



The Impact of Digital Apps in Shaping Sustainable Consumption Behavior: A Study on Gen Z from Bhopal

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Abstract. The study aims at analyzing the influence of digital applications on sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z in Bhopal by considering how social media campaigns, influencer marketing and email marketing contribute towards impacting the same. Research on Sustainability aims to identify what digital strategies are best applicable to promote sustainability related to Social Influencing via these platforms and understanding the issues faced by Gen Z in switching towards sustainable practices. This paper collects theory from the reviewing of writing dependent on primary and secondary data by structured survey through Bhopal among Gen Z customers. The survey measures their digital interaction on sustainability content and sustainable consumption behavior in general. The ANOVA analyses the statistical significance of differences in sustainable behavior according to digital marketing strategies. The implications of the study suggests that some digital strategies are more effective at driving Gen Z towards sustainability than others, which have potential implications for companies and marketers trying to generate attention amidst this generation. The research ends by highlighting the prospective of digital apps to fulfil sustainable consumerism and offers some suggestions on how can we opt this medium as instrument towards inculcating better preferences for eco-friendly buying behaviors among young consumers from Bhopal.

Keywords: *Gen Z, Influencer Marketing, Social Media Campaigns, Email Marketing, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern world, sustainability plays a central theme in consumer behavior with the growing awareness of environmental concerns, and businesses pushing themselves to opt for more eco-friendly practices. As we all know the present era is all about digitalization and the impact of digital media and applications adversely affects the consumer's purchasing power, especially the younger generation particularly Gen Z as sustainable consumption is becoming a key factor. Gen Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is known for its strong digital presence and growing environmental consciousness. This is the first generation to grow up with smartphones, social media, and the internet, so they are highly responsive to digital marketing tactics.

1.1 GENERATION

Generation refers to the group of individuals born and living at the same time, typically the average period is about 20-30 years. This categorization of generations, done by sociologists, demographers, and researchers, helps us to understand the experiences and their generational values. Organizations like the Pew Research Centre define these groups by analyzing societal shifts. Authors William Strauss and Neil Howe, in their book *Generations*, popularized the concept by identifying recurring cycles. Generational categories include the Silent Generation (born 1928–1945), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1980), Millennials (1981–1996), and Generation Z (1997–2012). Each group is bound by their cultural and societal values which shows how they are different from each generation. Most of the time we people face generational gaps and it also highly affects how they interact with the world according to their experiences and values.

1.2 DIGITAL APPLICATIONS

Digital applications, or apps, are software programs designed to run on devices such as smartphones, tablets, computers, and even smartwatches. These apps play a crucial role in modern life by enhancing convenience and accessibility. As they become an integral part of our lives and transform how we communicate, work, and entertain

ourselves. These applications revolutionized many sectors with their high access and transformed the thinking of modern people. These application plays a major role in Gen-Z's life and affect their consumption patterns. Applications like – Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp. Today Gen-Z shifted from offline to online and spent more time on these applications.

1.3 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Sustainable Consumption refers to the responsible use of goods and services in ways that reduce the environmental impact, conserve resources, and promote social equity. The main aim is to meet the present needs without compromising the future needs. The benefit of sustainable consumption is to protect the environment from pollution, resource depletion, and waste. Gen Z highly promotes sustainable consumption because of the awareness and knowledge about the products and their consumption effects. Presently sustainable consumption is gaining momentum and is highly adopted by every organization and group to protect the environment but the work is still in progress. Mainly these activities came into force because the modern world was more concerned about healthy and safe lifestyles.

1.4 DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization plays a crucial role in shaping those behaviors. Gen Z is highly active on social media platforms, where sustainability trends often go viral. As we all know this generation is more focused on transparency ethical production and eco-friendly products as they are highly active on digital applications and emphasize brand values and knowledge. Social media campaigns, Influencer marketing & E-mail marketing are also key to reaching Gen Z consumers.

1.4.1 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Social media campaign is a coordinated marketing effort to reach a specific goal and helps to promote a product and raise awareness or engage with an audience. It

involves creating and sharing content on various platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter to attract attention and spark conversations. To reach engagement the campaign includes posts, videos, stories, and interactive elements or polls.

1.4.2 INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer Marketing has evolved into one of the most effective strategies in digital advertising as consumers increasingly rely on recommendations from people, they trust rather than traditional ads. These influencers, from celebrities to micro-influencers with smaller, niche followings, play a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing apart is its ability to create genuine, personalized connections between brands and consumers. Influencers often integrate products into their everyday content, making the promotions feel more natural. As a result, brands can highly engage communities and boost their credibility by associating with figures that their audiences admire and trust. This approach also offers measurable results through metrics like likes, shares, comments, and direct sales, making it an invaluable tool for companies seeking to grow in today's competitive digital world.

