gen Z consumers (aged 18 to 30 years), convenience sampling method has been adopted which includes selection of a group of participants. This study has target population of 500 participants for increased generalization of findings.

Data Analysis

The performed data collection and research generates vast

data, including survey questions and answers which should be analyzed and interpreted (Bell et al, 2022) [22].

In order to solve the research questions related to communication channels in building brand awareness among Gen Z, here are the hypotheses and statistical tests which would be conducted using SPSS software.

Here are the variables considered for conducting statistical tests.

Independent: Online and offline communication channels like social media, email, traditional media, etc.

Dependent: Brand awareness levels (measured through online survey)

H1: Online communication channels are significantly better than traditional channels of communication for increasing brand awareness among Gen Z

H01: Online communication channels are not better than traditional channels for brand awareness

Statistical analysis for H1: Since there are more than two communication channels to compare (as online communication channels include social media, email marketing, website/blogs, influencer marketing, and so on), one way ANOVA test would be better to compare the effectiveness of online channels over traditional channels.

H2: Using communication channels has significant impact on improving brand awareness among Gen Z consumers

H02: There is no significant impact of communication channels on brand awareness among Gen Z consumers

Variables

Independent: Communication channels and strategies like engagement, content type, frequency of communications

Dependent: Brand awareness (measured using online survey)

Statistical tests for H2: To determine the factors affecting brand awareness (like content type, engagement, or time spent), multivariate regression analysis would be performed to know their respective roles.

Data Analysis

There are 203 (45%) participants who are 21 to 25 years old, 128 (28%) participants are 18 to 20 years old, and 119 (26%) participants are 26 to 30 years old (Table 1) (Figure 3).

Table 1: Age Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 to 20 years	128	28.4	28.4	28.4
	21 to 25 years	203	45.1	45.1	73.6
	26 to 30 years	119	26.4	26.4	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

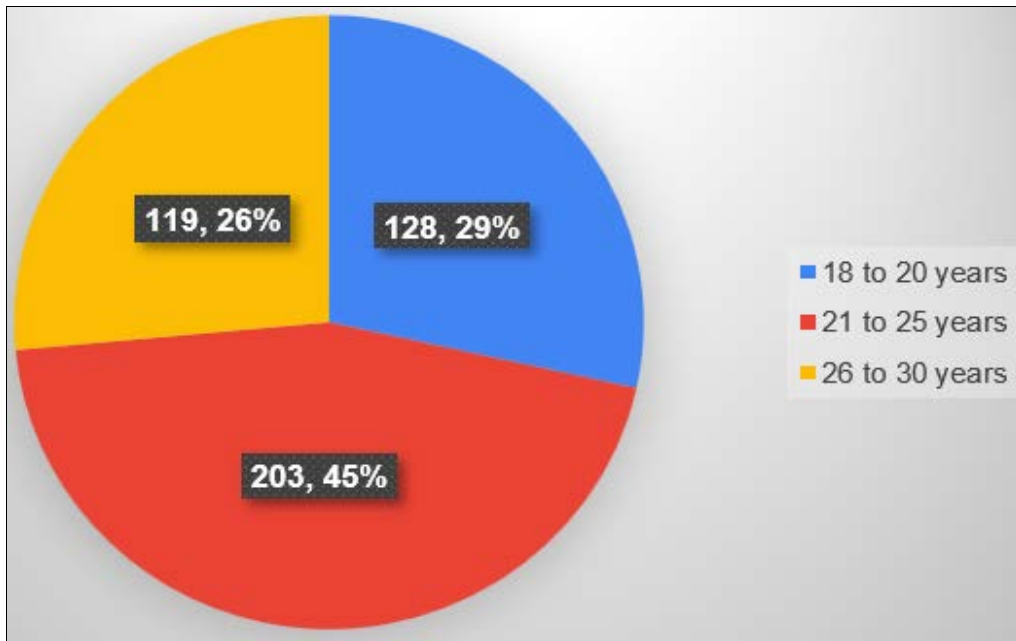


Fig 3: Age Group

There are 287 (64%) participants who are male and 163 (36%) participants who are female (Table 2) (Figure 4).

Table 2: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	163	36.2	36.2	36.2
	Male	287	63.8	63.8	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

