



Social Media Marketing and Purchasing Decisions among Generation Z Consumers

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Abstract

This research identified the strategies enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to leverage social media to engage Generation Z consumers. Understanding how SMEs utilize social media and implement best practices is crucial for fostering business-to-consumer relationships. The study assessed the utilization of social media marketing, specifically electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), trust, and the level of purchasing decision factors (awareness, interest, desire, and action) among Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. The findings reveal that social media marketing, particularly eWOM, was fully utilized by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, indicating its significance in influencing their purchasing decisions. This research used a quantitative research design with a total of 380 respondents of Generation Z residing in Los Baños, Laguna. The instrument used was an adopted survey questionnaire already validated by the previous researcher, which is to be improved and validated by the adviser. This research provides valuable insights into the relationship between social media marketing and Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions. Understanding and leveraging these insights can help businesses engage with this influential consumer segment and drive business growth in the digital age.

Keywords: *Social Media; Marketing; Purchasing Decision; Generation Z*

INTRODUCTION

Businesses rely on technology nowadays. Significant changes have been brought about by technology, which also affects every element of how people communicate and how companies market their goods and services to gain market share. The Internet offers a variety of advantages that can assist in attracting a sizable number of potential and committed clients. Consumers use it for various purposes, including gathering data for online shopping. It is stated that online shopping is faster and safer. Online shopping is a quick process for people. However, analysts believe it will significantly rise since consumers feel comfortable and secure when shopping online and think their time savings would transform how people communicate (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have a lot of chances and benefits to social media marketing (SMM). SMEs must create a clear social media marketing plan that fits their corporate objectives and target market. When implementing SMM for SMEs, consistency, quality content, active involvement, and measuring key performance indicators were essential considerations.

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SMEs must create a clear social media marketing plan that fits their corporate objectives and target market. When implementing SMM for SMEs, consistency, quality content, active involvement, and measuring key performance indicators were essential considerations. According to the study by Hayes (2022), more than 80% of consumers say that social media, particularly influencer content, significantly impacts their purchasing decisions. As a result, marketers from various industries were advancing social media marketing (SMM) from a single tool to a multifaceted source of marketing intelligence for a growing and essential audience. Born between 1997 and 2012, Generation Z represents a distinct and important target population for social media marketing.

This study pinpointed the tactics that helped small- to medium-sized businesses (SMEs) use social media to engage customers. Understanding how small businesses utilize marketing strategies and social media best practices to help develop business-to-consumer relationships is crucial because the SME sector is significant in most economies. This research will tackle the relationship between the utilization of social media marketing and the level of purchasing decisions among SME owners and Generation Z consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital media, often known as online media, is a type of media on the Internet that is provided online. Internet media consists of two definitions. Any form or format of internet media is generally considered exclusively accessible online, comprising sound, video, photos, and text. The term "media" can refer to both offline and online communication. In light of this, email, mailing lists, WhatsApp, websites, blogs, and social media were all online media types.

Businesses were increasingly aiming to use social media platforms to engage with various stakeholders as top-level strategy increasingly involves plans to develop a presence on these sites. To increase the commercial impact of Indian small and medium-sized firms, this study aims to identify the factors that would motivate them to employ social media marketing techniques. The usage of SMM by SMEs has a significant impact on improving their business outcomes. SMEs were considered to be a substantial source of new employment. SMEs were seen as powerful forces in the battle against poverty since they were significant revenue sources for low- and middle-income countries worldwide. The success of SMEs is essential for the overall growth of nations on a national and regional level (Chatterjee, Kar, & Gupta, 2018).

The first generation worldwide is Generation Z. They first notice globalization in their thought processes. When it comes to connecting with others or getting knowledge, Generation Z has no boundaries. Geographical boundaries were no longer a barrier for them because nearly everything could be obtained online, and communicating with individuals around the globe could be done quickly. Borders between people from various backgrounds were also removed by globalization. Therefore, Generation Z individuals have the freedom to experiment with multiple personas, sample a variety of hobbies, join new communities, and broaden their horizons, according to Sparks & Honey. Generation Z is linked online and is affected by the same factors. Because of technology and globalization, Generation Z is connected to various social networks online through diverse trends, Internet influencers, fashion, food, locations, and even their language and unique phrases and expressions.

