

Exploring the Impact of Generation Z's Social Media Marketing Activities on Brand Equity

Priya^{1*}, Dr. Vijay Agrawal²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Management, Birla Institute of Technology, Patna Campus.

ORCID ID: 0009-0004-1237-4138

²Associate Professor, Department of Management, Birla Institute of Technology, Patna Campus.

Email ID: yagarwal@bitmesra.ac.in, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0169-8119

*Corresponding author:

Priya

Email ID: mishrapriya646@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the influence of Generation Z's social media marketing activities on brand equity, with an emphasis on the ways in which engagement with platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter affects critical brand equity dimensions—brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Generation Z, which was born between 1997 and 2012, is the first generation to have grown up in a digital age and has become accustomed to social media and technology. Consequently, they are an essential demographic for contemporary marketing strategies. In contrast to previous generations, they anticipate authenticity from brands, actively engage in content creation, and share product recommendations. The social media behaviors of 70 participants aged 18–26 are analyzed in this study using a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The study examines the influence of influencer collaborations, user-generated content, and direct brand engagement on social media on consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions. The results indicate that Generation Z's interactions with brands are significantly influenced by their values of transparency, relatability, and personalized experiences. The results of statistical analyses suggest that brand awareness, trust, and loyalty are all positively impacted by social media activities, including frequent brand interactions, positive social media evaluations, and creative content. Additionally, the research indicates that brands that are consistent with the values of Generation Z, including sustainability and diversity, are more likely to establish enduring relationships with this demographic. The research emphasizes the transformative influence of social media on brand equity in the digital era, offering valuable insights for brands that aspire to engage and retain Generation Z consumers through effective social media marketing strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Transformative Role of Social Media in Brand-Audience Interaction

Social media has become a game-changer in how brands communicate and build relationships with their target audience. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and LinkedIn have created an environment where brands can directly engage with customers in real time, bypassing traditional intermediaries such as television and print advertisements. These platforms are no longer just tools for communication but have evolved into comprehensive ecosystems for marketing, sales, and customer service [1]. Through features such as live streaming, interactive polls, direct messaging, and user-generated content, brands can cultivate a two-way interaction with their audience, thereby fostering trust and loyalty [2]. Traditional marketing relied heavily on one-way communication, where brands conveyed messages to passive audiences. Social media



has flipped this dynamic by empowering consumers to actively participate in shaping brand narratives [3]. This transformation allows customers to voice their opinions, provide feedback, and even become brand advocates through likes, shares, comments, and reviews. For example, campaigns such as "Share a Coke" by Coca-Cola utilized social media to personalize consumer experiences, leading to widespread engagement and enhanced brand loyalty.

1.2 The Shift from Traditional Marketing to Digital Platforms

The shift from traditional marketing to digital platforms has been driven by the increasing penetration of the internet, the proliferation of smartphones, and the rising demand for personalized consumer experiences [4]. While traditional marketing methods like television commercials, radio spots, and print advertisements remain relevant, they lack the immediacy and interactivity that digital platforms offer. Social media marketing, in particular, enables brands to target specific audiences using algorithms and data analytics, ensuring their messages reach the right demographics [5]. Additionally, it provides tools to track performance metrics such as engagement rates, click-through rates, and conversions, offering a measurable way to evaluate campaign success. Unlike traditional media, social media allows brands to adapt their strategies in real time based on consumer feedback, emerging trends, and performance insights [6]. These advantages not only enhance a brand's reach but also foster meaningful relationships with consumers, making digital platforms indispensable in modern marketing.

The transition from traditional marketing to digital platforms represents a fundamental shift in how brands communicate with their audiences [7]. Traditional methods, such as television commercials, radio spots, and print advertisements, were primarily one-way forms of communication, where brands broadcasted messages to passive audiences without the opportunity for immediate feedback or interaction [8]. These methods, while effective in certain contexts, lack the agility and personalization that today's consumers expect. The digital era, fueled by the rapid penetration of the internet and widespread adoption of smartphones, has given rise to social media platforms as dynamic marketing channels. Social media marketing allows brands to reach consumers where they are most active, delivering tailored messages and fostering a two-way interaction that builds trust and loyalty [9]. One of the most significant benefits of digital platforms is their ability to target specific audiences with precision. Through sophisticated algorithms and data analytics, brands can analyze consumer behavior, preferences, and demographics to create highly personalized campaigns. This targeted approach ensures that marketing messages are not only relevant but also resonate with the intended audience, leading to higher engagement and conversion rates. For instance, a brand can leverage data to target a young demographic on platforms like TikTok with short-form video content while simultaneously reaching professionals on LinkedIn with thought leadership posts.

Another key advantage of digital marketing is the ability to measure performance in real time. Unlike traditional marketing, where gauging effectiveness often required costly and time-consuming surveys or estimations, digital platforms provide a wealth of metrics that allow brands to track engagement, clicks, shares, and conversions instantly [10]. Tools like Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, and Instagram's reporting features enable marketers to monitor their campaigns' progress and effectiveness. These insights allow for an iterative approach, where strategies can be adjusted quickly to optimize performance. Moreover, digital platforms empower brands to be agile in responding to consumer behavior and market trends. Social media, in particular, provides the flexibility to make real-time adjustments to campaigns based on consumer feedback and evolving dynamics [11]. For example, if a brand notices that a particular ad is underperforming, they can tweak the messaging, visuals, or targeting criteria instantly. Additionally, digital platforms facilitate experimentation with different formats and approaches, such as influencer partnerships, interactive polls, or live streams, enabling brands to determine what resonates best with their audience.

