
THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON GENERATION Z CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION FOR ONLINE SHOPPING IN ANAMBRA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of social media marketing on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention toward online shopping in Anambra State, Nigeria. Five social media marketing dimensions (trendiness, interaction, entertainment, customization, and electronic word of mouth) were examined to determine their effect on Gen Z purchase intention. A structured questionnaire was administered, and the data were analyzed using statistical package for social sciences, version 25. The findings reveal that trendiness, interaction, customization, and e-WOM significantly and positively influence purchase intention, with trendiness and interaction emerging as the strongest predictors. However, entertainment was found to have no significant effect, indicating that enjoyable content alone does not drive Gen Z purchasing decisions in this context. The study concludes that marketers targeting Gen Z in Anambra State must prioritize relevance, engagement, personalization, and credible peer influence to effectively drive online purchase intention. Recommendations were made for marketers to prioritize relevance, engagement, personalization, and social proof to enhance online purchase intention.

Keywords: Social media marketing, purchase intention, Generation Z and online shopping

Introduction

The rapid evolution of digital technologies and the internet has significantly transformed marketing practices globally, with social media marketing (SMM) emerging as one of the most dynamic channels for brand communication and consumer engagement (Hafez, 2021). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have redefined how businesses interact with customers, shifting from traditional one-way communication to interactive, real-time engagement. These platforms allow consumers to access information, share experiences, and participate in brand conversations, thereby influencing perceptions and purchasing decisions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2021). The interactive features of social media, including entertainment, customization, trendiness, and e-word of mouth, have positioned it as a strategic tool for enhancing brand awareness, building customer relationships, and shaping consumer purchase intentions (Yongbing, 2020; Hanaysha, 2022). As firms increasingly integrate social media into their marketing strategies to build consumer loyalty, attract younger audiences, and remain competitive in today's fast-changing business environment, the impact of these platforms on consumer behavior, especially in online shopping, has become an important focus of academic and managerial interest.

Within this changing landscape, one demographic group where this influence is most evident is Generation Z. Born between 1997 and 2012, they are widely described as “digital natives” because they have grown up with the internet and are deeply immersed in social media culture (Djafarova & Bowes, 2020). Globally and in Nigeria, studies show that Gen Z spends more time on social media than any other generation. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this trend by reducing physical store visits and shifting consumer preferences toward digital platforms (Akram et al., 2021) highlighting the need for organizations seeking relevance to prioritize SMM as a means of reaching and influencing their purchase decisions.

Despite this growing trend and relevance, businesses in developing economies, including Anambra state, still struggle to understand how social media marketing strategies translate into purchase intentions, particularly in the context of online shopping. In the literature, the variables most often identified as drivers of SMM effectiveness are interaction, trendiness, customization, entertainment, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Each of these factors has been shown to influence consumer decision-making globally (Yongbing, 2020; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2021), but their combined effect on Gen Z consumers in Anambra remains underexplored.

Despite the growing relevance of online shopping in Nigeria, there is still inadequate empirical evidence on how these SMM variables shape Gen Z's purchase intention. While global research underscores their importance, contextual realities such as cultural preferences, consumer trust in digital platforms, and infrastructural limitations suggest that the Nigerian experience may differ significantly. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, few studies have examined the influence of interaction, trendiness, customization, entertainment, and e-WOM on Gen Z's purchase intention toward online shopping in Nigeria. This scarcity of evidence not only limits academic understanding but also constrains businesses and marketers from effectively leveraging social media to engage this influential consumer group. Addressing this gap is therefore essential for advancing digital marketing knowledge and unlocking the full potential of online commerce in regions such as Anambra State. Based on the above, the following hypotheses are formulated for the study:

Hypotheses

H1: Content quality significantly influences brand equity in the hospitality industry in Imo State.

H2: Interactivity significantly influences brand equity in the hospitality industry in Imo State.

H3: Platform diversity significantly influences brand equity in the hospitality industry in Imo State.

H4: User-generated content significantly influences brand equity in the hospitality industry in Imo State.

H5: Engagement metrics significantly influence brand equity in the hospitality industry in Imo State.