According to Bradley (2020), eWOM had significant commercial influence because customers regard it as a reliable and objective source of product information. Numerous studies have examined how eWOM has affected the marketplace over the past 20 years. Word-of-mouth

advertising has always been effective because it allows satisfied customers to refer goods and services to their friends, relatives, and coworkers. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) could be even more effective in the social networking era. Positive messages on social media can be amplified, especially by "influencers"—those with a greater than average audience and reach on different websites and applications.

According to Robinson (2020), trust is the hope and conviction that other people's future behavior will be positive or, at the very least, neutral. There were various definitions of trust from the behavioral perspective in contrast to these definitions of trust in terms of emotion or psychological condition. According to Mishra (2020), trust is the readiness of one party to be open and vulnerable to another party because of the expectation that the other party is capable, honest, caring, and trustworthy.

Based on Carnesi's research (2023), businesses utilize social media to build their online reputations, increase brand awareness, and disseminate significant information about their ventures. But far too frequently, this process is a one-sided struggle. Utilizing any social networking site, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, and others, should involve engaging followers actively. This not only improves a company's visibility but also its relationships with both present and potential clients. The most underused social networking platform tool is conversation. Companies publish frequently and may even engage viewers in chat, but they rarely demonstrate a sincere desire to learn from their followers.

In conclusion, variety has a vital role to play in globalization. Generation Z is growing up in a social system that is very non-traditional. They don't perceive good or evil, typical or atypical, in anything. They understand that there were many different racial, ethnic, and national origins and social and economic statuses among people. They accept a wide range of people, including those with different sexual orientations and gender identities. Therefore, getting the extraordinarily diverse globe is more than just a matter of tolerance; it is a way of thinking.

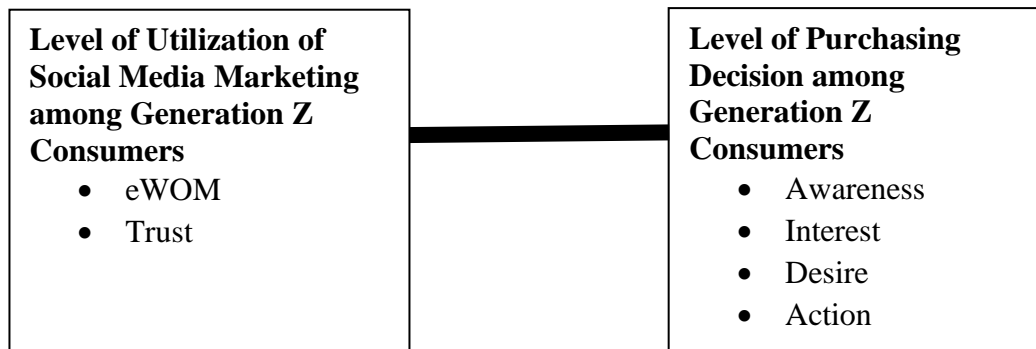


Figure 1. Research paradigm

The research paradigm, as seen in Figure 1, illustrates how the study took place. Building trust among consumers and eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) were two essential social media marketing functions. eWOM is the term used to describe the sharing of knowledge and views on goods, services, and brands over the Internet. Contrarily, trust has a significant role in shaping customer behavior and purchasing choices. Let's investigate the connection between trust, eWOM, and social media marketing. The four steps of a customer's journey to reaching a purchase decision were described by the AIDA model, a marketing framework. Every stage is a typical psychological process that customers go through.

In conclusion, social media marketing can effectively employ the AIDA model to influence and guide consumer behavior. By utilizing the AIDA model within social media marketing, marketers can effectively navigate users through attention, interest, desire, and action, resulting in heightened engagement, increased conversions, and overall support for company objectives. Through integrating eWOM, trust-building strategies, and the AIDA model, social media marketing can successfully lead customers through the decision-making process. Such a successful social media marketing campaign aims to attract attention through positive eWOM, establish trust through authentic communication, stimulate desire through captivating content, and prompt action through clear CTAs and trust-building techniques. Ultimately, this approach contributes to higher conversions and the advancement of business goals.

