

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Digital interaction effect on Gen Z purchasers' behavior in the digital era. Members of this generation are knowledgeable about technology and were born roughly around the mid-1990s to the early 2010s. Turner (2022), they are especially active on online platforms, which affect how they connect with brands and what they decide to buy. Social media marketing strategies are employed throughout different online platforms to leverage consumers, brand loyalty, and sales within the e-commerce sector. (Kaplan, 2015). Background: West Coast Region The Gambia's is experiencing an escalate in e-commerce owing to increased internet capacity and mobile usage. As a result, it is necessary to comprehend how social media marketing affects Gen Z's brand involvement and purchasing decisions.

Social media marketing includes sponsored ads, content marketing, influencer marketing, interactive interaction, and other tactics. Customer preferences and behavior have been significantly impacted by social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Facebook as well as Twitter (Duffett, 2017). Gen Z who are digital natives are more likely to react positively to social media marketing tactics that emphasize peer recommendations, authenticity, and personalization than to traditional marketing tactics (Zhou et al., 2021). This primarily seeks to determine the elements that contribute to social media marketing for small businesses in The Gambia. However, the extent to which such measurements effectively contribute to Gen Z brand loyalty and purchase behavior is all but coined.

Due to widespread internet access and the expansion of digital payment methods the e-commerce sector is gradually growing although the Gambia is still in its infancy. Given that the West Coast Region is the most populous and economically active region of the country it can be an area of dominance for the growing e-commerce (World Bank, 2020). Social media is among the most beneficial platforms for marketing and ensuring that your potential customers will interact with your digital assets, so any business to master digital marketing to make Gen Z consumers interact with them. Due to recent technology developments, the majority of consumers are now members of Generation Z (Dhani et al., 2025). This generation's increased investment demonstrates a shift in perspective on financial management and investment, particularly aided by technological advancements and convenient information availability (Armansyah et al., 2023).

In Surabaya, one of the biggest cities in Indonesia, research by Paseru et al. (2023) found that social media's influence and the ease of access to information through technology play a significant role in investment decisions among generation Z. These factors have the potential to significantly impact people's mindsets and economic behavior, particularly among generation Z. The internet is a tool that people utilize for communication and information access. The internet is quickly becoming one of the most extensively used forms of media among Gambians. The Gambia Internet Service Providers Association (GISPA) provided data that demonstrated this issue.

Table1.1. Overview of Social Media Marketing Adoption and Use of Connected Devices and Services in The Gambia (2024–2025)

Total Population 2.81M	Cellular mobile connections 3.15M	Individuals using the internet 1.52M	Social Media User Identities 449 THOUSAND
Year on Year Change +2.5%	Year on Year Change +4.5%	Year on Year Change +2.5%	Year on Year Change +32.0%
Urbanization 65.4%	Total vs Population 113%	Total vs Population 54.2%	Total vs Population 16.1%
2025			
Total Population 2.79M	Cellular mobile connections 3.02M	Individuals using the internet 1.28M	Social Media User Identities 404THOUSAND
Year on Year Change +2.3%	Year on Year Change +4.3%	Year on Year Change +2.3%	Year on Year Change +11.2%
Urbanization 64.7%	Total vs Population 107%	Total vs Population 45.9%	Total vs Population 14.4%