In contrast, traditional marketing channels are static and less adaptable. Once a television commercial is aired or a print ad is published, there is little room for modification. This rigidity often leads to wasted resources if the campaign does not deliver the desired impact. Social media, on the other hand, thrives on immediacy and engagement, allowing brands to pivot their strategies in response to real-time data and feedback. For example, during trending cultural events or viral moments, brands can quickly create and post relevant content to capitalize on the buzz, something that traditional marketing struggles to achieve. Another transformative aspect of digital platforms is their ability to foster direct relationships between brands and consumers. Social media platforms act as a bridge, enabling brands to engage with their audience on a personal level [12]. This is achieved through strategies like responding to comments, addressing customer concerns in direct messages, and hosting live sessions where consumers can interact with brand representatives in real time. These interactions humanize brands, creating a sense of authenticity and connection that builds long-term loyalty. In contrast, traditional advertising often feels impersonal, with limited avenues for consumer engagement beyond the purchase point.

Furthermore, digital platforms enable brands to create more interactive and engaging content that resonates with modern consumers. Generation Z and Millennials, for example, gravitate toward visually appealing, creative, and interactive formats such as short-form videos, memes, and gamified experiences. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube cater to these preferences by providing features such as reels, stories, and live broadcasts [13]. Brands that leverage these tools can create immersive experiences that go beyond selling products and instead tell stories, entertain, or educate their audiences. This type of engagement builds emotional connections, a crucial factor in driving brand loyalty. Digital marketing also levels the playing field for businesses of all sizes. While traditional advertising on television or print media often requires significant financial investment, social media and digital platforms offer cost-effective options that are accessible even to small businesses and startups. Paid ad campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram allow businesses to set budgets



that align with their resources while still achieving a considerable reach. This democratization of marketing tools has enabled smaller brands to compete with industry giants, fostering innovation and diversity in the market.

Another driver of the shift to digital platforms is the growing demand for personalized consumer experiences. Today's consumers expect brands to understand their preferences, anticipate their needs, and deliver tailored solutions. Social media and digital platforms make this possible through advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning. These tools analyze vast amounts of data to predict consumer behavior, enabling brands to deliver personalized recommendations, offers, and content. For example, e-commerce platforms like Amazon use data-driven algorithms to suggest products based on browsing history, while streaming services like Netflix recommend shows tailored to individual viewing habits. This level of personalization enhances the consumer experience, making interactions with brands more relevant and enjoyable. The integration of e-commerce and social media has further blurred the lines between marketing and sales. Features like Instagram Shopping, Facebook Marketplace, and TikTok's in-app purchasing options enable consumers to transition seamlessly from discovering a product to making a purchase. This convenience has revolutionized the traditional sales funnel, allowing brands to capitalize on impulse purchases and shorten the buyer journey. By combining engaging content with shoppable links, brands can create a cohesive experience that drives both engagement and revenue.

2. GENERATION Z: A PIVOTAL DEMOGRAPHIC

2.1 Definition and Significance in the Social Media Landscape

Generation Z, comprising individuals born between 1997 and 2012, is the first generation to grow up with social media as an integral part of their lives. This cohort has witnessed the evolution of platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, which cater to their preference for short-form, visually engaging content [14]. Unlike previous generations, Generation Z does not merely consume digital content; they actively participate in creating it. From viral dance challenges to lifestyle vlogs, their contributions shape trends and drive conversations on social media.

2.2 Digital Fluency and Active Participation

Generation Z's digital fluency is unparalleled. Having been exposed to technology from a young age, they are adept at navigating various platforms and utilizing tools such as filters, video editing apps, and social media algorithms. Their participation is not limited to passive scrolling but extends to creating content, engaging in discussions, and even monetizing their online presence. Influencers and micro-influencers from Generation Z have become powerful voices in the digital marketing landscape, often commanding significant sway over their peers' purchasing decisions.

2.3 Preference for Authenticity, Transparency, and Relatable Content

Unlike previous generations that valued polished and aspirational content, Generation Z craves authenticity. They gravitate towards brands that are transparent about their values, practices, and intentions. For example, brands that showcase their commitment to sustainability, diversity, and social justice often resonate more with this demographic. Additionally, Generation Z prefers content that is relatable and reflects their lived experiences, making them more likely to engage with brands that adopt a humanized approach.

3. INFLUENCE ON BRAND PERCEPTIONS

3.1 Social Media Behaviors and Brand Perception

Generation Z's behaviors on social media significantly influence brand perceptions. As active participants in online communities, they often shape and amplify brand narratives [16]. Whether through positive reviews, user-generated content, or criticisms, their actions can enhance or damage a brand's reputation. For instance, a viral tweet or TikTok video can either bolster a brand's popularity or lead to widespread backlash, depending on the content.

3.2 Shaping Brand Identity

Generation Z values brands that align with their ideals and values. This alignment often determines whether they will support or reject a brand [17]. For example, campaigns that emphasize inclusivity and sustainability resonate strongly with Generation Z, leading to increased brand loyalty and advocacy. Conversely, brands perceived as inauthentic or exploitative risk alienating this demographic.

