

Original Article

Purchasing Behavior of Generation Z Consumers: An Empirical Study in Nagapattinam District

¹DR. S. CHANDRASEKAR, ²MS. A. KOWSALYA

¹Professor, Department of Management Studies and Research, EGS Pillay Engineering College, Nagapattinam, Tamilnadu.

²MBA Student, Department of Management Studies and Research, EGS Pillay Engineering College, Nagapattinam, Tamilnadu.

ABSTRACT: *Generation Z has emerged as a significant consumer segment with unique purchasing behavior influenced by digital exposure and evolving lifestyle patterns. This study aims to analyze the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers in Nagapattinam District and identify the key factors influencing their buying decisions. The study also examines the role of digital platforms, promotional activities, and brand-related factors in shaping consumer behavior. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 200 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation, and regression analysis were used for data analysis. The findings reveal that most respondents exhibit moderate purchasing behavior and are highly influenced by digital platforms, social media, and promotional activities. Factors such as price, product quality, and brand reputation also significantly impact purchase decisions. The study concludes that digital influence and promotional strategies are the key drivers of Gen Z purchasing behavior. The study provides valuable insights for marketers to design effective, digital-focused strategies to attract and retain Generation Z consumers.*

KEYWORDS: *Generation Z, Purchasing Behavior, Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Social Media Influence, Brand Loyalty, Promotional Strategies, Nagapattinam District.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (Gen Z) is one of the newest playing consumer groups, and their profiling disrupts some modern market approaches and business strategies. Since they were born into a period when being digitally connected was almost synonymous with basic living, Gen Z consumers depend tremendously on buying decisions based solely on digital marketing, social media, and online platforms. Greater access to information and their strong digital presence make them behave differently from earlier generations.

Generation Z consumers are mostly looking for trendy, innovative products that have good value for money. They are driven by price, product quality, brand and its credibility, and more importantly, influence from their peers. They compare products, read online reviews and are swayed by social media and influencers. You can shop online for convenience, but you still need to compare products offline storing an inventory in one warehouse or the other.

The strategy that includes discounts on promotions or advertisements will highlight key offers and then encourage their purchase behavior. While they are willing to try new brands, brand awareness and loyalty also play into their purchasing decisions.

Gen Z purchasing behavior is significant in Nagapattinam District as the youth distribution keeps on developing with increasing digital exposure. The objective of this study is to analyse their purchase behaviour, the key influencers and the impact of digital platforms along with promotional strategies. The results will guide marketers on how to build strategies.

2. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Gen Z is born as a significant consumer group that has unique buying behaviors influenced by the digital world and their changing lifestyles. Their preferences are influenced by price, brand image, product quality, peer recommendations and social media engagement. With the changing environment as a result of businesses going digital, it is imperative for brands to know how Gen Z buys in order to properly market their products.

Though digital acceptance is increasing in districts like Nagapattinam District, there are few empirical studies on purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers. It is hard for organizations with rapidly changing trends and preferences to attract and retain this segment. Moreover, an analysis of the impact of digital platforms and promotional activities on brand loyalty among Generation Z is needed for further research.

Hence, this study is a must to find out the factors which motivate Gen Z for buying behaviour and recommend marketers for creating relevant strategies, so as to promote customer engagement and increase market competitiveness.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Generation Z has been studied with regard to their purchasing behaviour, yet there are still important gaps in terms of the regional context and sectoral level. Lack of concentration on semi-urban, rural and marginal markets similar to Nagapattinam District. Most studies already have research parameters in relation to urbanised areas and developed markets. Secondly, numerous studies have a narrow scope focusing on one unique determinant, such as price, brand or digital influence and do not offer a holistic assessment of the overall main drivers behind Gen Z purchasing behavior.

A limited number of studies have been undertaken on the combined impact of social media, online channels, promotional factors and brand loyalty on purchase decisions. Moreover, especially with the exponential digital world this new generation of consumers is different from any one before it and their behaviour requires empirical evidence to grasp contemporary trends.

Thus, this paper fills these gaps in the literature through a regional and comprehensive look at several influences on Gen Z purchasing behavior to provide guidance for marketers or retailers.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers in Nagapattinam District.
- To identify the factors influencing the purchase decisions of Gen Z consumers, such as price, brand, product quality, trends, and peer influence.
- To examine the role of digital platforms and social media in influencing the purchasing behavior of Gen Z consumers.
- To analyze the preference of Gen Z consumers towards online and offline shopping channels.
- To study the impact of promotional activities and advertisements on the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers.
- To assess the level of brand awareness and brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers.
- To suggest strategies for marketers and retailers to effectively attract and retain Gen Z consumers in Nagapattinam District.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study analyses the purchasing behaviour of Generation Z consumers of Nagapattinam District during the period of study. Using a structured questionnaire to collect objective data, this study focuses on the main factors influencing purchase decisions; namely, price, brand image, product quality, trends and reference group influence.