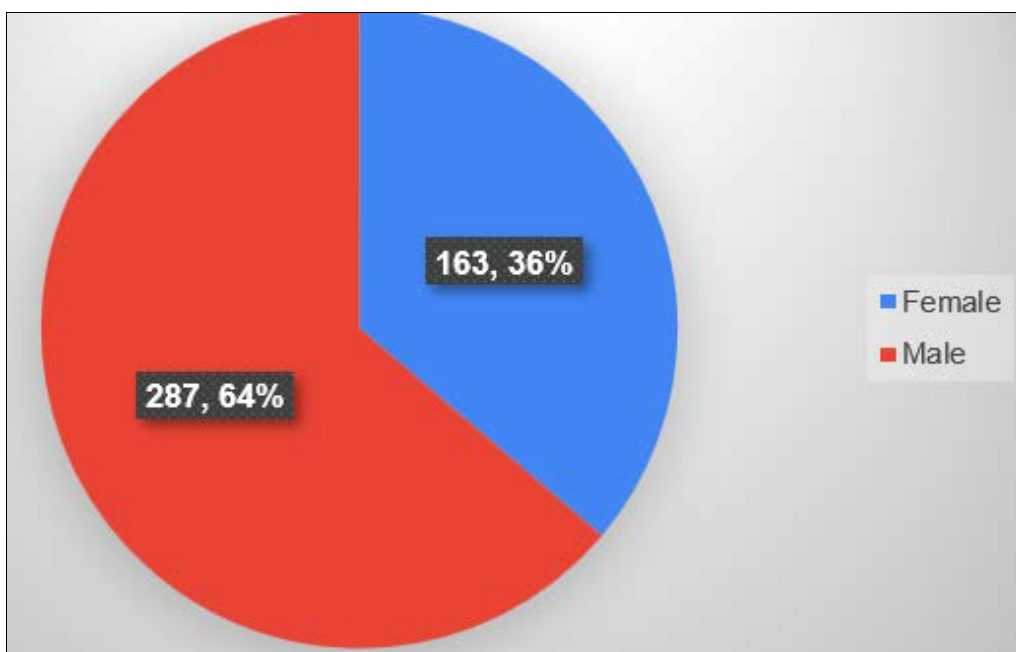


Fig 4: Gender

There are 280 (62%) participants who are graduate, 129 (29%) participants who have completed higher secondary education, and 41 (9%) participants have completed high school education (Table 3) (Figure 5).

Table 3: Academic qualification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Graduate	280	62.2	62.2	62.2
	High School	41	9.1	9.1	71.3
	Higher Secondary	129	28.7	28.7	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

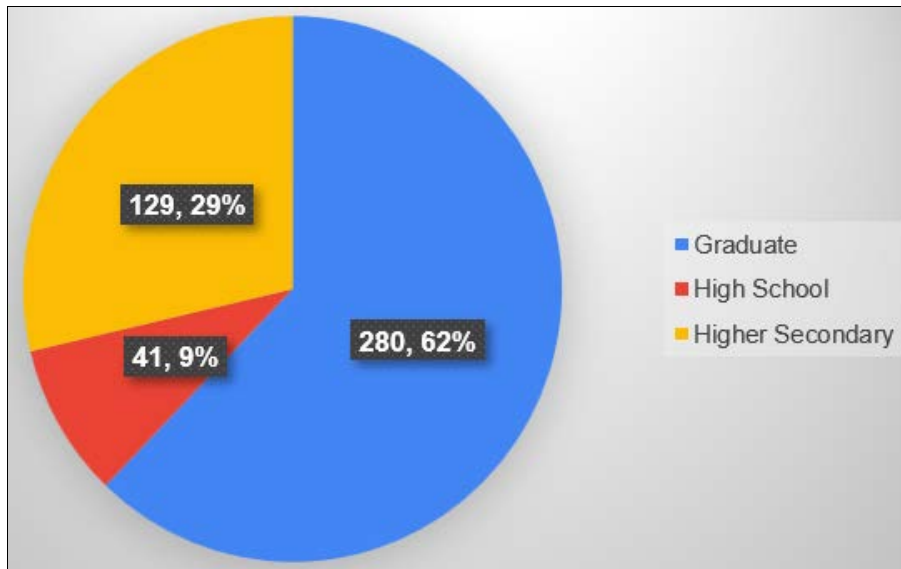


Fig 5: Academic qualification

When it comes to consume social media, 176 (39%) participants use tablet, 117 (26%) participants use smartphone, and 157 (35%) participants use laptop (Table 4) (Figure 6).

Table 4: Devices used for consuming social media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Laptop	157	34.9	34.9	34.9
	Smartphone	117	26.0	26.0	60.9
	Tablet	176	39.1	39.1	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