Hypothesis

The study tested the following null hypothesis at a 0.5 level of significance:

Ho: There was no significant relationship between the utilization level of Social Media Marketing and Purchasing Decisions among Generation Z consumers.

Table 1. Distribution of Generation Z consumers according to sex, age, and educational attainment

Sex	Total	Percentage
Male	206	54%
Female	160	42%
Prefer not Say	14	4%
Age		
11 to 13	52	14%
14 to 16	189	50%
17 to 19	44	12%
20 to 22	54	14%
23 to 25	41	11%
Educational Attainment		
College	107	28%
High School	267	70%
Elementary	6	2%

Sex

According to the conducted survey, there were more men (54%) than women (42%) in the population of Generation Z, and four percent (4%) of the consumers prefer not to declare their sexes in the municipality of Los Baños, Laguna.

Age

Most of the interviewed Generation Z consumers are 14 to 16 years old, followed by the age group of 20 to 22 years old. Given that Los Baños has a median age of 26, half of the city's residents were under 26, and the other half were over 26.

Educational Attainment

Based on the data gathered, most Generation Z interviewed were in high school or secondary education. 70% of the respondents came from high school, 20% from college or tertiary education, and 2% from elementary or primary-level education.

The main data-gathering instrument of this study was an adopted survey questionnaire that the previous researcher had already validated and was to be improved and validated by the adviser. The survey questionnaire is divided into three parts, which will gather the needed data by the problem statement. The first part of the questionnaire will consist of questions regarding the demographic profile of the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire will be about social media marketing, and the third part will be about the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers.

To determine the level of utilization of social media and level of purchasing decision among generation consumers, the following statistical limits with a 4-point Likert Scale, respectively, with their corresponding verbal interpretation is adopted for this study:

Assigned Points	Numerical Range	Categorical Response
4	3.25 – 4.00	Very High
3	2.50 – 3.24	High

2	1.75 – 2.49	Low
1	1.00 – 1.74	Very Low

Using Google Forms, the respondents' availability to complete the questionnaires was identified. Questionnaires were delivered after a discussion of the study with Generation Z customers. Also, hard copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents of small and medium enterprises. The questionnaire was immediately submitted to the researcher or returned after the respondents had completed answering it. The researcher then documented and tabulated the information and data acquired. To protect the privacy of the respondents, the study addressed specific ethical issues. These issues included consent and confidentiality. The researcher obtained the full consent of the respondents by explaining the necessary details and the aim of the study. The respondents voluntarily participated in the research and understood their role in completing it. The confidentiality of the respondents was ensured by not disclosing their names or other personal information in the research. Only relevant information needed to answer the specific research questions was included. The obtained data will be tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using the following statistical treatments applied to the study:

1. Frequency - This was used to compute the number of respondents who will participate in the study.
2. Weighted Mean and Likert Scale - These were used to determine the level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers.
3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient - This was used to determine the significant relationship between the level of utilization and Social Media Marketing and purchasing decisions among Generation Z consumers.

METHODOLOGY

This research study utilized quantitative methods and employed a descriptive correlational research approach to examine the relationship between the level of purchasing decisions and the utilization of Social Media Marketing among Generation Z consumers. Descriptive correlational research involves evaluating and analyzing data to understand existing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, perceptions, trends, and cause-effect relationships. Significantly, this research approach did not alter the environment and could involve a one-time interaction with groups of people or a longitudinal study tracking individuals over time (Bhandari, 2022). It was chosen to analyze and interpret the study's results. The research design involved using surveys to collect necessary information. It utilized the gathered data to propose interventions for enhancing the company's existing program or developing a new one.