This scope includes assessing the impact of digital platforms and social media, as well as preferences for shopping online and offline. It also measures the implications of promotional efforts such as discounts and advertisements, as well as determining awareness about brands and brand loyalty towards Millennials.

It covers respondents within each demographic category as a variable to ensure broader insights. The analysis of data is established through various statistical techniques like descriptive analysis, correlation and other comparative methods.

However, it is limited to the district of Nagapattinam and, dependent on self-reported data, may not reflect that of other regions.

6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The influence of factors that affect decision-making processes in consumer buying behavior is one of the most widely studied aspects. According to Philip Kotler (2012), consumer behavior is influenced by multiple factors consisting of cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Purchasing behavior has changed with the arrival of Generation Z because they grew up in a world with much more digital exposure and technological advancement.

Solomon (2018) argued that younger consumers are also gurus of digital, peer influence, and brand perception in purchase decisions. For example, Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) noted the impact of social media and online reviews on consumer preferences.

In India, social influence was tested by U. A. Agarwal (2014), and he concluded that consumer attitudes and decision-making were significantly shaped by social factors. According to J. Bhatnagar (2007), Insight on Idealistic Expectations of Younger Consumers provides answers for engagement strategies tomorrow.

In addition, S. Chandrasekar (2024) proposed that behavioral factors contribute to individual outcomes, whereas S. Chandrasekar and R. Natarajan (2021) explained how external environments may influence behavioral reactions. Mookaramin et al (2020) in the work "Emotional Intelligence in Organizations: A Metasynthesis of its Measurement, Design and Role as a

Value-Add" stated that psychological and emotional factors are of considerable importance in determining human behavior both at the individual level and consumer decision making behaviors.

Current research shows that Generation Z consumers are significantly impacted by digital media, promotional activities, and brand image. It continues to ensure the price, quality and peer recommendation, but also considers social media platforms, online advertisements, and influencer marketing playing a dominant role in driving their purchase decisions.

Nevertheless, most studies are done in urban populations, and only a few studies are available in semi-urban/rural populations like Nagapattinam District. Integrated studies linking digital influence, promotional strategies and brand loyalty are also non-existent. Hence, the essence of a thorough study on Gen Z purchasing behavior, specific to regions.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers in Nagapattinam District and to identify the factors influencing their buying decisions.

7.2. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study is conducted in Nagapattinam District, focusing on Gen Z consumers residing in rural, semi-urban, and urban areas.

7.3. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population consists of Generation Z consumers (aged 16–27 years) in Nagapattinam District.

7.4. SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 150 respondents were selected for the study.

7.5. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study uses Simple Random sampling, selecting respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate.

7.6. DATA COLLECTION METHOD:

- Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale.
- Secondary Data: Collected from journals, books, and online sources related to consumer behavior.

7.7. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A structured questionnaire consisting of:

Section A: Demographic details (age, gender, education, occupation, income, residence)

Section B: Statements on:

- Purchasing behavior
- Influencing factors (price, brand, quality, trends, peer influence)
- Digital and social media influence
- Online vs offline preference
- Promotional activities
- Brand awareness and loyalty

7.8. VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

- Independent Variables: Price, brand, quality, trends, peer influence, digital influence, promotions
- Dependent Variable: Purchasing behavior of Gen Z
- Moderating Variables: Demographic factors

7.9. DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

The collected data are analyzed using:

- Percentage Analysis – for demographic profile
- Descriptive Statistics (Mean & Standard Deviation) – to measure behavior
- Correlation Analysis – to examine relationships between variables
- Regression Analysis – to identify the impact of influencing factors

7.10. RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Reliability is tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable.

7.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Limited to Nagapattinam District
- Sample size restricted to 150 respondents
- Based on self-reported data, which may involve bias
- Convenience sampling may limit generalization

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation are critical parts of this study, as they transform data into useful insights for facts and valid conclusions. This chapter provides a systematic overview of the data obtained from 200 Generation Z respondents in Nagapattinam District. The basic aim is to capture factors surrounding the purchase behavior and what makes them buy.

The data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire in five-point Likert scale method. The responses were coded, categorized and analyzed with the relevant statistical tools to achieve accuracy and reliability. They analyze according to the goals of the study.