Literature Review

Social media has radically transformed how individuals interact and make decisions in today's digital age (Cham et al., 2022; Nalbant & Aydin, 2023). Aichner et al. (2021) define social media as broad online platforms that allow people to network, post, tweet, blog, tag, exchange, evaluate, and share content. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have enabled businesses and consumers to interact seamlessly across boundaries (Dwivedi et al., 2021). With the increasing number of users, individuals now rely heavily on social networks for brand and product information (Shareef et al., 2019). Social media marketing (SMM) has become one of the most powerful tools for brands to engage with consumers and create lasting impressions (Kumar & Sharma, 2024; Tan et al., 2023). It involves leveraging social networks to build relationships, communicate brand value, and influence consumer perceptions (Albanna et al., 2022).

"Generation Z" (Gen Z) refers to the demographic cohort following the Millennial generation, typically born between 1997 to the early 2012. This generation is characterized by its digital native status, growing up with widespread access to the internet, smartphones, and social media (Twenge, 2017). Gen Z individuals are known for their strong emphasis on technology, social connectivity, digital communication, and a unique set of values and attitudes. Their unique characteristics and perspectives have significant implications for various aspects of society, including education, the workplace, consumer behavior, and social activism. This literature review explores the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence linking social media marketing to online purchase intention, with a focus on five constructs: interaction, trendiness, customization, e-wom and entertainment.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Brand Equity and Social Media Marketing

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) provides a robust theoretical foundation for this study on social media marketing and Gen Z consumers' purchase intention. The model explains persuasion through two distinct routes: the central route, which involves thoughtful evaluation of message content, and the peripheral route, which relies on cues such as attractiveness, popularity, or entertainment. This dual

framework is particularly relevant to Gen Z, who are highly active on digital platforms and exposed to a constant flow of marketing messages. In the context of social media marketing, elements such as trendiness and entertainment typically function as peripheral cues, capturing attention and influencing attitudes without requiring deep cognitive effort. Conversely, interaction and customization are more

aligned with the central route, as they demand greater consumer involvement, stimulate personal relevance, and encourage thoughtful processing. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is versatile as it can appeal to both routes, providing credible and detailed information for rational evaluation while also signaling popularity and social approval that shape affective responses.

Anchoring this study on the ELM ensures theoretical rigor by situating the selected variables within a widely recognized persuasion framework. The model is especially suitable for understanding Gen Z, who display both analytical and emotional tendencies in online decision-making. It highlights that purchase intention may be influenced not only by the quality of information provided but also by the design, relevance, and appeal of social media marketing efforts. By applying ELM, this study is able to explain not just whether social media marketing impacts Gen Z consumers' purchase intention, but also how different dimensions (trendiness, entertainment, interaction, customization, and eWOM) operate through different persuasion routes to shape decisions. This makes the ELM an ideal theoretical anchor, providing explanatory power and practical relevance for analyzing online shopping behavior among Gen Z in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Social Media Marketing Model (Kim and Ko, 2010; 2012)

Social media marketing in the Kim and Ko (2012) model was defined as posts intended to promote purchases and was analyzed for its entertainment value, interactivity, and how widely the posts were shared (i.e., word of mouth). The entertainment value was derived from how fun and interesting the posts were perceived to be by social media followers. Interactivity dealt with connecting and commenting by followers. A high rating in word of mouth or sharing category for social media marketing was the result of followers sharing the posts through the social media network. The Kim and Ko model is anchored on the uses and gratification model.

Hypotheses Development

Interaction and Purchase intention

Interaction, as a key element of social media marketing, refers to the degree of communication, engagement, and mutual exchange between businesses and consumers on online platforms. It captures the extent to which consumers actively participate in conversations, share feedback, and feel connected to brands through online communities. Interaction on social media enables users to communicate, share opinions, and exchange information within online communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Marketers leverage interactive campaigns by encouraging consumer-generated content, reviews, and subscriptions, which enhance brand awareness and purchase intention (Dessart et al., 2015; Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Such interactions improve consumers' ability to recall brands and strengthen their exposure to brand-related information (De Vries et al., 2012; Hemsley-Brown, 2016). Engagement through active brand presence on social media also facilitates rapid information exchange and deeper customer connections (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Seo &

Park, 2018). When consumers integrate brand interactions into their personal identity, brand image, loyalty and actual purchase are reinforced (Langaro et al., 2018). The viral effect of interactive engagement allows brands to gain recognition and influence a wide audience (Sharma & Verma, 2018). Given Gen Z's preference for interactive and participatory online experiences, such engagement strongly shapes their purchase intentions. Therefore, it is hypothesized that there is a positive and significant relationship between interaction and Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra State.