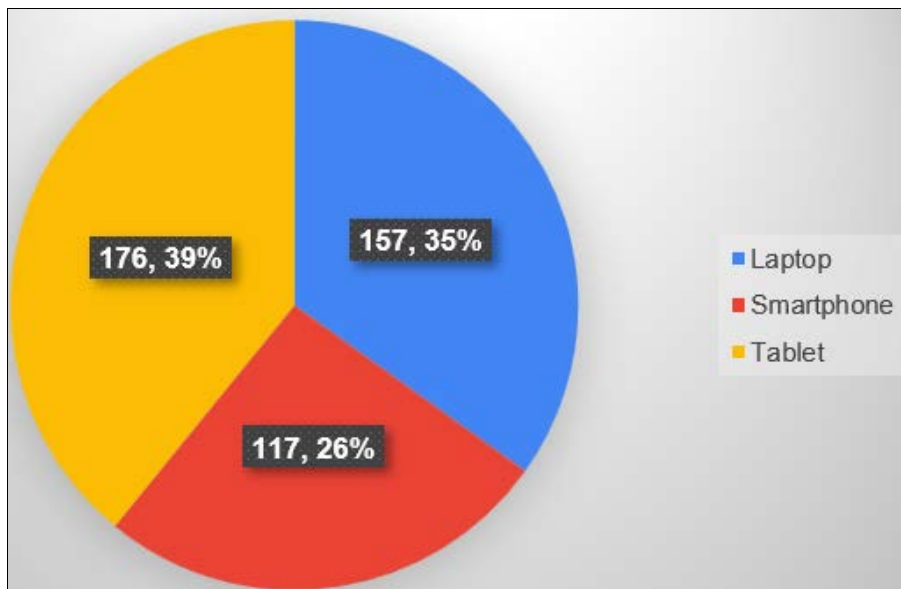


Fig 6: Devices used for consuming social media

Brand Awareness and channels of communication used

There are 320 (71%) participants who use social media most widely for engaging with brands, 67 (15%) participants watch content creators or influencers to engage with brands, 36 (8%) participants use blogs/websites to engage with brands, and only 27 (6%) participants use traditional media like radio, print media, and TV (Table 5) (Figure 7).

Table 5: Which communication channels are used most widely for engagement with brands by you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Blogs/websites	36	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Content creators/influencers	67	14.9	14.9	22.9
	Social media (Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, etc.)	320	71.1	71.1	94.0
	Traditional media (Radio, TV, Print media, etc.)	27	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

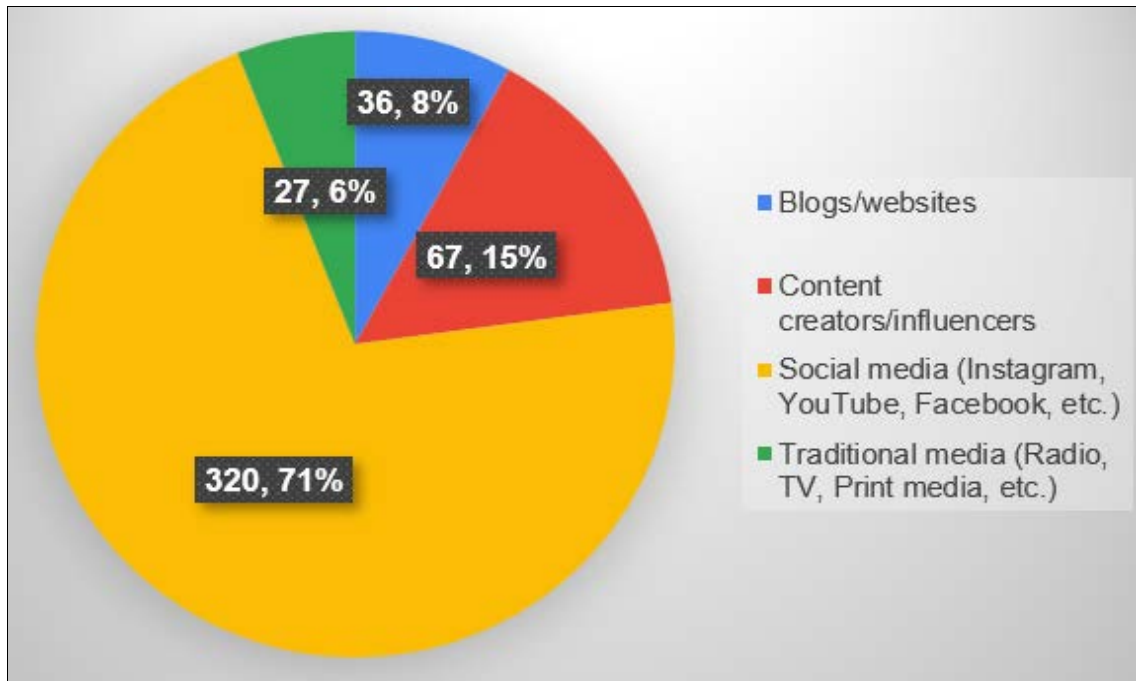


Fig 7: Which communication channels are used most widely for engagement with brands by you?

There are 171 (38%) participants who are highly likely to know about new brands through social media, 161 (36%) participants are likely to know about new brands through social media, and only 45 (10%) participants not using social media to know about new brands. Hence, there are 74% participants who are leaning towards social media for brand discovery. Like social media, 179 (40%) participants are likely and 176 (39%) participants are more likely to know about new brands through influencers, while only 8% participants don't rely on influencers to know about brands. Combined, 79% participants found influencers effective for brand discovery.