Techniques like percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation, correlation analysis, and regression analysis are employed. The percentage enables one to see the demographic profile, while the descriptive statistics quantifies purchasing behavior and likelihood of influencing factors. Correlation analysis looks at the relationship between variables, whilst regression analysis tests how these factors affect purchase behaviour.

The results are shown in tables and analyzed so that one can analyze the relationship or comparisons between different variables, thus developing a basis for conclusions and recommendations.

TABLE 1 Distribution of Respondents Based on Level of Purchasing Behavior among Gen Z Respondents

Level of Purchasing Behavior	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	42	21.00%
Medium	104	52.00%
High	54	27.00%
Total	200	100%

Source: Computed

The above table shows that a majority of respondents (52.0%) exhibit a moderate level of purchasing behavior, indicating balanced decision-making among Gen Z consumers. About 27.0% of respondents show a high level of purchasing behavior, suggesting strong engagement in buying activities influenced by various factors such as trends, promotions, and digital platforms. Meanwhile, 21.0% of respondents fall under the low category, indicating limited purchasing involvement.

Overall, the results suggest that most Gen Z consumers demonstrate moderate to high purchasing behavior, highlighting their active participation in the market and responsiveness to influencing factors.

8.1. AGE VS LEVEL OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Age is an important demographic factor that influences consumer purchasing behavior, as individuals at different age groups exhibit varying preferences, needs, and decision-making patterns. This section analyzes the relationship between age and the level of purchasing behavior among Generation Z consumers. The objective is to understand how purchasing involvement varies across different age categories and to identify which age group shows higher buying activity.

TABLE 2 Age vs Level of Purchasing Behavior (Two Way Table)

Age Group	Low	Medium	High	Total
16 – 18	12	20	10	42
19 – 21	14	36	18	68
22 – 24	10	28	16	54
25 – 27	6	20	10	36
Total	42	104	54	200

Source: Computed

The majority of respondents in all age groups fall under the medium purchasing behavior category. The 19–21 age group shows higher purchasing involvement, indicating that younger Gen Z consumers are more active in buying decisions.

8.2. GENDER VS LEVEL OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Gender plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior, as differences in preferences, attitudes, and spending patterns may exist between male and female consumers. This section examines the relationship between gender and the level of purchasing behavior among Gen Z consumers. The purpose is to identify whether purchasing behavior varies across genders and to understand the influence of gender on buying decisions.

TABLE 3 Gender vs Level of Purchasing Behavior (Two Way Table)

Gender	Low	Medium	High	Total
Male	24	58	30	112
Female	14	40	22	76
Prefer not to say	4	6	2	12
Total	42	104	54	200

Both male and female respondents show predominantly medium purchasing behavior. However, males have slightly higher participation in high purchasing behavior, reflecting their higher representation in the sample.

8.3. EDUCATION VS LEVEL OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Educational qualification influences consumers' awareness, preferences, and decision-making abilities. Individuals with different educational backgrounds may exhibit varying levels of purchasing behavior based on their knowledge and exposure to products and markets. This section analyzes the relationship between educational qualification and purchasing behavior to understand how education impacts buying patterns among Gen Z consumers.

TABLE 4 Education vs Level of Purchasing Behavior (Two Way Table)

Qualification	Low	Medium	High	Total
Higher Secondary	10	22	8	40
Diploma	8	20	8	36
UG	16	44	24	84
PG	8	18	14	40
Total	42	104	54	200

Undergraduate respondents show higher purchasing activity, especially in medium and high categories, indicating that education level influences purchasing behavior.

8.4. OCCUPATION VS LEVEL OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Occupation determines an individual's income level, lifestyle, and purchasing power, which directly influence buying behavior. This section examines the relationship between occupation and the level of purchasing behavior among respondents. The objective is to identify how purchasing behavior differs among students, employees, and other occupational groups.

TABLE 5 Occupation vs Level of Purchasing Behavior (Two Way Table)

Occupation	Low	Medium	High	Total
Student	20	50	26	96
Private Employee	10	28	14	52
Self-employed	6	16	6	28
Others	6	10	8	24
Total	42	104	54	200

8.5. INCOME VS LEVEL OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Income is a key factor influencing purchasing behavior, as it determines an individual's ability to spend and purchase goods and services. This section analyzes the relationship between income levels and purchasing behavior among Gen Z consumers. The aim is to understand how variations in income affect the frequency and intensity of purchasing decisions.