The respondents in this study were Generation Z consumers and Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The total number of Generation Z in the Philippines is 31,183, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020). Therefore, the sample size for this study is 380. The researcher will randomly choose the respondents to obtain more objective results. The respondents were selected regardless of gender, age, or educational attainment. The researcher will use a survey to collect data from the respondents. The survey will ask about the respondents' shopping habits, attitudes towards SMEs, and willingness to support SMEs. The researcher expects that the findings of this study will be helpful for SMEs in understanding the needs and wants of Generation Z consumers. The results will also help SMEs to develop strategies to attract and retain Generation Z customers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Following their investigation, analysis, and data gathering, the researchers concluded that social media marketing tactics directly impacted customer purchasing behavior, particularly among Filipinos. Social media is a phenomenon because it has altered how people interact and behave. It changed from a communication medium to a marketing channel that aids companies in promoting and advertising their goods. But as more people use social media, they unknowingly change their purchase habits due to becoming dependent on it or addicted to it.

Problem Number 1. What is the level of utilization of social media marketing as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of eWOM and Trust?

The table that follows provides the findings on the problem stated above.

Table 2. Level of utilization of social media marketing as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of eWOM

Indicators in terms of eWOM	\bar{X}	VI
1. Use of social media every day.	3.79	FU
2. Read opinions and product feedback seen through social media accounts and pages before purchasing it.	3.58	FU
3. Use of social media during free time.	3.93	FU
4. Feel curious about a particular product of service when seeing their advertisement online.	3.02	U
5. Consider availing of a product or service that a friend shares and recommends online.	2.96	U
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	3.45	FU

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Fully Utilized (FU) 1.75 – 2.49 Partially Utilized (PU)
 2.50 – 3.24 Utilized (U) 1.00 – 1.74 Not Utilized (NU)

The level of utilization of social media marketing as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) had a general assessment of **3.45**, which was verbally interpreted as **Fully Utilized**. Therefore, Generation Z consumers in Los Baños Laguna fully utilized social media marketing regarding eWOM. The question of usage on social media during free time had the highest computed mean of **3.93**, which is verbally interpreted as **Fully Utilized**, followed by the use of social media every day with a mean of **3.60** and verbally interpreted as **Fully Utilized** as well, while considering availing products or service recommended by friends and online gained the lowest mean of **2.96** or verbally interpreted as **Utilized**. The reading of opinions and product feedback gained a mean of **3.58** and was verbally interpreted as **fully utilized** while being curious about the product when seeing the advertisement online gained a mean of **3.02** or was verbally interpreted as **utilized**.

Social media websites have created valuable opportunities for electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) conversations. People could now discuss brands' products and services with friends and acquaintances. According to Bradley (2020), eWOM had significant commercial influence because customers regard it as a reliable and objective source of product information. Numerous studies have examined how eWOM has affected the marketplace over the past 20 years. Word-of-mouth advertising has always been effective because it allows satisfied customers to refer goods and services to their friends, relatives, and coworkers. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) could be even more effective in the social networking era. Positive messages on social media can be amplified, especially by "influencers"—those with a greater than average audience and reach on different websites and applications.

Table 3. Level of utilization of social media marketing as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of trust

Indicators in terms of Trust		\bar{X}	VI
1.	Downloads online shopping applications that can be seen on social media, which can help with purchases.	2.96	U
2.	Trusts social media platforms and promotions	3.06	U
3.	I use social media during my free time.	2.84	U
4.	Consumers usually purchase products that are recommended by social media influencers.	3.93	FU
5.	Finds online advertisements informative, and it helps with what to purchase	3.14	U
GENERAL ASSESSMENT		3.19	U

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Fully Utilized (FU) 1.75 – 2.49 Partially Utilized (PU)
 2.50 – 3.24 Utilized (U) 1.00 – 1.74 Not Utilized (NU)

The level of utilization of social media marketing as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of trust. The general assessment gained a mean of **3.19**, verbally interpreted as **Utilized**. This means that Social Media Marketing in terms of trust is fully utilized as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. The highest indicator was "Consumers usually purchase products recommended by social media influencers," which gained a mean of **3.93** and was verbally interpreted as **Fully Utilized**. Based on the indicator, genZ trusts social media, especially when a known influencer advertises or promotes the product to them. The indicator "I" also gained the same mean as the first one finds online advertisements informative and helps me with what I am going to purchase," earned a mean of **3.14** and was verbally interpreted as **Utilized**. That said, genZ trusts social media at a very high level since they were born in the digital era. They were more familiar with how the social media works. It can effectively promote or advertise products or services that lead to the business's target market or audience.