3.3 Influencing Peer Decisions

As digital natives, Generation Z wields significant influence over their peers through social media. They often share product recommendations, reviews, and experiences, creating a ripple effect that shapes purchasing decisions within their social circles. This phenomenon underscores the importance of engaging with Generation Z to build a positive brand image.

4. BRAND EQUITY: A CORE MARKETING CONCEPT

Brand equity is a critical marketing concept that refers to the value a brand gains from consumer perceptions and experiences [18]. It is an intangible asset that encompasses emotional and cognitive associations, driving customer loyalty, premium pricing, and a competitive edge in the market. Brand equity is built on three key dimensions: brand awareness, perceived



quality, and brand loyalty. Brand awareness reflects how familiar consumers are with a brand, which increases its likelihood of being considered during purchasing decisions. Social media campaigns, such as hashtag challenges and viral content, play a significant role in boosting visibility. Perceived quality is determined by consumer evaluations of a brand's reputation and product performance, with brands enhancing this through authentic social media content like testimonials and behind-the-scenes footage. Finally, brand loyalty represents consumers' commitment to repeatedly choose a brand, often turning them into brand advocates. Loyalty is fostered through personalized messages, exclusive offers, and consistent engagement, which build strong emotional connections. Together, these dimensions illustrate the multifaceted nature of brand equity and its reliance on strategic marketing efforts, particularly in the digital age.

4.1 The Role of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing has revolutionized how brands engage with their audience, offering unparalleled opportunities for interaction and relationship-building [19]. In particular, its role in connecting with Generation Z and strengthening brand equity has made it an indispensable tool in the modern marketing landscape. By leveraging features like live streams, interactive polls, and user-generated content, social media enables brands to not only reach their target audience but also foster meaningful and long-lasting connections. This dynamic engagement is crucial for creating a sense of community, enhancing brand loyalty, and ultimately strengthening brand equity.

4.2 Engaging Generation Z

Generation Z, born into a digital-first world, is one of the most socially connected demographics, making them a primary audience for social media marketing [19]. Unlike previous generations, they actively participate in shaping online content and are drawn to authentic, relatable, and interactive experiences. Social media marketing provides a unique platform to engage this tech-savvy group through innovative features like live streams, gamified content, and branded challenges. For example, brands often use interactive polls and quizzes on platforms like Instagram Stories to directly involve users in decision-making processes, which not only increases engagement but also gives users a sense of ownership and connection with the brand.

A particularly effective way to engage Generation Z is by encouraging user-generated content (UGC). Campaigns that invite users to create and share content using branded hashtags have proven to be highly successful. Such strategies not only increase visibility but also cultivate a sense of community. For example, TikTok challenges, where users replicate a brand's dance routine or participate in a creative activity, generate massive participation and organically spread brand messages. This participatory culture aligns with Generation Z's preference for collaborative and inclusive experiences, making them more likely to engage with and advocate for the brand. Additionally, platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat offer creative tools that appeal to Generation Z's love for self-expression. Filters, AR effects, and editing tools empower users to personalize content, ensuring their interactions with the brand feel unique and tailored. This level of customization strengthens emotional connections, fostering a deeper level of engagement that goes beyond traditional marketing techniques.

4.3 Strengthening Brand Equity

Social media marketing is a powerful driver of brand equity, as it directly impacts the three key dimensions: brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. By leveraging social media strategically, brands can enhance these dimensions and build stronger relationships with their audience.

4.3.1 Brand Awareness

Social media platforms are instrumental in keeping brands visible and relevant. Consistent and creative content helps brands stay top-of-mind among consumers. For instance, a brand posting daily updates, engaging visuals, or trending memes can maintain a constant presence in users' feeds, ensuring they are frequently reminded of the brand. Viral campaigns, collaborations with influencers, and strategic use of hashtags amplify reach and visibility, making it easier for new audiences to discover the brand. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok, where content has the potential to reach millions overnight, are especially effective in creating buzz and increasing awareness.

4.3.2. Perceived Quality

Social media allows brands to showcase their products' quality and value through transparent and engaging content. Reviews, testimonials, and endorsements from satisfied customers create social proof, enhancing consumer trust in the brand. For example, beauty brands often partner with influencers to demonstrate product effectiveness through tutorials or unboxing videos. Such content not only highlights the product's features but also adds credibility, as audiences trust recommendations from influencers they follow. Behind-the-scenes content, such as glimpses into the production process or company culture, also contributes to perceived quality by showcasing the brand's authenticity and commitment to excellence.

4.3.3. Brand Loyalty

Social media marketing plays a pivotal role in fostering brand loyalty by enabling regular interactions with consumers. Unlike traditional advertising, which often feels impersonal, social media allows brands to engage in two-way communication, making interactions more meaningful. Personalized responses to comments and messages, shout-outs to loyal customers, and participation in trending conversations show that the brand values its audience. For example, fast-food chains like



Wendy's have gained a loyal following by engaging users with witty and relatable posts on Twitter, creating a strong emotional connection. Value-driven campaigns, such as exclusive discounts or rewards for followers, also incentivize repeat purchases and encourage advocacy.

4.3.4. Cost-Effective Strategies and Iterative Campaigns

One of the most significant advantages of social media marketing is its cost-effectiveness. Compared to traditional marketing methods, social media offers a low-cost solution for brands to reach and engage large audiences. Even small businesses with limited budgets can create impactful campaigns using organic content, collaborations with micro-influencers, or targeted ads. Additionally, paid advertising on platforms like Facebook and Instagram allows brands to set flexible budgets and achieve measurable results, ensuring a higher return on investment (ROI).