Trendiness and Purchase intention

Trendiness in social media marketing refers to providing consumers with the latest news, hot topics, and up-to-date product information that resonates with current discussions online. It reflects the ability of brands and service providers to align their marketing activities with contemporary industry trends and effectively engage audiences through appealing and trendy content (Seo & Park, 2018; Ebrahim, 2019). Social media platforms, as primary sources of breaking news and consumer insights, play a vital role in shaping product preferences by exposing consumers to what is new and fashionable (Godey et al., 2016). Gen Z consumers, in particular, rely heavily on trend-driven content to evaluate peers' product usage and adjust their preferences accordingly (Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Continual updating of brand materials on social media also strengthens consumers' perceptions of novelty, which fosters brand loyalty and affinity (Zarei et al., 2022). Moreover, trendiness has been shown to significantly enhance brand image and awareness, ultimately contributing to stronger brand equity (Seo & Park, 2018). Given Gen Z's responsiveness to trends and preference for current, interactive content, trendiness is expected to play a crucial role in their purchase decisions. It is therefore hypothesized that there is a positive and significant relationship between trendiness and Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra State.

Customization and purchase intention

Customization in social media marketing refers to providing tailored information and services that align with individual consumer needs and preferences. It enables users to access relevant product details, pricing, and brand attributes while freely expressing their opinions and engaging with personalized content (Cheung et al., 2020; Kim & Ko, 2012). Marketers leverage customization to deliver brand-related information that matches consumer expectations, thereby enhancing satisfaction and relevance (Rohm et al., 2013; Schulze et al., 2015). By offering personalized experiences, customization enhances perceived brand value, strengthens differentiation, and builds favorable brand images that attract and retain customers (Ebrahim, 2019). Such tailored marketing efforts positively affect consumers' cognitive experiences and affinity toward brands, ultimately influencing their purchasing choices (Dessart et al., 2015; Cheung et al., 2020a). Furthermore, Seo and Park (2018) identified customization as one of the most impactful elements of social media marketing that shapes brand equity. For Gen Z consumers, who value personalization and relevance in online interactions, customized content plays a pivotal role in shaping purchase intention.

Entertainment and purchase intention

Entertainment is a vital dimension of social media marketing that encourages positive emotions and engagement among consumers. Entertaining content, such as humorous posts, engaging videos, or creative visuals, captures consumer attention and fosters enjoyment,

which strengthens their connection to the brand (Bilgin, 2018; Merrilees, 2016; Ismail, 2017). When consumers experience fun and excitement through brand communications, these positive emotions contribute to brand recognition and stronger associations in their minds (Liu & Arnett, 2000; Preshaw & Taylor, 2011). Research confirms that entertaining brand activities positively influence brand equity by deepening consumer attachment and loyalty (Nobar et al., 2020; Chen & Qasim, 2020; Sharma et al., 2022). Moreover, the enjoyable connection consumers develop with entertaining content increases their likelihood of purchase (Dessart et al., 2015). Seo and Park (2018) further emphasized the importance of entertainment in capturing consumer attention and cultivating brand equity. Given Gen Z's preference for engaging and interactive online experiences, entertainment is expected to significantly influence their purchase intention toward online shopping.

E-WOM and purchase intention

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) refers to consumers' online sharing of opinions, experiences, and recommendations about products or services, which often carry greater credibility and influence than firm-generated content (Aji et al., 2020). With the widespread use of social media, Gen Z increasingly relies on eWOM to evaluate brands, reduce uncertainty, and guide purchasing choices (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Positive eWOM fosters emotional connections between consumers and brands, enhances visibility, and strengthens brand equity, which in turn drives purchase intention (Syahrivar & Ichlas, 2018). Moreover, its immediacy, accessibility, and wide reach make eWOM more persuasive than traditional word-of-mouth in shaping consumer decisions (Farzin et al., 2022).