Gen Z, also known as Zoomers, were born between 1997 and 2012 and have never known a world without the Internet, according to Memon (2021). Trust is taking chances and picking a course of action despite the danger that others could lose out.

Problem Number 2. What is the level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action?

Table 4. Level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of awareness

Indicators in terms of Awareness		\bar{X}	VI
1.	Social media have an impact on the intention of consumers to purchase	3.27	VH
2.	Popular products online were attractive to the eyes of consumers	3.23	H
3.	I find online advertisements informative, and they help me with what I am going to purchase	3.11	H
4.	Online advertisements are helpful if you need to gain knowledge about a particular product or service.	3.11	H
5.	Visit online websites that were promoted on social media	2.84	H
GENERAL ASSESSMENT		3.11	H

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Very High (VH) 1.75 – 2.49 Low (L)
 2.50 – 3.24 High (H) 1.00 – 1.74 Very Low (VL)

Generation Z consumers assess the level of purchasing decisions in terms of awareness. The general assessment based on the table displays **High** with a mean of **3.11**. This means that the level of

Purchasing Decision is high in terms of awareness as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. Moreover, the highest indicator that gained **3.27** is "Social Media have an impact with the intention of consumers to purchase" and verbally interpreted as **Very High**, followed by the indicator "Popular products online were interesting to the eyes of consumers," which gained the mean of **3.23** and verbally interpreted as **High**. In contrast, the indicator "I visit online websites that were promoted in social media" gained the lowest mean of **2.84**, which is verbally interpreted as high. Therefore, Gen Z is directly influenced by the promotional events posted or shared on social media. It shows that it is a good strategy for businesses to promote their brands online.

The first is to launch campaigns via many channels. You must capture consumers' attention across various platforms, including television and email marketing. Second, you can compose information for a 30-second television commercial and write details about your product in newsletters. And lastly, display banners and posters. Large posters and billboards about it might pique the customer's interest in your brand. Create a visually appealing design and show it before nearby companies' windows. Additionally, you can hand out fliers at gatherings with many people, such as festivals and sporting events (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Table 5. Level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of interest

Indicators in Terms of Interest	\bar{X}	VI
1. Read opinions and product feedback that can be seen through social media accounts before purchasing it.	3.56	VH
2. Social media increases consumers' curiosity about the product or service they want to purchase.	3.27	VH
3. Popular products online were attractive to the eyes of consumers	3.23	H
4. Consumers usually purchase products that are recommended by social media influencers.	3.14	H
5. Feels curious about a particular product or service when seeing their advertisement online.	3.02	H
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	3.24	H

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Very High (VR) 1.75 – 2.49 Low (L)
 2.50 – 3.24 High (H) 1.00 – 1.74 Very Low (VL)

The level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of interest had a general assessment of 3.24 or higher.

Accounts that cater to Gen Z's interests or introduce them to new ones receive much attention from them. It is necessary to determine their significant interests to comprehend their distinctive social media activity. Table 2.2 shows the level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of interest. The general assessment for this variable is **High**, with a mean of **3.24**. This means that the level of Purchasing Decision is high in terms of interest as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. The highest indicator, "I read opinions and product feedback that I see through my social media accounts before I purchase it," garnered a mean of **3.56** and was verbally interpreted as **Very High**. In contrast, the indicator "I feel curious about a certain product or service when I see their advertisement online" gained the lowest mean of **3.02** and was verbally interpreted as **high**.