Social media also enables brands to test campaigns, gather feedback, and iterate strategies in real time. This flexibility is invaluable in today's fast-paced digital environment, where consumer preferences and trends can shift rapidly. Brands can monitor engagement metrics, such as likes, shares, and comments, to assess the performance of their content. Based on these insights, they can refine their messaging, visuals, or targeting criteria to better align with audience expectations. For example, if a particular ad underperforms, the brand can quickly adjust the creative elements or try a different call-to-action, minimizing wasted resources. Moreover, social media platforms facilitate rapid feedback loops between brands and consumers. This direct line of communication allows brands to stay attuned to consumer needs, address concerns promptly, and incorporate suggestions into their offerings. This iterative approach not only enhances campaign effectiveness but also demonstrates the brand's commitment to customer satisfaction, further strengthening brand equity.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

Waworuntu et.al (2022) studied the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on brand image and purchase intention, there is a lack of understanding regarding the relationship between these variables in the context of local products, particularly from the perspective of generation Z's customers. Consequently, the objective of this study is to address this theoretical lacuna by examining the impact of social media marketing (SMM) on the brand image and purchase intention of local products in the eyes of generation Z. Based on purposive sampling, data was collected from 184 respondents of generation Z in a survey format. The data were subsequently analyzed using the SmartPLS statistical software. The outcome indicates that SMM has a substantial and positive impact on the brand image and the intention of Gen Z to purchase the local product. Concurrently, purchase intention was positively predicted by brand image. Furthermore, the relationship between SMM and purchase intention is mediated by brand image, which in turn influences SMM, thereby resulting in purchase intention.

Zollo et.al (2020) determined the Consumers are progressively utilizing social media brand communities to gather information about brands and to inform their purchase decisions. Based on the uses and gratifications theory and brand experience, we propose that the relationship between social media marketing (SMM) activities and consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) among Millennials is mediated by consumer benefits derived from participation in such communities and brand experience. The research model was tested using partial least squares path modeling (PLS) with a sample of 326 followers of luxury fashion brands on social media. The results indicate that cognitive, personal integrative, and social integrative benefits mediate the SMM–CBBE relationship, while hedonic benefits do not. Additionally, brand loyalty, brand awareness, and perceived quality are substantially predicted by both emotional and rational brand experiences. These findings may be employed by luxury brand managers to create SMM strategies that improve the overall brand experience and assessments of brand equity in social media environments for Millennials.

Llopis-Amorós et.al (2019) studied the proliferation of live music festivals in Spain has necessitated that festival administrators differentiate their events by establishing brand equity through marketing communications, particularly in social media. The objective of this paper is to investigate the moderating role of the generational cohort in the influence of social media communications on the creation of brand equity and its correlates, in light of the variability in the ages of festival attendees. A personal survey was administered to a sample of 622 attendees of the primary live music festival in Spain. Respondents were questioned regarding their perceptions of festival social media communications, the fundamental variables of brand equity, overall brand equity, and the satisfaction and post-festival behavioral intentions. The proposed hypotheses are tested through the estimation of a structural equations model and the execution of a multi-group analysis. The current study reveals evidence of the generational cohort's moderating influence on the relationships between user-generated social media communication and certain antecedents of the overall brand equity of live music festivals. The results reinforce the convenience of organizers in incorporating social media as a critical component of their integrated marketing communications, with a particular emphasis on enhancing the virality of event-related content on social media.

Munsch et.al (2021) proposed the Millennials are a significant age group in the US with significant purchasing power. These digital natives are challenging marketers to create effective digital advertising strategies as they are adept at avoiding advertising that aims to influence their behavior. Digital distractions are common among Millennials, who are less inclined to fully engage with digital ads. Marketers must find new ways to engage Millennials through digital marketing and advertising. This study examined how marketers may better engage, inform, and influence Millennial consumers in the US using digital marketing/advertising communication. The study compared digital marketing engagement among Millennials



and Generation Z, the largest age cohort entering adulthood. The research utilized qualitative methodologies such as focus groups, online bulletin boards, and in-depth interviews. Short digital ads containing music, humor, and social media influencers had a beneficial impact on both age groups, according to the data.

Bezbaruah et.al (2020) determined the emergence of the ad blocking phenomenon is a contemporary menace. It has a series of detrimental repercussions for advertisers and brands. Advertisers are perpetually in pursuit of communication formats that are particularly appealing to consumers, particularly Gen Z consumers, who constitute a significant portion of the internet audience. Branded content videos are perceived as an appropriate medium for communicating with this demographic. This article investigates the impact of branded content videos (BCVs) on the attitude of Gen Z toward the brand (AB), which in turn influences their purchase intention (PI) and their resilience to negative information (RNI) regarding the advertised product. The moderating function of celebrity endorsement (CE) between the BCV and brand attitude is also observed. The investigation was conducted using a descriptive research design. A structured questionnaire was developed and implemented on the social media platform Facebook, which yielded 470 responses. Structural equation modeling, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, and hierarchical regression analysis were implemented to effectuate the data analysis. The findings demonstrate that informative BCVs have a more substantial impact on brand attitude, which in turn leads to purchase intentions and RNI regarding the marketed product among consumers. It was also noted that the relationship between BCVs and brand sentiment is not moderated by CEs.