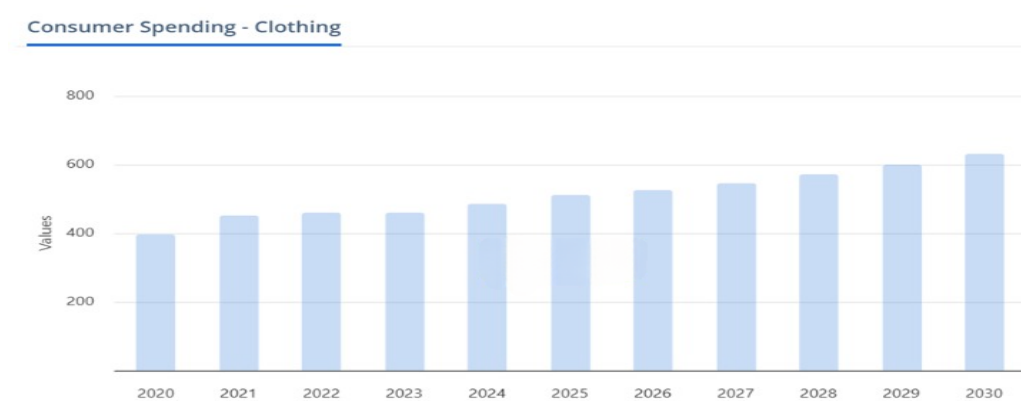
Source: www.datareportal.com

According to (Adolph, 2016) Social media has significantly changed the marketing environment by enabling stakeholders and customers to impact brands through online word-of-mouth. To make sense of this field, researchers have concentrated on comprehending the extent, character, and application of social media. They have also unavoidably attempted to investigate the elements that impact usage and the eventual effects of social media use, for both businesses and consumers. The Gambia's digital population, with 2.81 million connected devices, is growing at 2.5% year-on-year. Urban areas dominate, with mobile connectivity exceeding the total. Internet users are 54.2% and social media usage is 32% in 2024. The Gambia's digital connectivity has slightly declined compared to 2024 with a total population of 2.79 million connected devices and services. Cellular mobile connections have decreased by 4.3% while internet users have decreased to 1.28 million. Social media user identities have

dropped indicating potential issues with access affordability or data accuracy adjustments. However, the digital media user base increased by 11.2% between early 2024 and early 2025, with 30.1% of the population using social media.

To evaluate respondents' online buying habits and product feedback preferences, a pilot study was carried out in West Coast Region the Gambia, with a special emphasis on Gen Z customers. 50% of respondents made 1 to 3 online purchases, according to the first chart "Frequency of Online Purchases" suggesting that the most typical activity is occasional shopping. 20% of those surveyed said they had made 4 to 6 online purchases, and another 20% said they had never done so. Only 10% of respondents made purchases more than 7 times indicating that this demographic does not often engage in very regular internet shopping. The "Product Rating of Purchases" which is the second one shows how interested the respondents were in post-purchase reviews. It shows that 25% of respondents gave moderate ratings (3 to 4 stars) while 30% offered low ratings (1 to 2 stars). It is interesting to note that 25% of customers did not review their purchases at all, and just 20% gave their goods the highest rating (5 stars). These results imply that many respondents are either not completely involved in rating behavior or are unhappy with their purchases. Overall, the pre-survey results show that although a sizable percentage of Gen Z customers in the sample shop online, there are discernible gaps in consistent high-quality feedback activity as well as variations in frequency and satisfaction levels. Consumer behavior involves making decisions before and after purchasing goods and services including research on brands and product quality (Kinanti et al., 2024). Customers seek information on quality once they understand their needs. Internet shopping offers comfort and ease, as noted by Kotler and Armstrong in Aprilia (2013).

Diagram1.4. Impulsive Buying in the Gambia



(Source: www.statista.com)

According to (Moses et al., 2021) Impulsive purchasing a common strategy in e-commerce can have both positive and negative consequences. It can negatively impact customers' emotional well-being and financial security making it difficult to save money. Careless spending can lead to debt accumulation, bankruptcy, and poverty. The Gambia's Gen Z known for their fashion-conscious lifestyle is particularly prone to impulsive buying. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat influence instant buying decisions while flash deals influencers and internet trends also encourage last-minute purchases. These purchases are driven by social status, self-expression, and easy access to mobile money services(Rashmi et al., 2022). It had primarily been brought on by the welcoming atmosphere, easy payment methods, tempting promotions, and well-equipped facilities. Consumers are at ease at the mall; thus, it frequently serves as a place to unwind after a demanding workday. Additionally, it encourages people to buy things without beforehand planning. Impulsive buying in traditional markets, however, will be different because the conditions there are very different from those in modern markets(Wiwiki Iryanti et al., 2019).

Table1.5. Data on Influencer Marketing on Instagram in the Gambia 2025

No	Name	Followers	ER	Country	Top Influence	Potential Reach
1	What's on Gambia	126.6k	2.3%	Gambia		38k
2	BinBuba's Creation	72.5k	0.46%	Gambia	Fashion and AC Modeling	21.7k
3	Kerr Fatou	63.7k	0.54%	Gambia	Fashion	19.1k
4	Kaddy Joanne Walton	63.4k	2.5%	Gambia		19k
5	Gambia Talent Promotion	59.8k	0.54%	Gambia		17.9k