After grabbing their attention, the next stage is to pique their interest in your goods. For instance, describe the appealing qualities of your product in a blog post on the company website or any social media platform. Consider creating a brief film that showcases the product and includes a voiceover explaining the features' functions to add visual appeal. Customers interested in your product may buy it more frequently (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Table 6. Level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of desire

Indicators in terms of Desire	\bar{X}	VI
1. Download online shopping applications I see on social media, which can help purchasing.	3.06	H
2. Social media have an impact on the intention of consumers to purchase	3.27	VH
3. Usually, purchase products that were recommended by social media influencers.	3.14	H
4. Finds it more efficient to buy things online.	2.91	H
5. Consider availing of a product or service that a friend shares and recommends online.	2.96	H
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	3.07	H

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Very High (VR) 1.75 – 2.49 Low (L)
 2.50 – 3.24 High (H) 1.00 – 1.74 Very Low (VL)

Generation Z consumers assess the level of purchasing decisions in terms of desire. The general assessment based on the table displays **High** with a mean of **3.70**. This means that the level of Purchasing Decision is high in terms of desire as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. Moreover, the indicator "Social media have an impact with the intention of consumers to purchase" gained the highest mean of **3.27** and was verbally interpreted as **Very High**. In contrast, the indicator "I find it more efficient to buy things online" gained the lowest mean of **2.91**. In addition, the indicator "I consider availing product or service that my friends share and recommend online" also earned the lowest mean of **2.96**, which is verbally interpreted as **High**.

Consider how infomercials offer their material; they hope to engage viewers with intriguing facts about the product and its advantages. These advantages should pique viewers' interest in the goods. The way that infomercials accomplish this is by showcasing the goods in a variety of inventive settings. Explain to the audience the benefits of the good or service and why they require it.

Table 7. Level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of action

Indicators in Terms of Action	\bar{X}	VI
1. Download online shopping applications seen on social media, which can help purchasing.	3.06	H
2. Consumers usually purchase products that are recommended by social media influencers.	3.14	H
3. Finds it more efficient to buy things online.	3.91	H
4. Purchase products that are seen online.	2.74	H
5. Avail products/services that are seen online.	2.58	H
GENERAL ASSESSMENT	2.89	H

Legend: 3.25 – 4.00 Very High (VR) 1.75 – 2.49 Low (L)
 2.50 – 3.24 High (H) 1.00 – 1.74 Very Low (VL)

The level of purchasing decision as assessed by Generation Z consumers in terms of action. The general assessment based on the table displays **High** with a mean of **2.89**. This means that the level of Purchasing Decision is high in terms of action as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. Moreover, the indicator "finds it more efficient to buy things online" gained the highest mean of **3.91** and was verbally interpreted as **Very High**. In contrast, the hand of "avails products or service that seen online" gained the lowest mean of **2.58**, which was verbally

interpreted as **high**. One reason for having the lowest mean for the availability of products or services online is that most respondents were in high school or at the secondary level of education. It means that they have no source of income yet and still ask for money from their parents.

Overall, regarding AIDA, the level of purchasing decisions is high, as assessed by Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna. Generally, a high level of buying decision offers organizations chances to spur growth, boost client relationships, stand out from rivals, and raise overall performance. Businesses can improve their marketing tactics, raise client satisfaction, and find long-term success by taking advantage of these opportunities. Therefore, implementing a well-designed online marketing strategy can indeed help increase the consumer base of a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME).

Problem Number 3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of utilization of Social Media Marketing and the level of purchasing decisions among Generation Z?

Table 8. Test of significant relationship between the level of utilization of social media marketing and level of purchasing decision among Generation Z

Level of Utilization on Social Media Marketing	Level of Purchasing Decision	r Value	P Value	Remarks	Decision
eWOM	Awareness	.682**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Interest	.764**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Desire,	.735**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Action	.591**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
Trust	Awareness	.802**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Interest	.748**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Desire,	.902**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀
	Action	.834**	.000	Significant	Reject H ₀

**Correlational at the level 0.01

*Correlational at the level 0.05(Two-tailed)

Businesses aiming to reach Generation Z must comprehend the value of social media marketing and how it affects this group's purchasing behavior. Brands may interact with Generation Z through social media platforms, forge meaningful connections, and use these connections to sway their purchasing decisions through socially responsible, relevant, and authentic marketing techniques. This research observes that eWOM is a trend influencing Generation Z users on social networking sites. Traditional marketing methods and social media marketing differ in that social media marketing enables users to reach both individuals they know and allows strangers to communicate through chat and feedback on actual goods or services offered by the various companies. These actions may impact people's buying intentions.