When it comes to email marketing, there are mixed responses from 171 (38%) participants. Only 26% participants are more likely to know about brands through email marketing. A notable group of participants (35%) don't find email marketing effective for brand discovery. There are 57 (13%) participants who are likely to use websites/blogs and 92 (20%) participants who are very likely to use websites/blogs, while 36% participants combined don't use websites/blogs for brand discovery. Hence, websites/blogs are not much effective for brand discovery (Table 6).

Table 6: How likely are you to know about new brands through the following channels?

Channels	Not at all Likely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely
Social media	45 (10%)	43 (10%)	30 (7%)	161 (36%)	171 (38%)
Influencers	37 (8%)	36 (8%)	22 (5)	179 (40%)	176 (39%)
Email Marketing	55 (12%)	103 (23%)	171 (38%)	110 (24%)	11 (2%)
Website/blogs	74 (16%)	92 (20%)	135 (30%)	57 (13%)	92 (20%)
Traditional media	110 (24%)	130 (29%)	116 (26%)	41 (9%)	53 (12%)

There are 133 (30%) participants who get the best knowledge of the brand through live streams, 128 (28%) participants get to know about a brand through memes, 104 (23%) participants know about the brands through

shorts/reels, 75 (17%) participants know about the brands through short stories, and only 10 (2%) participants use other modes to know about the brand (Table 7) (Figure 8).

Table 7: What kind of social media content gives you best knowledge of the brand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Live Streams	133	29.6	29.6	29.6
	Memes	128	28.4	28.4	58.0
	Others	10	2.2	2.2	60.2
	Short stories	75	16.7	16.7	76.9
	Shorts/Reels	104	23.1	23.1	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

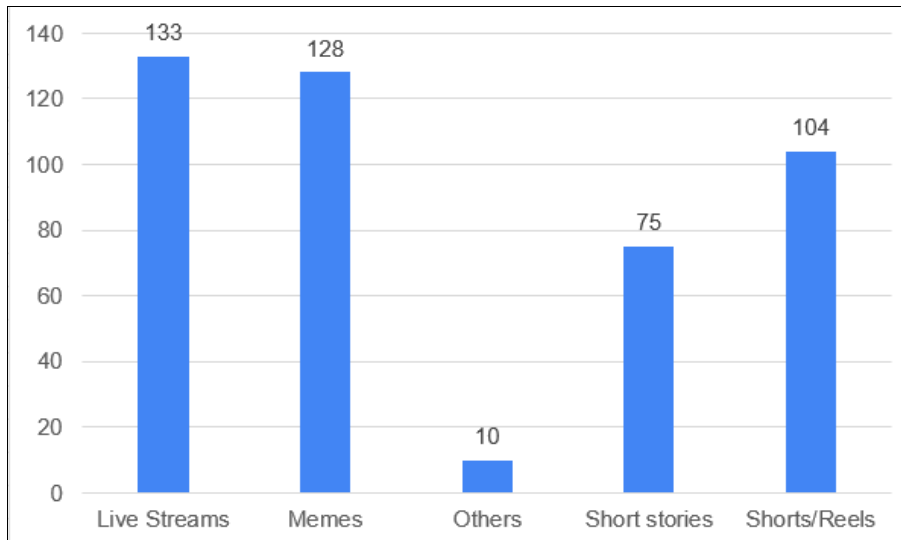


Fig 8: What kind of social media content gives you best knowledge of the brand?

Building Awareness

There are 154 (34%) participants follow brands through social media once they discover them, 144 (32%) participants read/watch content related to new brand once

they discover it, 88 (20%) participants try out their services/products, and 64 (14%) participants check out their website (Table 8) (Figure 9).

Table 8: How do you engage with a brand once you discover them?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Buying their services/products	88	19.6	19.6	19.6
	Checking out their website	64	14.2	14.2	33.8
	Following them through social media	154	34.2	34.2	68.0
	Reading/watching content related to them	144	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

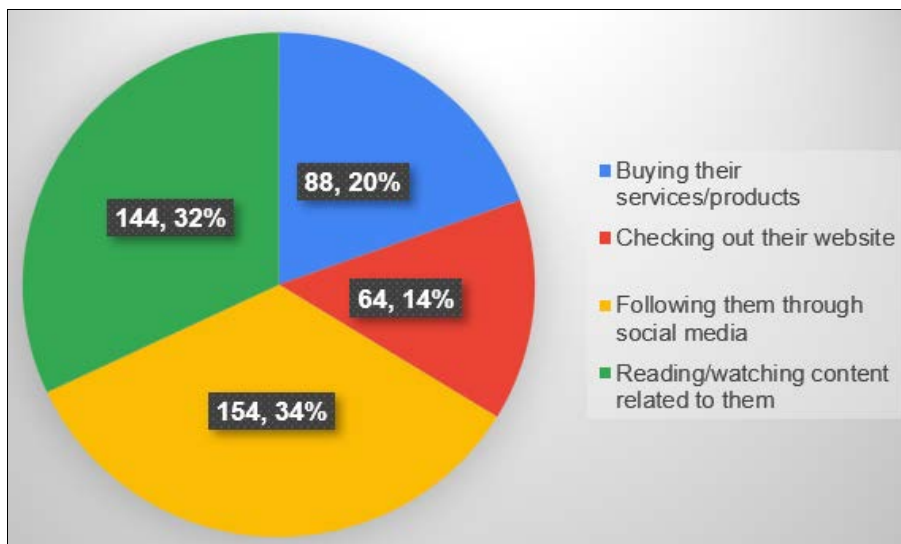


Fig 9: How participants engage with brand once they discover it?

