



Impact of Digital and Social Media Advertising on Millennial Consumers

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Abstract

Generation Y, commonly identified as Millennials, comprises individuals born between 1981 and 1996. Characterized by profound digital immersion and technological proficiency, this cohort has been significantly influenced by the pervasive expansion of social media. Consequently, social media advertising has emerged as a formidable catalyst in shaping their purchase intentions, consumption patterns, and brand preferences. The present study investigates the multifaceted influence of social media advertising on the buying behaviour of Generation Y consumers within the contemporary digital marketplace.

The findings unequivocally demonstrate that social media advertising exerts a profound influence on the lifestyle orientations, consumption behaviour, and purchase decision-making processes of Generation Y consumers. The ubiquitous proliferation of digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and X (formerly Twitter) has fundamentally reconfigured the dynamics of consumer-brand interaction. By facilitating instantaneous access to comprehensive product information, authentic consumer reviews, algorithmically curated recommendations, and influencer-generated endorsements, social media advertising substantially shapes consumer perceptions, reinforces purchase intentions, and cultivates enduring brand predispositions within the contemporary digital ecosystem.

The study further highlights that Generation Y consumers actively engage with digital content and rely heavily on online reviews and peer recommendations before making purchases. Businesses and marketers can therefore better understand consumer expectations and design effective advertising strategies to attract and retain this segment. The research concludes that social media advertising has become an essential marketing tool influencing Generation Y's buying behaviour in the modern digital economy.

Key Words: Generation Y, Buying Behaviour, Social Media Advertising, Millennials, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Y, conventionally recognized as the Millennial cohort, encompasses individuals born between 1981 and 1996. Distinguished by their formative years amidst the unprecedented proliferation of digital technologies and internet-mediated communication, this generation epitomizes a technologically adept and digitally immersed consumer segment. They are often referred to as “Digital Natives” because of their familiarity with smartphones, social networking sites, and online communication platforms. Social media has become an integral part of their personal, social, and professional lives.

According to recent studies, social media platforms have revolutionized conventional marketing by fostering direct and dynamic engagement between brands and consumers. Millennials actively engage with platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp for entertainment, communication, product reviews, and online shopping. Their buying behaviour is greatly influenced by digital advertisements, influencer marketing, customer reviews, and online brand engagement.

Generation Y consumers prefer convenience, instant access to information, personalized experiences, and peer recommendations while making purchasing decisions. Social media advertisements provide these consumers with quick product comparisons, promotional offers, and interactive content, which significantly influence their buying intentions.

The growing popularity of online shopping and digital payments has further strengthened Socialmedia’s power over our buying choices. Today, businesses increasingly rely on social media advertising to attract Millennials because this generation spends a significant amount of time online. Social media has therefore become an important medium for creating brand awareness, influencing consumer attitudes, and driving purchasing decisions.

This study explores the profound influence of social media advertising on Generation Y’s purchasing behaviour, while examining the extent to which digital promotional strategies shape their buying decisions and consumer preferences.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Social Media Advertising

Social media advertising is a powerful digital marketing phenomenon that utilizes online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and X to enhance brand engagement and shape consumer behaviour. Researchers have identified social media as one of the most effective communication tools for modern consumers because it enables interaction, information sharing, and engagement between brands and users.

Recent studies indicate that consumers are more likely to trust recommendations, reviews, and influencer content shared on social media platforms. Interactive advertisements, personalized recommendations, and engaging visual content have significantly increased customer participation and online purchasing behaviour.

According to contemporary marketing research, Millennials spend a large proportion of their daily time on social media, making them highly exposed to digital advertisements. Businesses use targeted advertising, influencer collaborations, sponsored posts, and algorithm-based recommendations to attract consumer attention and increase brand loyalty.

Researchers also emphasize that social media platforms allow consumers to compare products, read reviews, and communicate directly with brands, thereby increasing transparency and trust in online purchasing decisions.