Based on the results, there was a significant relationship between the level of utilization of Social Media Marketing eWOM and purchasing decision in terms of awareness with r value of .682**; eWOM and purchasing decision in terms of interest with r value of .764**; eWOM and purchasing decision in terms of desire with r value of .735**; and eWOM and purchasing decision in terms of action with r value of .591** among generation Z consumers. Moreover, there was also a significant relationship between the level of utilization of Social Media Marketing trust and purchasing decision in terms of awareness with r value of .802**; trust and buying decision in terms of interest with r value of .784**; trust and purchasing decision in terms of desire with r value of .902**; and trust and buying decision in terms of action with r value of .834** among generation Z consumers as shown in their probability values of .000 respectively. Results show that if the independent variable increases, the dependent variables tend to increase also. Therefore, if social media marketing increases, purchasing decisions also increase. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The

result shows a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Problem Number 4. Based on the Results of the Study, What Output May Be Proposed?

Table 9. Social media portals - matrix

Social Media Portal	Description	Content	Hours to Manage	Benefits to Business Owners	Remarks
FACEBOOK	A powerful platform that offers numerous opportunities for businesses to connect with their target audience and promote their products or services	<p>Most of the users were attracted by rumors.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Links were a must to be seen and heard on the FB account.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Users usually love factual content.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Hard selling is usually ignored.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Spammers were called out.</p> <p>-</p> <p>The more postings, the better</p>	<p>Better to spend about 3 – 4 hours a day</p> <p>-</p> <p>Minimum of 2 hours per day</p>	<p>Show ads to users whose friends have recently engaged with their followers.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Friends and followers were instantly notified with new feeds.</p> <p>-</p> <p>Reach target audience based on demographics.</p>	The Facebook platform had a higher-than-average tolerance for times between feeds. But will grow incredibly well if daily feedings are maintained.

Social Media Portal	Description	Content	Hours to Manage	Benefits to Business Owners	Remarks
<i>YOUTUBE</i>	Powerful social media platform that offers significant opportunities for businesses and marketers to engage with their target audience through video content.	Advertising is permitted - Maximum of 2 GB videos, 10 minutes in length - Video descriptions were a must for optimization. - users love "how-to" or educational videos and entertaining content - they like public attention	Better to spend about 3 – 4 hours a day - Minimum of 2 hours per day - If the business already has a YouTube account, more time will be required if it needs to create a promotional video.	It is given priority in Google’s page ranking. - It is an excellent place to park video clips and spwere the company's server and bandwidth. - Businesses can create a customer and channel base. - Youtube videos can. Start generating conversations about a business and drive traffic back to the website.	The YouTube platform had minimal maintenance requirements. However, as the channel grows and becomes an essential part of the business's online presence, more frequent and consistent content creation is needed to sustain the momentum and meet the audience's expectations.

Social Media Portal	Description	Content	Hours to Manage	Benefits to Business Owners	Remarks
INSTAGRAM	a popular social media platform that plays a significant role in marketing strategies. It is a visually-focused platform where users can share photos and videos with their followers.	Advertising is permitted - Entertaining photos and short videos were encouraged - Video descriptions were a must for optimization. - They like public attention.	Better to spend about 3 – 4 hours a day - Minimum of 2 hours per day	Wide Reach: Instagram has a massive user base, with over 1 billion monthly active users. - allows businesses to engage directly with their audience through comments, likes, and direct messages	Instagram is a powerful social media platform that enables businesses to connect with their target audience, promote their products or services, and build a strong brand presence. With its visually-oriented nature and wide reach, Instagram allows businesses to showcase their offerings through high-quality images and engaging videos.