1.4.3 EMAIL MARKETING

Email Marketing is the most powerful digital marketing strategy to target a particular group via direct mail. It is used to promote products, share updates, or build relationships with an audience through personalized messages and email. Most business organizations opt for this strategy to boost their sale and build loyalty toward their products. This is the best way to reduce the consumption of time and focus on the right consumers at the right time and more cost-effective. Additionally, email marketing can be automated enabling businesses to schedule campaigns, send triggered emails based on user actions like a welcome email after signup and nurture leads over time.

These all factors play a pivotal role in shaping sustainable consumption behavior among GenZ by promoting eco-friendly products ethical practices and raising awareness about the products. They also help to reach customers directly and increase

sales. Gen Z, being highly active on social platforms, is more likely to adopt sustainable practices when exposed to campaigns that align with their values of environmental responsibility and social justice. They focus on the company's sustainability efforts and eco-friendly products that significantly drive sales and reach engagement. Also, digital marketing also plays a significant role in attracting Gen Z as these tactics, attract them with their sustainable lifestyles.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To assess the potential of digital marketing tactics, such as social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and email marketing, for nurturing sustainable consumption behavior in Gen Z living in Bhopal.
- ii. To determine the features of digital strategies that significantly influence sustainable consumer behavior among Gen Z residents of Bhopal.
- iii. To determine the digital strategies that significantly influence sustainability consumer behavior among Gen Z residents of Bhopal.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative methodology, drawing on both primary and secondary data sources. A structured survey was utilized to gather primary data from a sample of 25 Gen Z clients in Bhopal using Google Forms. Convenience sampling was utilized to choose the participants, and data standardization was employed to ensure uniformity. ANOVA and additional Microsoft Excel data analysis methods were utilized to assess the statistical significance of variations in sustainable behavior based on different digital marketing strategies.

The research focused on three primary digital marketing strategies: social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and email marketing. Secondary data about sustainable consumption and marketing strategies was gathered from pertinent academic sources. The ANOVA analysis found that social media initiatives were more

effective than influencer and email marketing for influencing sustainable behavior among Gen Z. Because social media campaigns could actively engage individuals and increase knowledge of sustainability-related issues, they had a bigger impact. This approach provides a comprehensive evaluation of the way various digital marketing strategies encourage sustainability among Gen Z customers.

4. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₀: There is no significant difference in sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z in Bhopal based on the type of digital marketing strategy they are most influenced by i.e., social media campaigns, influencer marketing and email marketing.

H₁: There is a significant difference in sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z in Bhopal based on the type of digital marketing strategy they are most influenced by i.e., social media campaigns, influencer marketing and email marketing.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

I.(Singh et al., 2024) in their paper '**How Information Technology (IT) Is Shaping Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age: A Systematic Review and Future Research Direction**' stress the success of business in the modern era depends on the capability to understand the emerging patterns in consumer behavior within the context of information technology. He identified four relevant and critical themes: technological advancements, emerging patterns in consumer behavior, IT and consumer behavior, and the impact of the former on the latter. He concluded that with the rapid advancements in information technology digital platforms can gather, analyze, and interpret consumer buying behavior patterns. Also, due to the accessibility consumers are more receptive to the information they receive through technology. Thus, this interaction between IT and consumer behavior helps us understand how IT and consumer behavior interact to sense disruptive consumer behavior and renovate the landscape of traditional and digital ecosystems for businesses globally.

II.(Gao et al., 2022) in their paper **‘The Influence of Social Commerce on Eco-Friendly Consumer Behaviour: Technological and Social Roles’** have discussed the impacts of both technological and social factors on consumers’ eco-friendly behavior. They took a “Green Box Area” program based on Alibaba group’s two mobile apps to develop a model of technological and social factors to predict consumers’ eco-friendly intentions and behavior. The results of their study indicated that technological factors have an overall positive and significant impact on the eco-friendly behavior of consumers. Their study also demonstrated that the achievement contributed by social engagement also has a positive effect on the intention of consumers related to sustainability and the environment, which is beyond the presence of mere social factors. Also, in the long run the factors that contribute to attracting customers for such sustainable development activities include the ‘self-value obtained’ rather than ease of use only.