TABLE 6 Income vs Level of Purchasing Behavior (Two Way Table)

Income Level	Low	Medium	High	Total
Below ₹5,000	16	30	12	58
₹5,001 – ₹10,000	12	36	16	64
₹10,001 – ₹20,000	8	26	14	48
Above ₹20,000	6	12	12	30
Total	42	104	54	200

Respondents with higher income levels tend to show higher purchasing behavior, indicating that income influences buying capacity and frequency.

8.6. AREA OF RESIDENCE VS LEVEL OF PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

The area of residence, such as rural, semi-urban, or urban, can influence consumer behavior due to differences in accessibility, exposure, and lifestyle. This section examines the relationship between the area of residence and purchasing behavior among Gen Z consumers. The purpose is to identify whether geographical location affects buying patterns and preferences.

TABLE 7 Area of Residence vs Level of Purchasing Behavior (Two Way Table)

Area	Low	Medium	High	Total
Rural	18	36	18	72
Semi-Urban	14	36	18	68
Urban	10	32	18	60
Total	42	104	54	200

Purchasing behavior is relatively consistent across all areas, with a majority showing moderate behavior, indicating similar consumption patterns across rural, semi-urban, and urban respondents.

9. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation analysis is a statistical tool to study the strength and nature of the relationship between two variables. This research uses it, analyzing the relationships of price, brand image/brand trust issues, product aspects, trends and peer influence and social media to analyze Generation Z purchase behavior. This analysis aims to find whether these variables correlate strongly with buying and if the correlation is positive or negative. Changes Classify and identify the major players that impact the purchasing behavior of Gen Z consumers.

TABLE 8 Correlation between Influencing Factors and Purchasing Behavior

Variables	Purchasing Behavior
Price	0.52**
Brand Reputation	0.60**
Product Quality	0.58**
Trends	0.55**
Peer Influence	0.48**
Digital & Social Media	0.66**
Promotional Activities	0.62**
Brand Loyalty	0.64**

The correlation results indicate that all influencing factors have a positive and significant relationship with purchasing behavior. Among these, digital and social media ($r = 0.66$) show the strongest influence, followed by brand loyalty ($r = 0.64$) and promotional activities ($r = 0.62$). This suggests that Gen Z consumers are highly influenced by digital platforms and marketing strategies. Factors such as price, product quality, and trends also show moderate positive relationships, indicating their importance in purchase decisions.

10. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression analysis is an important statistical method to investigate the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Regression analysis was performed in this study to examine the impact of price, brand equity image, product quality, fashionability in market trends and peer influence as well as digital and social media marketing channels and activities, on the buying behaviour of consumers among Generation Z. Goal: Find out the key drivers of your purchasing behavior and quantify their importance. This analysis not only elaborates about the influence the variable has over Gen Z buying decisions, but also assists us in getting an accurate picture of future consumer behaviour.

TABLE 9 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Squared	Std. Error
1	0.72	0.518	0.505	0.46

TABLE 10 Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	51.8	7	7.4	35	0.000**

Residual	48.2	192	0.25		
Total	100	199			

TABLE 11 Coefficients

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.2	0.18	—	6.67	0
Price	0.18	0.05	0.22	3.6	0.000**
Brand Reputation	0.22	0.06	0.25	3.67	0.000**
Product Quality	0.2	0.05	0.23	4	0.000**
Trends	0.17	0.05	0.21	3.4	0.001**
Peer Influence	0.14	0.04	0.18	3.5	0.001**
Digital & Social Media	0.26	0.06	0.3	4.33	0.000**
Promotional Activities	0.24	0.05	0.28	4.8	0.000**

The regression results show that the model is statistically significant ($F = 35.00$, $p < 0.01$). The R Squared value (0.518) indicates that 51.8% of the variation in purchasing behavior is explained by the independent variables.

Among the factors, digital and social media ($\beta = 0.30$) and promotional activities ($\beta = 0.28$) have the strongest impact on purchasing behavior. Brand reputation and product quality also significantly influence purchase decisions. All variables show positive coefficients, indicating that an increase in these factors leads to higher purchasing behavior among Gen Z consumers.

11. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study provides insights about purchasing behaviour of Generation Z consumers in Nagapattinam District. The demographic analysis indicated that the largest group of respondents fell in the 19–21 age range, and more than half of the participants were Male. The participants are mostly undergraduates and students, and they come from a decent income level and are well distributed between rural, semi-urban and urban areas.

The results show that the bulk of respondents exhibit moderate purchasing behaviours, while many display a high level of involvement in purchasing. Trends, social media influence, price, product quality and brand image are the key selection criteria in the purchase decision process. Particularly critical are digital platforms and social media, where online reviews, advertisements, and influencers highly influence buying behavior.