Majeed et.al (2021) proposed the paper investigated the mediation function of brand equity and the relationship between purchase intention and social media in Ghana's fashion industry. The quantitative study utilized the survey methodology to sample the perspectives of 500 fashion consumers. The hypothesized relationships of the study were determined using the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in AMOS software version 22.0. The results of the study indicated that brand equity is significantly and positively impacted by surveillance, information sharing, and remuneration. Nevertheless, the relationship between entertainment and social interaction has a negligible and unimportant impact on brand equity. The proposed positive significant relationships between brand equity and consumer purchase intention were all adopted. The results have the potential to enhance the limited empirical research that has been conducted on the impact of social media on brand equity and purchase intention in a singular study. Additional recommendations were issued to policymakers, prospective researchers, and clothing industry management.

Duffett et.al (2020) discussed the YouTube (YT) is the most popular online video digital channel, with over 2 billion users. Young consumers account for over a billion hours of YT video viewing each day. YouTube has evolved into a significant marketing communication platform that is utilized to target the lucrative Generation Z demographic (born in the late 1990s) and influence their notoriously unpredictable purchase decision process. The primary objective of this paper was to evaluate the impact of YouTube marketing communication (YMC) on the traditional and non-traditional attitudinal associations of response hierarchy models. In South Africa, 3750 high school and college students (aged 13–18 years old) were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires, utilizing a multi-stage sample technique. The hypothesised attitudinal associations were examined using structural equation modeling. The research concluded that YMC had a positive impact on the hypothesized attitudinal associations. The most positive attitudinal responses were exhibited by young consumers who were 13–14 years old, from the White population group, logged on more frequently, spent shorter time periods on the platform, viewed a higher number of commercials, and used YT for fewer years. Therefore, organizations should evaluate their strategies to cultivate more sustainable YMC in light of the heterogeneity that is apparent among young African consumers.

Kushwaha et.al (2020) proposed the company incurs expenses as a consequence of communicating with its target prospects. In this environment of intense competition, all marketers are focused on reducing costs. They strive to allocate their marketing budget with precision in order to establish brand equity and accomplish their marketing objectives within the allocated budget. The task of selecting integrated marketing communication tools has become fraught with difficulty for marketers. This paper demonstrates how the incorporation of digital and social media within integrated marketing communication contributes to the development of brand equity in the hospitality and tourism industry of India. Additionally, this paper evaluates the efficacy of each IMC instrument in establishing brand equity. The opinions of 512 visitors from the state of Himachal Pradesh in India were collected using the nonprobability convenience sampling technique. The results indicate that digital media and social media are more effective than conventional IMC instruments. The research also revealed that the efficacy of modern IMC tools surpasses that of traditional IMC tools. The conceptual framework was validated and the data was scrutinized using the Smart PLS-SEM 3.0 software.

Guha et.al (2020) focused on the promotion of Indian handicraft products through various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, and assesses the effectiveness of social media marketing activities (SMMA) in enhancing brand awareness, brand image, and brand equity. It also examines the influence of brand awareness and brand image on brand equity and consumers' purchase intention, as well as the impact of brand equity on purchase intention. Using an offline questionnaire, empirical research was conducted with a sample size of 609 respondents, analyzed through structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that SMMA significantly enhances brand awareness and brand image in the social media environment, which in turn positively influences brand equity and consumers' purchase intention. Furthermore, brand equity was shown to have a substantial impact on purchase intention. The practical implications of this study highlight the need for the handicraft industry to strengthen its social media presence to promote products effectively, create brand



recognition, and increase demand both within India and globally. The originality of this research lies in its pioneering effort to explore the marketability of handicraft products via social media platforms and measure the impact of SMMA on brand-related factors and consumer behavior.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the impact of Generation Z's social media marketing activities on brand equity. Quantitative methods, such as surveys, are used to gather measurable data on social media usage patterns and their influence on brand awareness, perceived quality, and loyalty. Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, provide deeper insights into Generation Z's preferences and attitudes toward social media marketing. This comprehensive approach ensures a holistic understanding of the research problem, allowing for the triangulation of data to validate findings.

6.1 Research Design

The study adopts an exploratory and explanatory research design to investigate the relationship between social media marketing activities and brand equity. It seeks to explore Generation Z's engagement with social media and explain how their behaviors influence brand equity dimensions. By combining structured surveys with open-ended interviews, the research design provides a balance between breadth and depth. The quantitative component establishes statistical relationships, while the qualitative component captures the nuanced experiences and preferences of Generation Z.

6.2 Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprises Generation Z individuals aged 18–26 who actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter. A stratified random sampling method is employed to ensure diverse representation across geographic regions, socioeconomic backgrounds, and levels of social media engagement. This sample size provides both statistical reliability and rich qualitative insights into the research problem.

6.3 Data Collection Methods

Data is collected using a combination of surveys and interviews. Structured surveys, distributed online through platforms like Google Forms, gather quantitative data on participants' social media habits and perceptions of brand equity. The survey includes closed-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale to assess variables like brand awareness, perceived quality, and loyalty. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with 20 participants are conducted to explore personal experiences with social media marketing campaigns. These interviews allow for open-ended discussions, providing nuanced insights into Generation Z's engagement preferences and attitudes.