Purchase intention

Purchase intention represents a consumer's willingness or likelihood to buy a particular product or service (Sudaryanto et al., 2022). It is central to consumer behavior and precedes actual buying behavior, serving as a predictor of consumption (Peter & Olson, 2010). Rooted in the Theory of Planned Behavior, intention is seen as the strongest predictor of behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Earlier studies by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) confirm that intention serves as a bridge between attitudes and actual purchase behavior. Kotler and Keller (2009) suggest that purchase intention arises when consumers perceive that a product or service can meet their needs or desires. Similarly, Yoong and Lian (2019) define it as an individual's desire to acquire a product, which can help forecast consumer behavior. Consumers often develop interest before making a final decision to purchase, highlighting the gradual process behind intent formation (Lilima, 2020). Alnsour et al. (2018) agree that purchase intention reflects the likelihood of acquiring products in the future, tied to attitudes and preferences. Importantly, social media has become a major influencer of purchase intentions by exposing consumers to peer reviews, comments, and brand content (Mohiuddin et al., 2018). Customers often rely on online recommendations and critiques before finalizing their purchase decisions (Hanaysha, 2022). This behavior is especially evident among Gen Z consumers who prioritize online product research and discussions (Kemp, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated online shopping, further embedding digital channels as primary sources of purchase intention (Pillai et al., 2022). Post-purchase evaluations, where customers compare expectations with actual outcomes, are also influenced by prior social media exposure (Uzir et al., 2023). Ultimately, purchase intention serves as a critical link between marketing stimuli, consumer attitudes, and actual purchase behavior in online shopping environments (Ajzen, 1991; Sudaryanto et al., 2022).

Empirical Review

Ismael et al., (2025) examined how social media marketing dimensions influence young consumers' online purchase intentions in Bangladesh. Using PLS-SEM on data from 412 respondents, findings revealed that social media content, engagement, brand perception, and influencer marketing significantly drive purchase decisions. The study confirms the strong role of interactive and content-driven SMM strategies among youths. Ani et al. (2025) investigated the effects of social media marketing, brand image, and product quality on SME online purchasing decisions in Indonesia. Using PLS analysis of 543 responses, results show all three variables positively and significantly influence purchase decisions. The study confirms their relevance within the SDGs framework.

Schüler and Tapachai (2025) compared factors influencing social media purchase intention among young consumers in Thailand and Germany. Using SEM, attitudes significantly predicted purchase intention in both countries, while subjective norms were insignificant. The study suggests personal beliefs and lifestyle are key drivers across cultures. Prasetya et al. (2025) analyzed 23 studies to identify trends and challenges in social media marketing between 2020 and 2025. Findings highlight the dominance of influencer marketing, engagement, AI integration, and immersive technologies in driving consumer behavior. The study emphasizes authenticity, personalization, and cross-platform strategies for future research.

Ezeh et al. (2025) assessed the effect of social media interaction and collaboration on electronics purchase behavior in Anambra State, Nigeria. Regression results showed both interaction and collaboration significantly and positively influence consumer purchase decisions. The study recommends personalized engagement to enhance trust and loyalty. An and Ngo (2025) analyzed how social media marketing activities affect purchase intention and eWOM for organic cosmetics among Gen Z in Vietnam. Results show SMMAs strongly influence perceived quality and value, which in turn affect eWOM and purchase intention. The study highlights the mediating role of perceived quality and value.

Widiarta et al. (2024) examined the impact of social media marketing and eWOM on frozen meat purchase intention. Using survey data from 400 respondents, findings indicate both variables significantly enhance purchase intention, with eWOM being stronger. Younger and more educated consumers were more responsive to digital promotions. Lin et al. (2024) investigated how social media marketing activities influence logistics brand equity and reuse intention in China. PLS-SEM results show interaction, trendiness, customization, eWOM, and trust positively affect brand equity, which in turn drives reuse intention. Brand equity was found to mediate these relationships.

Elesi et al. (2024) analyzed the influence of social media advertising on Gen Z consumer choices in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Survey results indicate that influencer marketing, user-generated content, and social media ads significantly affect purchase intention and actual buying behavior. The study supports the relevance of SCT and UGT. Meliawati et al. (2023) examined the effects of TikTok marketing and product quality on purchase intention. Findings show that social media marketing and product quality both significantly influence purchase intention, with TikTok being the strongest SMM indicator. Product appearance was the most influential quality attribute.