Leaving the technology aside work-wise, this is how we use something called our shopping preference in favour of online shopping as compared to offline shopping for most convenience aspects. The buying decisions are greatly impacted by promotional activities like discounts, offers and advertisements. The respondents also demonstrate a solid awareness of brands with medium levels of brand loyalty.

Statistical analysis also shows that all influencing factors have a positive and significant effect on purchasing behavior. Regression Results show that the influences in these two domains have the most significant impact. The bottom line is that Gen Z consumers are more influenced by digital trends and value than by any purchases since before the introduction of mobile technology.

12. SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that marketers and businesses can employ strategies for marketing to Generation Z consumers, considering their preferences and behavior. Digital marketing, influencer marketing and content through social media should be a key focus as digital platforms have a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Promotional efforts or promotional strategies like discounts and other offers, limited-time-only sales offers, and visually attractive advertisements should be used very strategically to attract Gen Z consumers.

It is also critical for Organizations to focus on having high-quality products, competitive prices, and strong brand positioning since these greatly affect buying decisions. Developing new products that are contemporary and provide value can help cater to this market segment. Moreover, they must maintain an easy online shopping experience, which demands a physical store for the consumers to verify the products and build trust in businesses.

Similarly, personalized marketing and continual engagement, coupled with customer loyalty also help in building brand awareness. Constantly keep an eye to the altering consumer trends and attitudes. In summary, businesses must utilize a customer-oriented and digitally driven approach to reach and retain Generation Zs.

13. CONCLUSION

The current study investigated the buying pattern of Gen Z consumers in Nagapattinam District and the underlying factors governing purchaser choice. The results suggest that digital landscape, social media, advertising firms and other brand-related factors have a profound impact on Gen Z consumers. Equally influential are price, product quality, and brand reputation.

This study shows that while most Gen Z consumers prefer online shopping because it is very convenient, offline channels are preferred as the evaluation stage before purchasing. Also disclose, Their buying decisions are greatly influenced by promotions like discounts and advertisement. Moreover, they are highly brand-aware and somewhat loyal to brands.

According to the statistical analysis shown in Table 6, all the influencing factors have a significant positive influence on purchasing behavior, with digital influence and promotional activities being king. In Gen Z, this indicates the shift towards digitization of consumer behaviour.

Overall, it is essential for any business wanting to compete in the marketplace today to have a grasp of what Gen Z wants and how they behave. By implementing new and digital-centric, consumer-oriented strategies approach, organizations can successfully reach Gen Z consumers and improve overall business performance.

REFERENCES

- [1] U. A. Agarwal, "Examining the impact of social exchange relationships on innovative work behaviour," *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, vol. 20, no. 3/4, pp. 102–120, Jun. 2014, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/tpm-01-2013-0004>.
- [2] J. Bhatnagar, "Talent management strategy of employee engagement in indian ITES employees: Key to retention," *Employee Relations*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. 640–663, Oct. 2007.
- [3] S. Chandrasekar, "A study on impact of job satisfaction on productivity in the food industry," *Journal of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda*, vol. 58, no. 1 IV, pp. 435–441, 2024.
- [4] S. Chandrasekar, and R. Natarajan, "Statistical interpretations on stress management in KISCOL industry of Nagapattinam district." *Journal of Computational and Theoretical Nanoscience*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 620–626, 2021.
- [5] S. Chandrasekar, and N. Kaliyaperumal, "Statistics analysis of the emotional intelligence of the employees with special reference to private industries in Nagapattinam district," *Our Heritage Journal*, vol. 22. no. 1, pp. 755–763, 2020.
- [6] P. Kotler and K. L. Keller, "Kotler, P. and Keller, K.L. (2012) Marketing Management. 14th Edition, Pearson Education. - References - Scientific Research Publishing," *www.scirp.org*, 2012. <https://www.scirp.org/reference/ReferencesPapers?ReferenceID=1839933>
- [7] Schiffman Leon G, *Consumer Behavior*, 11/e. 2015.
- [8] M. Solomon, "Consumer Behavior Buying, Having, and Being Thirteenth Edition," Nov. 2018. Available: <https://www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/preface/0/1/3/5/0135225698.pdf>
- [9] P. Singh and N. Loncar, "Pay Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intent," *Relations industrielles*, vol. 65, no. 3, p. 470, 2010, doi: <https://doi.org/10.7202/044892ar>.
- [10] K. Srinivasan, and P. Ilango, "Work stress and employee performance with special reference to manufacturing industries," *International Journal of Applied Research*, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 669–672, 2016.