There are 247 (55%) participants who found regular updates on social media very effective and 101 (22%) participants found it extremely effective to build brand awareness once they discover a brand, while 72 (16%) participants found it moderately effective, 8 (2%) participants found it slightly effective, and 22 (5%) participants found it not at all effective. There are 138 (31%) participants who found sponsor ads on Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc. very effective and 156 (35%) participants found it extremely effective to build brand awareness, 79 (18%) participants found it moderately effective, 44 (10%) participants found them slightly effective, and 33 (7%) participants found them

not at all effective.

There are 156 (35%) participants who found influencer marketing very effective and 80 (18%) participants found it extremely effective to build brand awareness once they discover it, while 123 (27%) participants found it moderately effective, 52 (12%) participants found it slightly effective, and 39 (9%) found it not at all effective. Majority of participants (38%) found newsletters/emails not at all effective and 133 (30%) participants found them slightly effective to build brand awareness, while 76 (17%) participants found it moderately effective, and only 16% participants found it highly effective. Similarly, majority

(69%) participants found blogs, videos and other forms of content marketing not effective or slightly effective for brand awareness, while 84 (19%) participants found it

moderately effective and only 12% participants found it highly effective (Table 9).

Table 9: How much do these strategies are effective to build brand awareness once you discover a brand?

Strategies	Not at all Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately effective	Very Effective	Extremely Effective
Regular updates on social media	22 (5%)	8 (2%)	72 (16%)	247 (55%)	101 (22%)
Sponsor ads on Facebook, Google, YouTube, etc.	33 (7%)	44 (10%)	79 (18%)	138 (31%)	156 (35%)
Influencer marketing	39 (9%)	52 (12%)	123 (27%)	156 (35%)	80 (18%)
Newsletters/emails	169 (38%)	133 (30%)	76 (17%)	36 (8%)	36 (8%)
Blogs, videos and other form of content marketing	158 (35%)	152 (34%)	84 (19%)	28 (6%)	28 (6%)

According to majority (93%) of participants, influencer marketing and social media are more effective to build stronger bond with a brand than other channels. On the other hand, only 11 (2%) participants find email marketing

effective, 11 (2%) participants voted for traditional media, and 10 (2%) participants voted for websites/blogs to be effective to build stronger bond with a brand (Table 10) (Figure 10).

Table 10: According to you, which channel is more effective to build stronger bond with a brand?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Email marketing	11	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Influencer marketing	209	46.4	46.4	48.9
	Social Media	209	46.4	46.4	95.3
	Traditional Media	11	2.4	2.4	97.8
	Websites/blogs	10	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

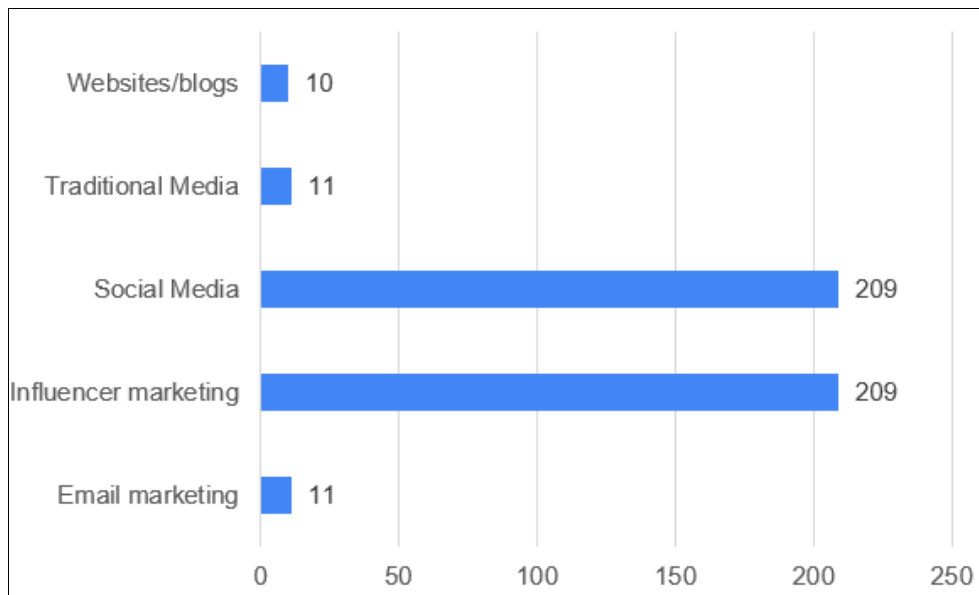


Fig 10: Effective channels to build stronger bond with a brand

Brand Recall and Preferences

When following a brand on social media, 320 (71%) participants are likely to recommend a brand to others and

102 (23%) participants are very likely to recommend it to others. While only 2% participants were not likely to do the same (Table 11) (Figure 11).