Methods

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of social media marketing attributes on Generation Z consumers' online purchase intention in Anambra State, Nigeria. The target population comprised Gen Z consumers who engage in online shopping, and due to the absence of an official population frame, it was treated as infinite. A sample size of 280 respondents was determined using Topman's formula at a 95% confidence level and selected through convenience sampling. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from validated scales, comprising 22 items measuring interaction, trendiness, customization, entertainment, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and purchase intention on a five-point Likert scale.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' characteristics, while exploratory factor analysis assessed construct validity. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesized relationships at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$). Content and face validity were established through expert review, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 0.70 confirmed the reliability of the measurement scales.

Results and Analysis

Consistent with the sample size determined at 280, copies of questionnaire were distributed to generation Z consumers in Anambra state, Nigeria. After completion, **265** copies of the questionnaire instruments were returned, representing **94.64 %** return rate.

Demographic Profile of respondents

Responses		Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	142	53.58
	Female	123	46.42
Age	18-20	32	12.0
	21-23	68	25.7
	24-26	118	44.5
	27-29	47	17.8
Marital Status	Single	167	63.1
	Married	92	34.7
	Divorced	6	2.2
Educational Background	Secondary school or below	82	30.9
	B.Sc or equivalent	154	58.1
	Postgraduate	29	11.0
Occupation	Student	77	29.1
	Government employee	36	13.6
	Private sect. employee	70	26.4
	self-employed	82	30.9
Total		265	100

Source: Field Survey. 2025

Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement model was assessed using factor analysis, reliability statistics, and validity checks. This stage was critical for determining whether the observed indicators appropriately

measured the underlying constructs of social media marketing (E-WOM, ENT, CUS, TRD, INT) and purchase intention (PI).

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.895, indicating excellent sampling adequacy. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 4671.840$, $df = 300$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. These results justified proceeding with principal component analysis (PCA).

Table 4.4.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.895
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4671.840
	Df	300
	Sig.	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Ho1: Interaction has no significant influence on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state.

The first Hypothesis tests the effect of interaction on purchase intention. The result showed that the p-value for interaction on purchase intention is less than 0.01. Thus, we reject the null and accept the alternate. Therefore, we conclude that interaction has a positive and significant influence on generation Z consumers' purchase intention for online shopping in Anambra state, Nigeria ($\beta = .45$, $t = 7.18$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H1.

Ho2: Trendiness has no significant influence on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state.

Hypotheses 2 predicted a positive and significant effect of trendiness on online shopping purchase intention of generation Z consumers in Anambra State, Nigeria. The result showed that the p-value for the effect of trendiness on purchase intention is less than 0.01. Thus, we reject the null and accept the alternate. Therefore, we conclude that trendiness has a positive and significant effect on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state, Nigeria. ($\beta = .24$, $t = 3.86$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2. The result suggests that trendiness significantly increases Generation Z's purchase intention, meaning Gen Z is more likely to buy when brands appear current, stylish, and aligned with modern digital culture.

Ho3: Customization has no significant influence on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state.

In hypotheses 3, we hypothesize a positive and significant effect of customization on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state. The result showed that the p-value for the effect of customization on purchase intention is less than 0.01. Thus, we reject the null and accept the alternate. Therefore, we conclude that customization has a positive and significant effect on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state. ($\beta = .14$, $t = 2.81$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H3. The Customization – purchase intention (CUS → PI) was significant but weaker than interaction and trendiness.

Ho4: E-WOM has no significant influence on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state.

Similarly, hypotheses 4 tested for a positive and significant effect of E-WOM on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state. The result showed that the p-value for the effect of e-wom on purchase intention is less than 0.01. Thus,

we reject the null and accept the alternate. Therefore, the result supports H4. Hence, we conclude that e-wom has a positive and significant effect on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state. ($\beta = .13$, $t = 2.28$, $p < 0.05$). The significant effect of e-WOM suggests that Generation Z consumers are influenced by online recommendations, reviews, and shared experiences when forming their purchase intentions.

Ho5: Entertainment has no significant influence on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state.

Conversely, the analysis for the last hypothesis, H5, found that entertainment (ENT) did not have a statistically significant effect on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state. ($\beta = 0.03$, $t = .60$, $p = 0.55$). This result was not supported by the hypothesis. The p-value for the effect of entertainment on purchase intention is greater than 0.05. Thus, we accept the null and reject the alternate. Therefore, we conclude that entertainment does not have a statistically significant effect on generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards online shopping in Anambra state. ($\beta = .24$, $t = 3.86$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, H5 was not supported. This finding suggests that, for Generation Z, enjoyable or fun content alone does not strongly influence their intention to purchase online.