2.2. Generation Y Buying Behaviour

Generation Y consumers are technologically advanced, well-informed, and highly connected through digital networks. Their buying behaviour is influenced by convenience, social trends, peer opinions, online reviews, and influencer recommendations.

Studies suggest that Millennials are more likely to purchase products after viewing advertisements on social media platforms. Influencer marketing, customer testimonials, and visual product demonstrations strongly affect their purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional consumers, Generation Y prefers interactive and personalized marketing approaches.

Furthermore, determinants such as income level, educational background, lifestyle orientation, and social standing significantly shape consumer behaviour and influence purchasing preferences. Millennials value brand authenticity, product quality, and customer experience. Social media enables them to access global brands, compare prices, and make informed decisions instantly.

Research further reveals that Generation Y consumers are more likely to share feedback, post reviews, and recommend products online, making social media an influential component of modern consumer behaviour.

2.3. Research Questions

The study aims to examine whether social media advertising significantly influences Generation Y buying behaviour.

2.3.1. Objectives of the Study

- [i] To critically evaluate the influence of social media advertising on the purchasing behaviour of Generation Y consumers.
- [ii] To identify the factors of social media advertising that influence consumer purchasing decisions.
- [iii] To analyze the relationship between demographic variables and online buying behaviour.
- [iv] To assess the efficacy of social media platforms in shaping purchase intentions and influencing the buying decisions of Millennials.

2.3.2. Hypotheses of the Study

- H01:** There exists no statistically significant impact of social media advertising on the purchasing behaviour of Generation Y consumers.
- H1:** There is a significant impact of social media advertising on Generation Y buying behaviour.
- H02:** Demographic factors do not significantly influence the relationship between social media advertising and buying behaviour.
- H2:** Demographic characteristics significantly shape the association between social media advertising and consumer buying behaviour.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study incorporates both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were systematically gathered through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. A total of 175 respondents from the Nagpur district participated in the survey during 2024–2025. The questionnaire included questions related to social media usage, advertisement exposure, online shopping habits, and buying behaviour.

Secondary data were obtained from relevant research journals, books, articles, websites, and published reports concerning social media marketing and consumer behaviour. The collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing techniques to examine the relationship between social media advertising and Generation Y buying behaviour.

4. DATA INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Gender and Age Group of Respondents

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents fall within the specified age group, representing the dominant demographic segment of the study of 26–35 years and are active users of social media platforms.

Table 1: Gender and Age Group

S.No.	Gender	No. of respondents (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Female	110	63
2	Male	65	37
Total		175	100
Age (in years)			
1	26-30	50	29
2	30-34	50	29
3	34-38	40	22
4	38-42	35	20
Total		175	100

Figure 1: Gender and Age Group

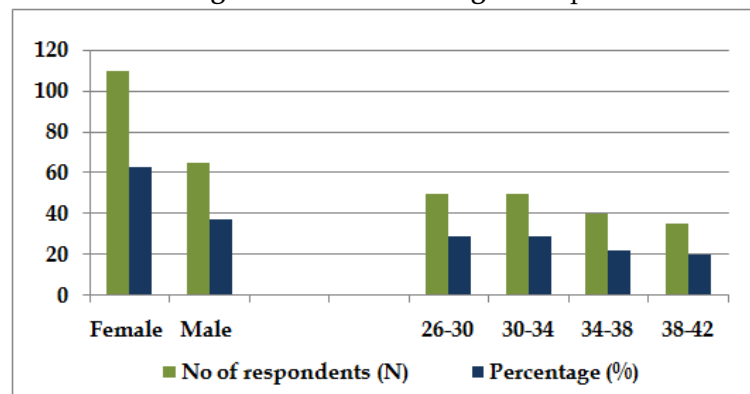


Table 1 shows the data related to gender and the age group. Data shows around 63% are the respondents of different age groups. The age millennial's age group range begins from 26 and ends on 42 years of age.