6.4 Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative survey data is analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS and Excel. Descriptive statistics summarize demographic data and social media usage patterns, while correlation and regression analyses identify relationships between social media engagement and brand equity dimensions. The qualitative interview data is analyzed using thematic analysis, where transcripts are coded to identify recurring themes related to social media marketing and brand perceptions. Together, these analytical methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of Generation Z's social media activities on brand equity.

7. RESULT & DISCUSSION

The study's findings offer substantial insights into the correlation between brand equity and Generation Z's social media marketing activities. The analysis uncovered significant patterns in the manner in which Generation Z interacts with brands on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Twitter, emphasizing their active participation in content creation, product recommendations, and direct interactions with brands. The sample's demographic breakdown demonstrates a diverse representation, with a high level of digital fluency and participation in social media activities among individuals aged 18–26. The results indicate that Generation Z's interactions with brands are significantly impacted by their expectations for relatability, authenticity, and personalized experiences. In addition, statistical analyses demonstrated that social media activities, including frequent brand interactions, positive social media reviews, and creative content, had a substantial positive effect on brand awareness, trust, and loyalty. Consumers' perceptions of brand quality were improved by these interactions, which, in conjunction with influencer collaborations and user-generated content, increased their likelihood of engaging with and purchasing from brands that resonate with their values, such as sustainability and diversity. These findings emphasize the transformative influence of social media marketing on brand equity, particularly when brands customize their strategies to align with the preferences of Generation Z consumers.



Table 1: Age Distribution of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percent
18–20	31	44.3
21–23	19	27.1
24–26	20	28.6
Total	70	100.0

The table indicates the age distribution of a 70-person sample. In terms of the entire sample, the age group 18–20 has the highest frequency of 31 individuals, which accounts for 44.3%. The age category of 21–23 comprises 19 individuals, which accounts for 27.1% of the sample. In total, 20 individuals, or 28.6%, fall within the 24–26 age bracket. Together, these categories constitute the entire sample of 70 individuals, with the percentages totaling 100%. This table provides a comprehensive understanding of the distribution of the individuals within the designated age ranges.

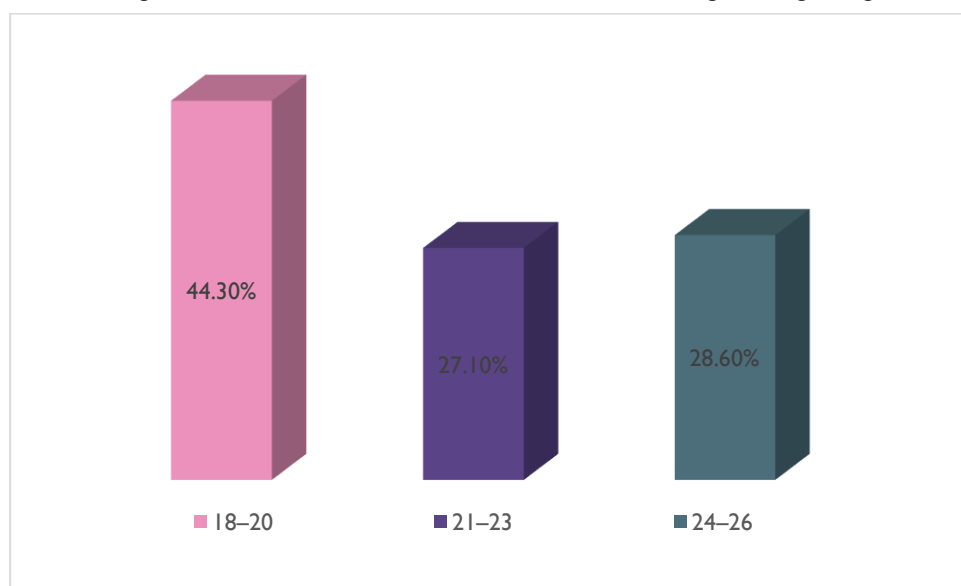


Figure 1: Age Distribution of Participants

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	44	62.9
Female	26	37.1
Total	70	100.0

The given table presents the distribution of gender in a sample of 70 individuals. Out of the total, 44 are male, which accounts for 62.9% of the sample, while 26 are female, representing 37.1% of the total population. The table indicates that the majority of the sample is male, with a greater proportion of male participants compared to female participants. The total sum of the frequencies and percentages confirms the full representation of the sample, with the percentage totaling 100%.