III.(Palomo-Domínguez et al., 2023) the paper **‘Gen Z’s Motivations towards Sustainable Fashion and Eco-Friendly Brand Attributes: The Case of Vinted’** delves into the gap between Generation Z’s attitudes and behaviours concerning sustainability, particularly in marketing communication and brand attributes. It explores this issue through a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analyses for a holistic understanding. The study’s primary qualitative method involved focus groups, using design thinking techniques to foster dynamic participation among diverse sociodemographic groups. The platform Vinted, which emphasizes sustainability and social innovation in second-hand shopping, served as a case study. Findings revealed that while participants expressed opposition to fast fashion and acknowledged sustainability concerns, their actual behaviours did not fully align with these attitudes. Notably, Group A emphasized sustainability, while Group B focused more on ethical issues related to fast fashion. The study also highlights the need for clearer communication of Vinted’s sustainability efforts and better gender representation on the platform. Ultimately, the research provides valuable insights into Generation Z’s motivations and behaviours, recommending future studies with larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal approaches to better

capture evolving consumer behaviours. Notably, Group A prioritized sustainability, whereas Group B concentrated more on fast fashion-related ethical concerns. Better female representation on Vinted and more transparent communication of the company's environmental initiatives are also highlighted in the research. The study concludes by offering insightful information on the motives and actions of Generation Z and suggesting that future research employ longitudinal methods and bigger, more varied samples in order to better capture changing consumer behavior.

IV.(Ge, 2024) the paper **‘Influencers Marketing and its Impacts on Sustainable Fashion Consumption Among Generation Z’** gives an emphasis on the fashion sector, the study examines how influencer marketing shapes consumer purchasing decisions. It examines important elements including the authority, appeal, and skill of influencers as well as the mediating function of social media platforms in swaying customer choices. The study also looks at how price sensitivity and ethical consumption affect consumer behavior, specifically how these elements influence choices in the context of social media marketing. The research indicates that customers' intentions to make purchases are significantly influenced by influencers, especially among Generation Z, who utilize social media extensively. The study offers useful information to marketers that wish to target this demographic successfully by using influencers' reach and trustworthiness. The study also emphasizes how crucial it is for marketers to include cost-conscious and ethical views when developing tactics for Generation Z consumers.

V. (Agu et al., 2022) The study **‘Exploring the Role of Sustainability-Oriented Marketing Education in Promoting Consciousness for Sustainable Consumption’** emphasizes the critical role that sustainability marketing education plays in influencing students' knowledge of sustainable consumption within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The study assesses how students' attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control (PBC), and comprehension of sustainable consumption are impacted by sustainability marketing education. Three Nigerian colleges' marketing students participate in the study. The study, which employed a structured survey questionnaire and statistical methods like partial least-

square analysis and bootstrapping, found that while sustainability marketing education significantly influences students' attitudes toward sustainable consumption, subjective norms and PBC had positive but non-significant effects. The findings suggest that while educational initiatives can successfully alter attitudes and raise awareness, external factors such as peer pressure and perceived behavioral control may not significantly affect the formation of long-lasting habits. A confirmatory factor analysis was used to further evaluate the study's measuring scale, revealing reliable constructs and substantial item loadings. In order to improve strategies for encouraging sustainable consumption, the study does, however, recommend more investigation into the factors that make PBC and subjective norms less significant. Overall, by including sustainability marketing education into the TPB model, the study reaffirms the importance of this type of instruction in encouraging students to engage in ethical consumption.

6. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

- The digital marketing strategies encountered by the Gen-Z of Bhopal city most frequently were intended to understand the various digital marketing strategies prevailing among them. The majority (i.e., 56% of the Gen-Z population surveyed) voted for encountering digital marketing strategies through social media campaigns, e.g. ads on Instagram, Facebook, etc, while 36% of the population surveyed voted for encountering such strategy through influencer marketing (brand endorsements). A very small proportion (i.e., 8% of the population surveyed) voted for encountering digital marketing strategies via email marketing.
- The majority i.e., 48% of the population surveyed said that they are sometimes engaged with digital content related to sustainability, 32% of the population said that they are often engaged with such content and 16% of them said that they are always engaged with sustainability content on digital platforms. Only a small proportion (i.e., 4% of the population surveyed) says that they are rarely engaged with such content on digital platforms.
- Almost half of the population surveyed (48%) said that they just sometimes consider the environmental impact of a product before making a purchase, while an equal

proportion of the population surveyed i.e., 24% accepts considering the environmental impact of a product before making a purchase often and always. Whereas just a small proportion i.e., 2% of the population agrees to consider such impacts rarely.