Table 11: If you follow a brand on social media, how likely are you to recommend it to others?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not at all Likely	5	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Unlikely	5	1.1	1.1	2.2
	Neutral	18	4.0	4.0	6.2
	Likely	320	71.1	71.1	77.3
	Very Likely	102	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	450	100.0	100.0	

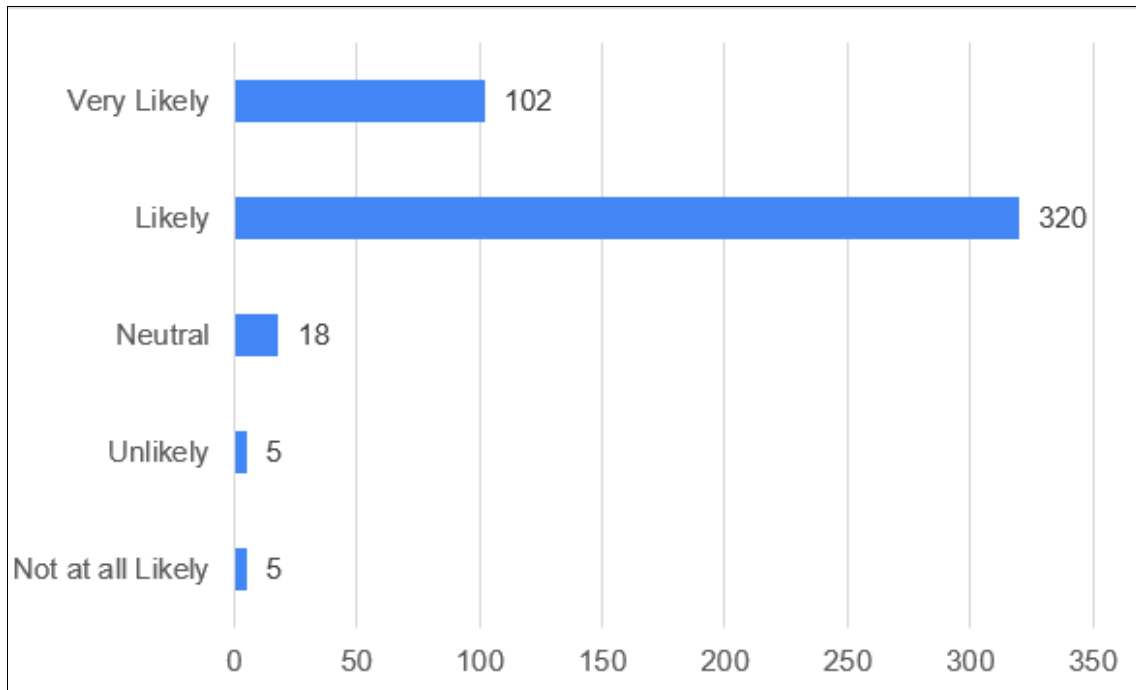


Fig 11: If you follow a brand on social media, how likely are you to recommend it to others?

There are 207 (46%) participants who sometimes engage with a brand on social media and 122 (27%) participants always engage with a brand on social media, while 38 (8%) participants never engage with a brand on social media, 38 (9%) participants rarely engage with a brand on social media, and 45 (10%) participants engage with a brand every once in a while. There are 239 (53%) participants who sometimes engage with a brand through influencers and 96 (21%) participants always engage with a brand through influencers. There are only 66 (15%) participants who rely on influencers sometimes to engage with a brand, while 38 (9%) participants rarely use influencers and 11 (2%) participants never engage with a brand through influencers. There are 185 (41%) participants who engage with a brand through email marketing every once in a while. There are 127 (28%) participants who engage with a brand rarely

through emails and 27 (6%) participants never engage with a brand through email marketing, while 99 (22%) participants sometimes engage with a brand through email marketing, and 12 (3%) participants always engage with a brand through email marketing. There are 150 (33%) participants who always engage with a brand through website/blogs, 78 (17%) participants sometimes use websites/blogs to engage with a brand, 99 (22%) participants use websites or blogs every once in a while, 60 (13%) participants use websites/blogs rarely, and 63 (14%) participants never use website/blogs to engage with a brand. There are 192 (43%) participants who never use traditional media and 156 (35%) participants rarely use traditional media to engage with a brand, while only 10% participants engage with a brand through traditional media (Table 12).