Table 2: Education and Income Group

S. No.	Education	Number of Respondent	Percentage (%)
1	Under Graduate	25	14
2	Graduate	67	38
3	Post Graduates	83	47
Income			
1	20K-50K	56	32
2	50K-1Lac	67	38
3	1 Lac & above	52	30
	Total	175	100

Figure 2: Qualification and Income Group

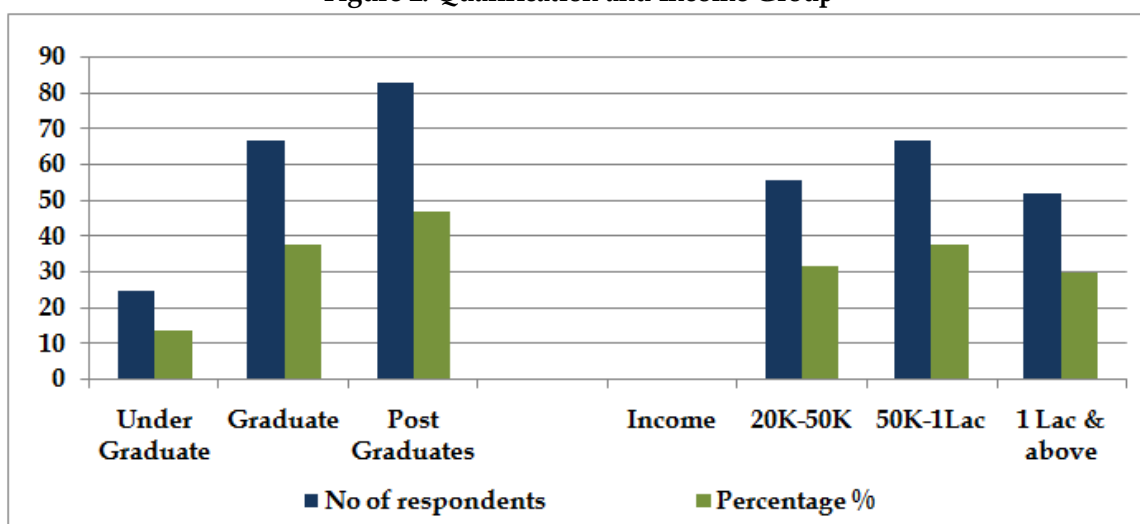


Table 2 and the connected figure represent the qualification and income group of the respondents. In the survey different participants of the under graduate, graduate and post graduate qualification showed their interest towards the social media advertisement and their buying decisions. To highlight the correlations between the variables i.e. age of the respondents and the their buying behavior which is influenced by social media advertisement is reflected with the statistical analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

X	mv	dx	dx ²	y	dy	dy ²	dx dy
26-30	28	0	0	50	15	225	0
30-34	32	4	16	50	15	225	60
34-38	36	8	64	40	5	25	40
38-42	40	12	144	35	0	0	0
	n=4	Σ=24	224	n=4	Σ=35	475	100

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= n \times \sum d \times dy - (\sum dx) \times (\sum dy) / \sqrt{n \cdot \sum dx^2 - (\sum dx)^2} \times \sqrt{n \cdot \sum dy^2 - (\sum dy)^2} \\
 &= 4 \times 100 - (24 \times 35) / \sqrt{4 \times 224 - (24)^2} \times \sqrt{4 \times 475 - (35)^2} \\
 &= 400 - 840 / \sqrt{896 - 576} \times \sqrt{900 - 1225} \\
 &= -440 / \sqrt{320} \times \sqrt{675} \\
 &= (-440) / 464.7822 \\
 &= -0.95
 \end{aligned}$$

Figure -0.95 shows the very high degree of negative correlation between two variables i.e. age in years and number of people making buying decision by having trust on social media advertisement, so of course if we talk about millennials rely more on social media for buying decisions. Hence, the study suggested that social media advertisement directly influence on Gen Y buying behavior.

The correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the demographic variables and consumer buying behaviour influenced by social media advertising. As presented in **Table 2**, the demographic profile of the respondents, including education and income, provides an overview of the characteristics of the sample used for the study.

The results of the **correlation analysis shown in Table 3** indicate a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.95$) between age and the number of respondents who rely on social media advertising for their purchasing decisions. This finding suggests that, within the Generation Y cohort included in the study, reliance on social media advertising for buying decisions tends to decrease with increasing age. Therefore, age is significantly associated with consumer buying behaviour influenced by social media advertising.

Furthermore, the demographic characteristics presented in **Tables 1 and 2**, particularly age, education, and income, indicate that respondents with different educational qualifications and income levels actively engage with social media platforms and online advertisements. These demographic factors contribute to variations in consumer purchasing behaviour and highlight the importance of considering demographic characteristics when examining the influence of social media advertising on Generation Y consumers.

Overall, the correlation analysis supports the study's objective by demonstrating that social media advertising has a significant relationship with the buying behaviour of Generation Y consumers, with age emerging as an important demographic factor influencing purchasing decisions.

This paper starts by recognizing Generation Y from different accomplices as far as orderly contrasts in values, inclinations and conduct that are steady after some time (instead of maturational or different contrasts). The uses of social media advertisement change emerging natural elements influencing online buying behavior of Gen Y, including financial, social, mechanical and political/lawful variables, as well as individual variables. Gen Y contrasts emerge from somewhat stable elements, for example, people's financial status, individual qualities/inclinations gender and age - as well as from exchange explicit such as objectives, feelings, standard of living, social circle are affected by social media advertisement. Then, at that point, the paper reflects the significant importance or role of social media advertisement among Gen Y.

Above Figures are representing the assertions about the uses (advantages) of the social media advertisement. The respondents consented to huge degree with the assertions about getting substantial advantage to their work and about the utilization of online entertainment as a direct to stay in contact with business contacts. The respondents were somewhat more mindful in their responses to the case that web-based entertainment had made them more associated.

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Status</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>H1: The role of social media is of considerable significance in shaping purchasing patterns and consumer choices advertisement on Gen Y's buying behavior.</i>	<i>Accepted</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>H1: There is significant influence of social media advertisement on Gen Y's buying behavior.</i>	

Hence, both alternate hypotheses have been accepted, which were:

H1: there is significant importance of various platforms of online engagement platforms on Gen Y and their buying behavior.

H2: There is significant influence of Interactive digital platforms advertisement on Gen Y. On the other hand, all null hypotheses have rejected i.e.

H01: there is no significant importance of social media advertisement on Gen Y buying behavior

H02: there is no significant influence of social media advertisement on Gen Y. Thus, the various platforms of social media, which also gives the exploring of different brands at worldwide is the new buzz area in advancing, i.e. fuses Gen Y.

5. CONCLUSION

Social media advertising has emerged as one of the most powerful marketing tools in the digital era. The study concludes that social media platforms serve as influential drivers of Generation Y's purchasing behaviour by shaping their preferences, perceptions, and decision-making processes.



Millennials actively engage with online advertisements, reviews, influencer content, and brand promotions before making purchases.

Compared to traditional advertising methods, social media advertising is more interactive, cost-effective, and accessible. It allows businesses to directly connect with consumers and create personalized marketing experiences. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp have evolved into pivotal platforms for brand engagement, digital communication, and online purchasing activities. The study further reveals that demographic factors such as age, education, and income influence the extent to which consumers are affected by social media advertisements. Businesses targeting Generation Y should therefore focus on digital marketing strategies, influencer collaborations, customer engagement, and personalized advertising to improve consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

In conclusion, social media advertising plays a vital role in shaping the buying behaviour of Generation Y consumers and is expected to remain a significant influence in the evolving digital marketplace.

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