- Influencers can have both positive and negative impacts on their audience, and play a major role in influencing the purchase decisions of especially the Gen-Z consumer segment. In recent times, where influencer marketing is rapidly gaining momentum, it is likely to understand how the Gen-Z of Bhopal city is attracted to this variety of digital marketing and how significant it is for them to consider a promoter's ideology before considering them as influencers. The majority (i.e., 44% of the population surveyed) says that they are **sometimes** likely to purchase a product that is endorsed by some influencer who promotes sustainability, while 24% say they are **often** inclined to make such purchases and 16% agree to **always** making their buying decision by considering the ideologies related to sustainability of endorsees. On the other hand, 12% of the population segment says they rarely consider such points while making any endorsed product purchases and 4% altogether deny considering or giving value to any such facts.
- Social media provides ample opportunities and resources to learn about the environment and ways to address sustainability issues. 36% of the population surveyed say that they are often engaged with content related to sustainability on digital platforms, while 28% vote for often and 24% vote for sometimes getting engaged with such content. On the other hand, a minor segment i.e., 12% of the population surveyed say that they are rarely engaged with such content.
- The following data shows how significant it is for Gen-Z of Bhopal City to consider buying from brands that have sustainable practices. The majority i.e., 28% of the population gives this factor a 10/10 rating and considers it the most important while the next majority i.e., 20% population gives this factor a 7/10 rating. A mere segment (i.e., 4% of the population surveyed) gives this factor a 2/10 rating and considers this factor as least important.
- The physical engagement of Gen-Z of Bhopal city for sustainable practices was intended to know. The majority votes for getting sometimes engaged with

practices that involve recycling products and materials, and an equal proportion votes that they are often /always engaged in such practices.

- The majority consider buying products with minimal packaging as sometimes important and the others consider it as often or always important. Also, a small segment votes for rarely considering such facts as important.
- An equal proportion (i.e., also the majority) of the population surveyed votes for sometimes/ always considering it important to buy products from brands that are known for their ethical practices.
- The majority says they often consider avoiding single-use plastic while the next majority votes always consider such issues important.
- The majority votes for sometimes/ often supporting local brands that give value to sustainability issues, while the next majority says that they always do so.

7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Expanding upon the results, the discussion section provides a more thorough understanding of how digital marketing strategies impact Gen Z's sustainable buying practices in Bhopal. Social media campaigns are the most effective digital marketing strategy, according to the survey; 56% of participants reported seeing them more frequently than influencer or email marketing (36% and 8%, respectively). This trend highlights the value of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram in reaching younger customers. Because of their eye-catching layout and ability to promote engagement through likes, shares, and comments, these platforms are a powerful tool for disseminating sustainability concepts. Marketers that wish to engage Generation Z should prioritize social media efforts to communicate brand values, especially those pertaining to sustainability.

Interestingly, influencer marketing has a complicated effect on consumer decisions despite its widespread use. The findings show that whereas 44% of respondents are occasionally inspired to base their purchases on the advice of sustainability-promoting influencers, just 16% of respondents do so consistently. This suggests that while influencers can have an impact on decision-making, their influence is not always there.

Consumers are discerning and may be more likely to trust influencers whose personal values align with their own, particularly in the context of sustainability. Brands should consider collaborating with influencers that have a strong personal commitment to moral behavior in order to maximize their efforts.

The survey also highlights varying levels of engagement with sustainability content on digital platforms. Nearly half (48%) of users only sometimes interact with sustainability-related content, while 32% do so on a regular basis. This implies that although sustainability is of importance, the majority of Gen Z consumers might not always be concerned about it. However, the fact that a significant portion of respondents consistently engage with this kind of material suggests that awareness is growing, which marketers may take advantage of by creating interesting and educational campaigns that reflect the values of this demographic.

Of those surveyed, 48% admitted to occasionally taking the environment into account while making purchases. This implies that although Gen Z is conscious of sustainability, it does not necessarily affect their shopping choices. A similar percentage of respondents said they usually or always think about sustainability (24%) suggests that consumers are becoming more ethical, but it also emphasizes how important it is for companies to consistently promote these values in their marketing.

According to the survey, respondents are more likely to view sustainability practices, such as recycling or avoiding single-use plastics, as either occasionally or frequently required when it comes to their physical participation. This demonstrates a desire to embrace sustainable practices, but it could also point to obstacles that prevent them from being completely incorporated into routine duties, such accessibility and convenience.

The conversation concludes by highlighting the necessity for Gen Z-focused companies to make sure that their sustainability messaging is understandable, consistent, and in line with consumer values, in addition to making good use of social media and influencer marketing. Information that is engaging, instructive, and motivating might support the ongoing movement toward more environmentally friendly buying patterns, which are becoming more and more important for this demographic.

8. HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H_0 : There is no significant difference in sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z in Bhopal based on the type of digital marketing strategy they are most influenced by i.e., social media campaigns, influencer marketing and email marketing.

H_1 : There is a significant difference in sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z in Bhopal based on the type of digital marketing strategy they are most influenced by i.e., social media campaigns, influencer marketing and email marketing.

The hypothesis testing is done by ANOVA (Analysis of Variance).

So, the sample size is $N = 25$.

The data is collected from Gen Z of Bhopal and divided into three samples namely, Social Media Marketing, Influencer Marketing and Email Marketing. The data is collected through google forms and the analysis is data is done through Microsoft Excel add-ins Data Analysis.

ANOVA TABLE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	Variance Ratio
Between Samples	SSB = 611	$c - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2$	MSB = 305.5	$F = \frac{MSB}{MSW} = 7.13$
Within Samples	SSW = 941	$n - c = 25 - 3 = 22$	MSW = 42.8	
TOTAL	SST = 1553	$n - 1 = 25 - 1 = 24$		

There is a significant difference in sustainable consumption behavior among Gen Z in Bhopal based on the type of digital marketing strategy they are most influenced by, i.e., social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and email marketing. **Thus, as the**

calculated F-value (7.13) is larger than the critical table value (3.44) at a (2, 22) degree of freedom and a 0.05 significance level, we reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that the type of digital marketing strategy significantly influences sustainable consumption behavior, confirming our alternative hypothesis.

9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study include the following-

- The study's very small sample size just 25 Gen Z consumers from Bhopal, reduces the generalizability of the findings. A larger and more diverse sample would be needed to draw conclusions about Gen Z's sustainable buying practices that are more widely applicable.
- Consumer behavior may differ in other countries or locations because the study was limited to Bhopal. In many social, cultural, and economic contexts, Gen Z's attitudes and behaviours about sustainability could not be well reflected in the findings.
- The convenience sampling method used in the study could have generated selection bias. The results might be biased since the participants were not selected at random, as those who are more interested in sustainability would be more likely to fill out the survey.
- One of the main sources of data for the study was self-reported information, which is prone to social desirability bias. Respondents may have overstated their commitment to sustainability or underreported their engagement in less sustainable practices to present a more favourable self-image.
- The study's primary focus was on digital marketing strategies, such as influencer marketing, email marketing, and social media campaigns. Other potentially effective marketing techniques, such search engine marketing, content marketing, and

conventional media, that might influence sustainable consumption patterns were not considered.

- The study solely examined the relationship between digital marketing and sustainability; it did not include other factors like price, product availability, or brand reputation that may influence consumer decisions.

10. SUGGESTIONS

The research suggests that, companies ought to prioritize digital marketing strategies that appeal most to Generation Z, particularly social media campaigns and influencer marketing, as they have a significant effect on their sustainable buying habits. Marketers ought to concentrate on producing engaging content with a sustainability theme that speaks to Gen Z values like ethical behavior and the environment. Additionally, influencers that support sustainability should be carefully chosen to make sure they live up to the expectations of their audience to further boost eco-friendly shopping. Email marketing may still be strategically used even though its impact is smaller if messages are geared toward this ecologically conscious demographic. Promoting recycling, supporting regional products, and limiting single-use plastics must be promoted to cultivate enduring sustainable practices.

11. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that digital apps have a significant impact on Gen Z's sustainable consumption patterns in Bhopal. Influencer marketing and social media campaigns are the finest digital techniques for generating awareness and supporting environmentally responsible behavior. As seen by the regularity with which Gen Z engages with sustainability content on digital platforms, they are aware of environmental issues and ready to engage with businesses that support sustainable practices. Email marketing has less of an effect, but when done correctly, it may still be a helpful supplementary tactic.

According to the research, Gen Z values businesses that uphold ethical and sustainable standards and frequently takes the environment into account when making purchases. However, as many respondents said they only occasionally engaged with eco-friendly information, there is still potential for growth in terms of boosting the regularity of sustainable behavior. This study highlights the role that online platforms play in promoting sustainable consumerism. In order to connect with Generation Z, businesses and marketers should focus on strengthening their digital sustainability initiatives, working with environmental influencers who are sincere about their cause, and encouraging eco-friendly practices like recycling and buying locally produced sustainable goods. In the end, digital apps have the ability to alter consumer behavior and produce a generation that is environmentally sensitive.

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