Table 12: How often do you engage with a brand on these marketing channels?

Marketing Channels	Never	Rarely	Every once in a while	Sometimes	Always
Social media	38 (8%)	38 (9%)	45 (10%)	207 (46%)	122 (27%)
Influencers	11 (2%)	38 (9%)	66 (15%)	239 (53%)	96 (21%)
Websites/blogs	63 (14%)	60 (13%)	99 (22%)	78 (17%)	150 (33%)
Email Marketing	27 (6%)	127 (28%)	185 (41%)	99 (22%)	12 (3%)
Traditional Media	192 (43%)	156 (35%)	57 (13%)	33 (7%)	12 (3%)

According to 198 (44%) participants, reviews/testimonials build their trust on a brand, 129 (29%) participants trust influencers' content when choosing a brand, 105 (23%)

participants believe on social media content, and only 18 (4%) participants rely on ads to trust a brand (Table 13) (Figure 12).

Table 13: What kind of communication builds your trust on a brand?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Ads	18	4.0	4.0
	Influencers' content	129	28.7	28.7
	Reviews/testimonials	198	44.0	44.0
	Social media content	105	23.3	23.3
	Total	450	100.0	100.0

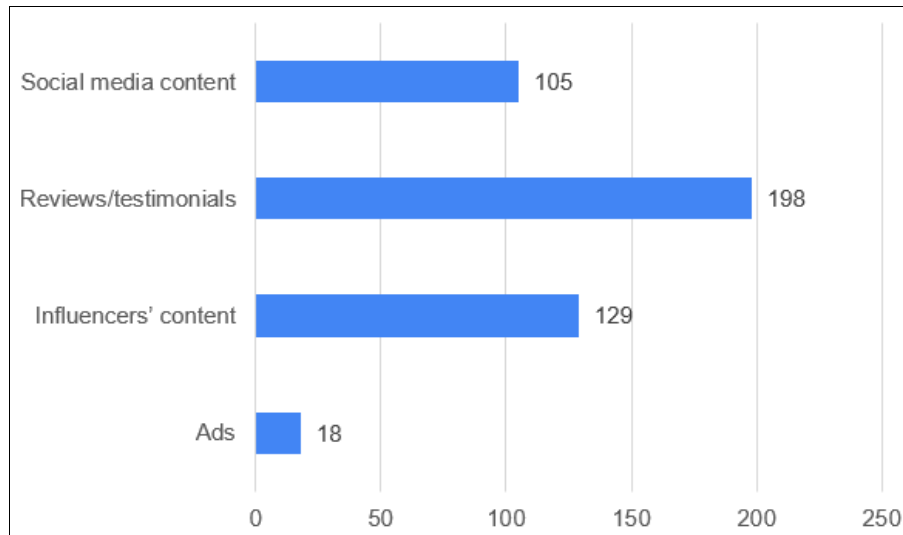


Fig 12: What kind of communication builds your trust on a brand?

Hypotheses testing

For testing H1, i.e., online communication channels are significantly better than traditional channels of communication for increasing brand awareness among Gen Z, online and offline channels of communication are considered as independent variables and brand awareness levels are considered as dependent variables. Since there are multiple channels of communication to compare (like social media, email marketing, influencers, blogs/websites, etc.), one way ANOVA test would be better to compare the effectiveness of online channels over traditional channels. When it comes to social media, F-statistic value is 16.049 and p-value (Sig.) is 0.000. Hence, there is a statistically significant difference in the way participants get to know about new brands using social media ($p < 0.05$). It means social media is perceived to be significantly more effective than other marketing channels. When it comes to influencers, F-statistic value is 11.545 and p-value (Sig.) is 0.000. Similarly, there is statistically significant difference in the way participants get to know about new brands from

influencers ($p < 0.05$). When it comes to email marketing, there is again a statistically significant difference in how participants may know about new brands ($p < 0.05$). F-statistic for email marketing is lower than the same for influencers. So, effect limit is smaller. When it comes to use of websites/blogs, they have different effectiveness and statistically significant difference in how participants may learn about new brands ($p < 0.05$). When it comes to traditional channels, there is statistically significant difference in how participants may learn about new brands using traditional channels ($p < 0.05$). However, significance level and F-statistic are very smaller than those of other mediums. It shows less impactful or weaker difference. Overall, influencers and social media suggest largest F-statistic, showing that they are most impactful channels among Gen Z for brand awareness. Hence, H1 is approved, i.e., online communication channels are significantly better than traditional channels of communication for increasing brand awareness among Gen Z (Table 14).