Table 4.4.2 Hypotheses Test Result

Relationship				Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Conclusion
H1	INT	=>	PI	.45	.06	7.18	.00	Supported
H2	TRD	=>	PI	.24	.06	3.86	.00	Supported
H3	CUS	=>	PI	.14	.05	2.81	.00	Supported
H4	E-WOM	=>	PI	.13	.06	2.28	.02	Supported
H5	ENT	=>	PI	.03	.06	.60	.55	Not Supported

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of social media marketing on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention toward online shopping in Anambra State, Nigeria, using the constructs of trendiness, interaction, entertainment, customization, and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). The findings showed that trendiness and interaction exert strong and significant effects, indicating that Gen Z consumers in Anambra value modern, engaging, and socially interactive online content when deciding to shop online. Customization also had a significant but weaker influence, suggesting that while personalized content is appreciated, it is not as central as trendiness and interaction. e-WOM emerged as a significant predictor, reinforcing the importance of peer reviews, recommendations, and online testimonies among Gen Z in the state. However, entertainment was not a significant factor, implying that enjoyable content does not necessarily translate into purchase intention in this context. Overall, the study highlights that marketers targeting Gen Z in Anambra State must prioritize relevance, engagement, personalization, and credible peer influence to effectively drive online purchase intention.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several actionable recommendations are proposed to help businesses enhance Generation Z consumers' online purchase intention in Anambra State. The recommendations focus on leveraging social media marketing strategies that proved significant in influencing Gen Z behaviour. Each suggestion is tailored to address the specific variables studied, ensuring practical relevance. Implementing these strategies can strengthen brand engagement, trust, and purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers.

1. Since interaction had the strongest impact on purchase intention, brands should invest in highly engaging content formats such as polls, question and answer sessions, live videos, and comment-driven posts. Social media managers should be trained to respond promptly and conversationally to comments and messages. Building two-way communication can help humanize the brand and enhance trust among Gen Z consumers. Brands should create community-like spaces where Gen Z feels heard and valued. Priority should be given to maintaining active and responsive brand communication channels. This approach will deepen engagement and improve purchase intention.
2. Given that trendiness strongly influences Gen Z purchase intention, businesses should consistently align their social media content with current digital trends, viral challenges, and popular conversations. Using trendy visuals, sounds, and hashtags can help strengthen brand appeal. Marketers should also collaborate with trend-setting influencers to increase visibility. Regular updates and fresh content should be prioritized to avoid appearing outdated. Creative teams should be encouraged to innovate quickly and adapt to emerging online behaviours. Ultimately, maintaining trendiness will help brands attract and retain Gen Z attention.
3. Although customization was significant but weaker, businesses should still provide personalized recommendations and tailored content to strengthen user relevance. Personalized messages, product suggestions, and targeted ads can make Gen Z feel valued. Companies should also consider customizable product options where possible. While personalization should not overshadow trendiness and interaction, it should complement them to enhance overall experience. Brands should avoid generic mass messaging and instead tailor content to preferences and behaviours. This combination will help maintain relevance and encourage purchase intention.
4. Because entertainment did not significantly influence purchase intention, brands should avoid relying solely on fun or humorous content to drive sales. While entertainment can attract attention, marketers should combine it with more impactful elements such as trendiness, interaction, and social proof. Campaigns should focus on value, relevance, and authenticity rather than entertainment alone. Brands may still use entertainment to maintain visibility but should integrate clear product benefits. Resources should be allocated more to interactive and trendy content which Gen Z prioritizes. Entertainment should therefore be used as a supplementary tool, not the core strategy. This balanced approach will improve marketing effectiveness.
5. Since e-WOM significantly influences Gen Z, brands should encourage satisfied customers to share positive reviews, testimonials, and unboxing experiences. Businesses should actively collaborate with micro-influencers to strengthen authentic peer recommendations. Creating hashtags, referral programs, or incentives for sharing purchase experiences can increase organic reach. Brands should monitor online reviews

and promptly address negative feedback to maintain credibility. Encouraging user-generated content can further build trust within Gen Z communities. Companies should highlight real customer stories in their campaigns. Leveraging social proof will enhance purchase confidence among Gen Z consumers.

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