Social Media Portal	Description	Content	Hours to Manage	Benefits to Business Owners	Remarks
TWITTER	a platform that allows businesses to connect with their target audience, share information, engage in conversations, and promote their products or services. Twitter is known for its real-time nature and character-limited posts, called tweets, which can contain text, images, videos, and links.	Love rumors - Does not like pictures - Links in postings will feed the growth. - Repeat postings were a must to be seen and heard. - Loves 1 to 1 ratio of following and being followed	It is a little short. It takes seconds to post - Having content to link to and/or create will take 1-2 hours daily.	Creates business and brand loyalty among followers - Quick method of communication - Positions the business as an authoritative voice - Great for business research - Expand business networks and relationships. - Can generate direct traffic back to the website and other marketing campaigns	The Twitter platform is one where single postings should have been more addressed. It would help if you repeated postings more than once to be heard on a minimal level for return on investment. This platform is the most difficult to feed and will demand all your time for such limited space. But with help, Twitter can be a big boon to the business.

CONCLUSIONS

After the researchers' investigation, examination, and gathering of the information, they could finally conclude a direct impact of social media marketing strategies on consumer buying behavior, specifically among Generation Z consumers in Los Baños, Laguna.

1. Social media marketing has been effectively utilized by Generation Z consumers, who are known for their high levels of engagement on various social media platforms. Within this context, Generation Z actively participates in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) activities, which involve sharing their opinions, experiences, and recommendations with their peers on social media platforms. This eWOM form is a powerful tool for influencing consumer behavior and shaping purchasing decisions among Generation Z individuals. Moreover, trust-building plays a significant role in the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies targeting this generation. By engaging in eWOM and establishing trust, Generation Z consumers contribute to the success of social media marketing campaigns to capture their attention and influence their buying choices.
2. Generation Z consumers demonstrate a notable level of engagement in the purchasing decision-making process, aligning with the principles outlined in the AIDA model. The AIDA model, which stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, provides a framework for understanding consumer behavior and the sequential stages they go through before

purchasing. SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises) can leverage this understanding to guide Generation Z consumers effectively along the decision-making journey and ultimately drive higher purchasing decisions. Therefore, by understanding and applying the principles of the AIDA model, SMEs can effectively guide Generation Z consumers through the stages of attention, interest, desire, and action, ultimately driving higher levels of purchasing decisions. Through strategic and targeted marketing efforts, SMEs can align their messaging and offerings with Generation Z's unique preferences and behaviors, maximizing their potential to capture this influential consumer segment.

3. Social media marketing efforts have a substantial impact on influencing and driving consumer purchasing behavior. When businesses effectively utilize social media marketing strategies, they can successfully engage with their target audience, create brand awareness, generate interest, and ultimately influence consumers to purchase. Given the significant relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions, a consumer's purchasing decision tends to increase as social media marketing increases. Social media marketing is vital in influencing and driving consumer purchasing behavior. Through effective utilization of social media platforms, businesses can engage with their target audience, create brand awareness, generate interest, and ultimately influence consumers to make purchasing decisions. By understanding and leveraging the power of social media marketing, businesses can maximize their potential for success in today's digital marketplace.
4. To further improve businesses' sales and exposure, there is a need to create a social media portal, Matrix. Implementing a social media matrix designed for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can significantly enhance their marketing efforts. Matrix can significantly enhance SMEs' social media marketing efforts by implementing a social media portal. By strategically selecting and utilizing the most appropriate social media platforms, SMEs can improve their sales and exposure, reach their target audience more effectively, and allocate their resources efficiently. With a well-defined social media strategy, SMEs can maximize the benefits of social media marketing and stay competitive in the digital landscape.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study used quantitative descriptive correlational research to assess the level of utilization of social media marketing concerning electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and trust, specifically regarding the purchasing decision stages of awareness, interest, desire, and action among SME owners and Generation Z consumers. The data was collected through an online survey, ensuring respondent convenience.

The study participants were SME owners and Generation Z consumers in Los Banos, Laguna. The study aimed to provide insights into the decision-making process of purchasing items through social media. However, it is essential to note that the scope of this study was limited to the use of social media for marketing purposes and its impact on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z.

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