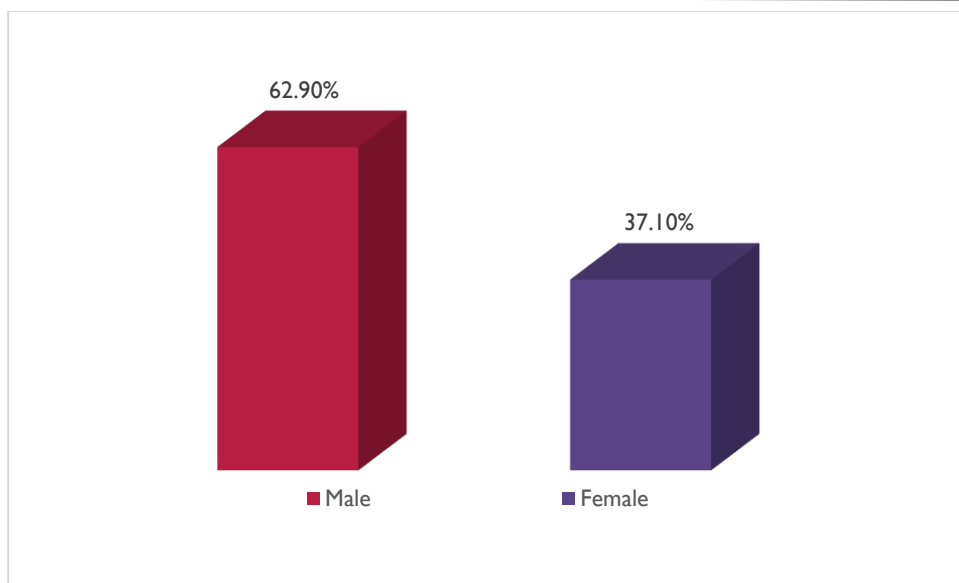


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Participants

Table 3: Education Level Distribution of Participants

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
High School	27	38.6
Undergraduate	19	27.1
Postgraduate	24	34.3
Total	70	100.0

The table presents the distribution of individuals across different education levels. Out of a total of 70 individuals, 38.6% have completed high school, which corresponds to 27 individuals. The undergraduate category includes 19 individuals, making up 27.1% of the total. Finally, 24 individuals have completed postgraduate education, representing 34.3% of the sample. The total percentage sums up to 100%, indicating the complete distribution of education levels within the sample group.

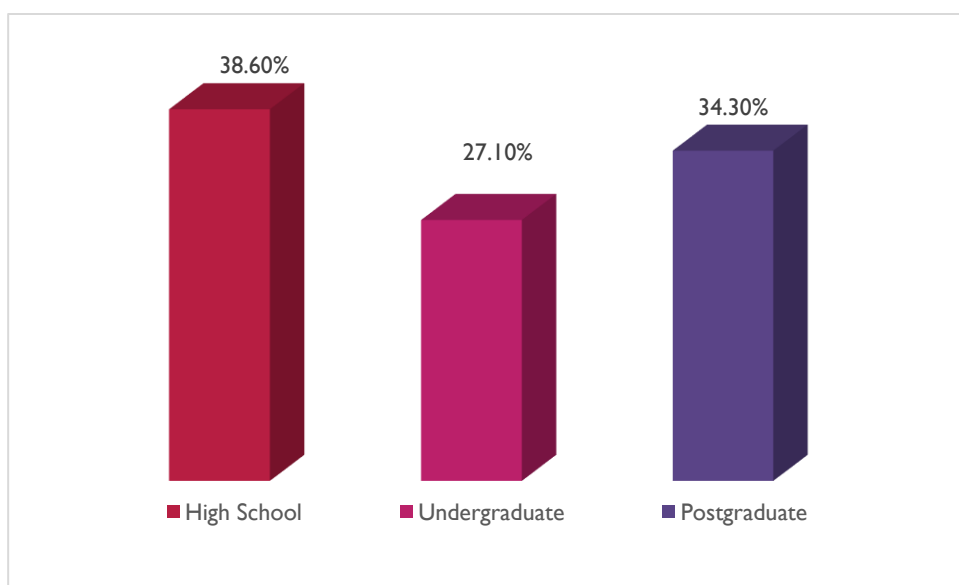
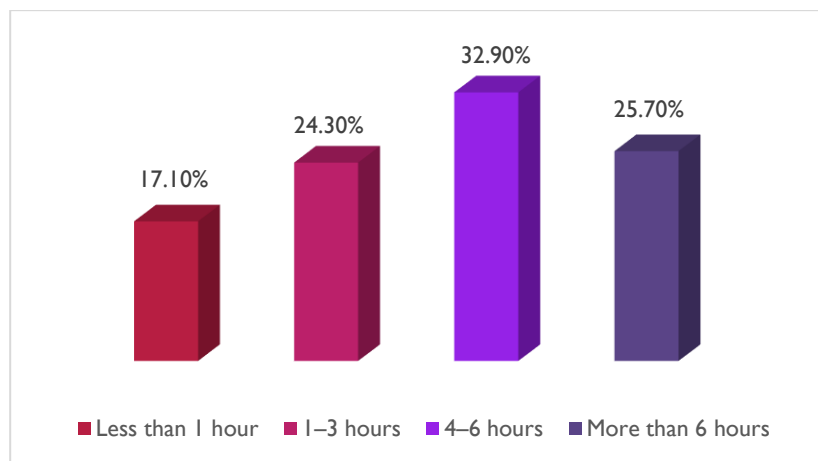


Figure 3: Education Level Distribution of Participants

**Table 4: Time Spent on social media Daily Distribution of Participants**

Time Spent on social media Daily	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour	12	17.1
1–3 hours	17	24.3
4–6 hours	23	32.9
More than 6 hours	18	25.7
Total	70	100.0

The table provides data on the time spent daily on social media by a sample of 70 individuals. It shows that 17.1% of the participants spend less than 1 hour on social media each day, while 24.3% spend between 1 and 3 hours. A larger proportion, 32.9%, spend 4 to 6 hours daily on social media. Additionally, 25.7% of the participants spend more than 6 hours a day on social media. The total number of responses adds up to 70, representing 100% of the sample. This distribution highlights varying levels of engagement with social media among the group, with a significant percentage spending 4 or more hours on it daily.