Table 14: ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
How likely are you to know about new brands through social media?	Between Groups	284.330	16	17.771	16.049	.000
	Within Groups	479.448	433	1.107		
	Total	763.778	449			
How likely are you to know about new brands through influencers?	Between Groups	201.289	16	12.581	11.545	.000
	Within Groups	471.842	433	1.090		
	Total	673.131	449			
How likely are you to know about new brands through email marketing?	Between Groups	91.958	16	5.747	6.718	.000
	Within Groups	370.462	433	.856		
	Total	462.420	449			
How likely are you to know about new brands through website/blogs?	Between Groups	267.170	16	16.698	13.246	.000
	Within Groups	545.827	433	1.261		
	Total	812.998	449			
How likely are you to know about new brands through traditional channels?	Between Groups	42.978	16	2.686	1.689	.046
	Within Groups	688.446	433	1.590		
	Total	731.424	449			

When it comes to test H2, i.e., Using communication channels has significant impact on improving brand awareness among Gen Z consumers, multivariate regression analysis (MVA) was performed. Communication strategies like content type, engagement, and frequency of communications are considered independent variables and brand awareness is considered dependent variable. Roy's

Largest Root ($p = 0.002$) is significant, which suggests that there is a statistically significant impact of communication channels which are used for engagement on at least one dependent variable. When looking at significance value, Pillai's Trace has 0.05, Wilks' Lambda has 0.951, Hotelling's Trace has 0.05, and Roy's Largest Root is 0.04. Hence, there is no significant impact of interaction between

engagement with a brand and communication channels. Overall, the interaction was statistically non-significant between “brand awareness” and “communication channels”. It shows how participants engage with brands doesn't vary

drastically as per the communication channels (Table 15). Hence, H2 is disapproved and There is no significant impact of communication channels on brand awareness among Gen Z consumers.

Table 15: Multivariate Tests^a

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.963	2297.512 ^b	5.000	439.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.037	2297.512 ^b	5.000	439.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	26.168	2297.512 ^b	5.000	439.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	26.168	2297.512 ^b	5.000	439.000	.000
Brand Awareness	Pillai's Trace	.022	.659	15.000	1323.000	.826
	Wilks' Lambda	.978	.658	15.000	1212.287	.827
	Hotelling's Trace	.022	.656	15.000	1313.000	.829
	Roy's Largest Root	.012	1.101 ^c	5.000	441.000	.359
Communication Channels	Pillai's Trace	.050	1.483	15.000	1323.000	.104
	Wilks' Lambda	.951	1.492	15.000	1212.287	.100
	Hotelling's Trace	.051	1.500	15.000	1313.000	.097
	Roy's Largest Root	.043	3.768 ^c	5.000	441.000	.002
Brand Awareness * Communication Channels	Pillai's Trace	.000	. ^b	.000	.000	.
	Wilks' Lambda	1.000	. ^b	.000	441.000	.
	Hotelling's Trace	.000	. ^b	.000	2.000	.
	Roy's Largest Root	.000	.000 ^b	5.000	438.000	1.000

a) How do you engage with a brand once you discover them? Which communication channels are used most widely for engagement with brands? How do you engage with a brand once you discover them? * Which communication channels are used most widely for engagement with brands? b) Exact statistic c) The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, social media and influencer marketing are found to be most widely used channels of communications for marketing to attract Gen Z consumers, according to 71% of participants. When it comes to brand discovery, influencers and social media are the most widely used sources by majority of Gen Z consumers. On the other hand, blogs/websites and email marketing were found to be less effective for the brands to attract Gen Z consumers, as they mostly use social media all the time. In addition, Gen Z preferred live streams and memes to get to know about the brands through social media as compared to short stories and reels/shorts.

After discovery of brands, most Gen Z consumers follow them on social media and consume content related to them, instead of trying their products or services (20%) and checking their websites (14%). Hence, brands should go for posting regular updates on social media as 77% of Gen Z consumers found it very/extremely effective. In addition, they can try sponsor ads, as they are effective according to 66% participants. However, blogs/videos and email marketing were found less impactful. It is also observed that whopping 94% Gen Z consumers are more likely to recommend brands to others when they discover them on social media.

Hence, social media and influencers have highest engagement rate in this day and age, as compared to blogs/websites (50%), traditional media (10%), and email marketing (25%). When it comes to build trust, reviews/testimonials are found to be most trusted form of communication by 44% participants, as compared to influencers (29%), ads (4%), and social media content (23%). Online communication channels (influencers and social media) are found to be significantly better than traditional channels for brand awareness ($p < 0.05$). However, there is no significant interaction among engagement methods and communication channels on brand awareness. It means communication channels are not enough to significantly affect brand awareness.

To conclude, social media and influencers are the most dominant channels for brand discovery, brand engagement, and building trust among Gen Z consumers. Email marketing and traditional channels play limited role in building brand engagement and awareness. When it comes to brand communication, Gen Z favors relatable memes and live streams and user-generated content like testimonials and reviews play a vital role in building trust, rather than influencers and social media posts by brands.

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