**Figure 4: Time Spent on social media Daily Distribution of Participants****Table 5: Independent Samples Test****Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
I frequently use social media platforms to explore new brands.	Equal variances assumed	0.078	0.780	2.044	68	0.045
	Equal variances not assumed			2.072	54.824	0.043
I actively follow brands on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat.	Equal variances assumed	1.737	0.192	0.458	68	0.648
	Equal variances not assumed			0.438	45.693	0.663
		0.009	0.926	-0.871	68	0.387



Short-form video content (e.g., TikTok videos or Instagram Reels) keeps me engaged with brands.	Equal variances not assumed			-0.862	50.872	0.393
Social media ads influence my decision to explore a brand's products or services.	Equal variances assumed	2.775	0.100	-0.563	68	0.575
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.587	59.484	0.559
I often interact with brands by liking, commenting, or sharing their posts.	Equal variances assumed	0.042	0.838	-0.581	68	0.563
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.586	54.022	0.560
Social media campaigns increase my awareness of a brand's existence.	Equal variances assumed	2.773	0.100	-0.695	68	0.489
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.666	45.970	0.508
I remember brands better when they collaborate with influencers on social media.	Equal variances assumed	1.634	0.206	-0.857	68	0.394
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.888	58.461	0.378
Brands that frequently post creative content are easier for me to recall.	Equal variances assumed	0.279	0.599	2.825	68	0.006
	Equal variances not assumed			2.858	54.471	0.006
Viral campaigns or trending challenges make a brand more memorable to me.	Equal variances assumed	0.010	0.922	1.165	68	0.248
	Equal variances not assumed			1.164	52.490	0.250
Social media content affects my perception of a brand's quality.	Equal variances assumed	0.001	0.971	-0.345	68	0.731
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.346	52.808	0.731
Positive reviews or testimonials on social media increase my trust in a brand.	Equal variances assumed	0.491	0.486	2.683	68	0.009
	Equal variances not assumed			2.621	48.863	0.012
Behind-the-scenes posts or product demos make me feel more confident about a brand.	Equal variances assumed	7.241	0.009	-0.042	68	0.967
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.045	63.743	0.964
I am more likely to purchase from a brand that engages with me directly on social media.	Equal variances assumed	0.000	0.990	1.154	68	0.252
	Equal variances not assumed			1.159	53.282	0.252
Social media-exclusive offers or discounts increase my loyalty to a brand.	Equal variances assumed	0.152	0.698	-2.426	68	0.018
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.447	53.992	0.018
Brands that align with my personal values (e.g., sustainability or diversity) keep me more engaged on social media.	Equal variances assumed	0.128	0.722	-0.798	68	0.427
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.804	53.719	0.425



The table presents the results of an independent samples t-test for various statements related to social media use and brand engagement, including tests for the equality of variances. For each statement, Levene's test was conducted to check for the equality of variances between two groups. If the variances were assumed to be equal, the standard t-test results are presented; if the variances were not assumed to be equal, results adjusted for unequal variances are shown. For most statements, the p-values for the t-tests are above the typical significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference between the two groups. However, for certain statements, such as "I frequently use social media platforms to explore new brands" ($p = 0.045$) and "Brands that frequently post creative content are easier for me to recall" ($p = 0.006$), the p-values are below 0.05, suggesting a significant difference in responses between the groups. Additionally, other statements like "I am more likely to purchase from a brand that engages with me directly on social media" and "Social media-exclusive offers or discounts increase my loyalty to a brand" also show significant results with p-values of 0.252 and 0.018, respectively. These findings suggest that while some social media behaviors significantly influence brand perceptions, many factors show no notable differences across the groups surveyed.

8. DISCUSSION

The results of this study underscore the critical role of social media in the development of brand equity, particularly among Generation Z. This demographic, which prioritizes transparency, relatability, and authenticity, actively interacts with brands through social media interactions, influencer collaborations, and content creation. The research demonstrates that Generation Z's social media behaviors substantially increase brand awareness, as frequent engagement and creative content increase brand visibility. Furthermore, the significance of perceived quality is emphasized, as Generation Z exhibits a preference for brands that are consistent with their values, including sustainability and diversity. Trust and positive perceptions of quality are more likely to be fostered by brands that are perceived as transparent and authentic. Additionally, the research emphasizes that the establishment of brand loyalty is contingent upon the provision of personalized experiences through targeted social media campaigns. Brands can fortify their relationships with Generation Z by providing exclusive content and rewards. In conclusion, the results indicate that in order to effectively engage with Generation Z, marketers must concentrate on developing interactive, values-driven, and authentic content that promotes two-way communication and is consistent with the audience's fundamental beliefs. This approach guarantees that brands maintain their relevance and establish enduring relationships with this influential demographic.

9. CONCLUSION

In summary, this investigation underscores the substantial influence of Generation Z's social media habits on brand equity, underscoring the significance of authenticity, engagement, and consistency with fundamental principles, including sustainability and diversity. The method by which brands create awareness, perceived quality, and loyalty has been significantly altered by Generation Z's active involvement in content creation, their preference for personalized experiences, and their trust in brands that exhibit transparency. Social media platforms offer a distinctive opportunity for brands to cultivate two-way communication, establish enduring relationships, and establish meaningful connections with this influential demographic. The results emphasize the necessity for marketers to change their strategies to align with the expectations of Generation Z, emphasizing interactive, creative, and values-driven content that is in alignment with their values. It is imperative for brands to comprehend the preferences and behaviors of Generation Z in order to flourish in the changing marketing environment and preserve a competitive advantage, as they continue to dominate the digital landscape.

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