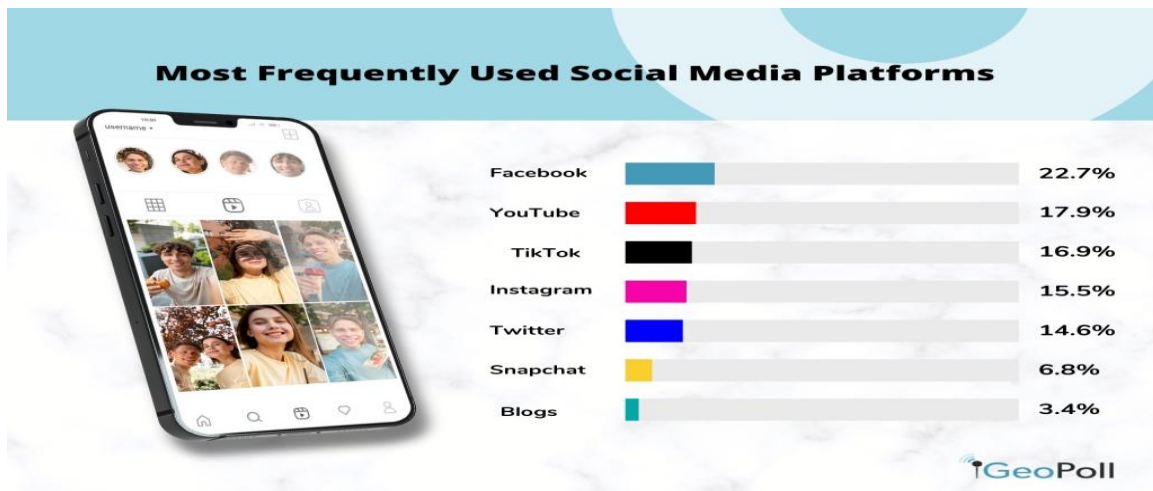
Source: www.starngage.com

According to (Bagus et al., 2024) Influencer marketing a blend of traditional and digital marketing techniques is gaining popularity as an online advertising medium. It combines content-driven campaigns with celebrity endorsements enabling efficient collaboration between influencers and companies. Using social media personalities to increase brand visibility and engagement influencer marketing is now recognized as a strategic technique in digital marketing (Sutiono et al., 2024). This tactic makes use of websites like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube where influencers can connect with a wide audience, as explained by Prasetya et al. (2021). Because they frequently have devoted followers who respect their viewpoints, these influencers are very successful at promoting products.

The Gambia's top five Instagram influencers in June 2025 are "What's On-Gambia," "BinBuba's Creation," "Kerr Fatou," "Kaddy Joanne Walton," and "Gambian Talents Promotion." These influencers have a significant impact on Gen Z viewers, with "What's On-Gambia" having 126.6K followers and a 2.3% interaction rate. They cater to

youth-focused content, fashion, modeling, and local entertainment, influencing trends, lifestyle, and purchasing habits in The Gambia.

Diagram 1.6 Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms



(Source: www.geopoll.com)

The Social Media Sites that people use the most is Facebook boasts an incredible 170 million users, making it one of the most famous social networking platforms in Africa. Due to its widespread use across languages and cultures, this platform serves as a bridge to connect individuals from various origins. According to recent research, Facebook leads the field in terms of active users with 22.78% of participants utilizing the network to follow influencers. YouTube came in second with a noteworthy 17.95% active user rate. With 16.95% of participants showing interest in the new and popular TikTok it is evident that this platform is a favorite for sharing short-form visual material. The percentage of active users on Instagram was 15.54%, followed by Twitter with 14.60% and Snapchat with 6.8%. Blogs trailed her closely with 3.42%.

The goal of social media marketing strategies is often to produce content that captures the attention of viewers and inspires individuals to spread the word to their online communities. As an advertisement passes from one user to another it most likely resonates since it appears to

come from a trustworthy external source rather than the business or brand itself (Bajpai Vivek et al., 2012) has stated as much. Because of this word-of-mouth marketing drives this type of advertising resulting in earned media as opposed to sponsored media. These days anyone with an internet connection may quickly access social media platforms.

For businesses, better customer service and brand awareness are generally the results of more communication, social media also offers businesses a comparatively low-cost venue for launching marketing initiatives on various websites users can interact with goods or services and users' prior experiences interacting on social networking sites make that conversation feel intimate by allowing individual followers to "repost" or "retweet" comments made by the product being advertised, social media sites like YouTube, Google Plus, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs allow the message to be viewed by all of the user connections, reaching a wider audience. Social networking sites allow businesses and products to communicate and engage with specific fans; this one-on-one interaction may increase the loyalty of potential customers and followers; brands may target a very narrow group of people by selecting which users to follow on those websites, social media platforms act as word-of-mouth and more people visit the product or business as a result of the information being shared and repeated.

According to Iblasi (2016), social media marketing is done entirely online with a website and an internet connection. Using social networking sites and the internet as marketing tools is known as social marketing. Social media advertising is popular among businesses these days due to its ease of use and time-saving features, which allow them to produce content that will help users, interact with customers, launch new goods, and reach a larger audience. Digital media advertising and promotion frequently use a variety of interpersonal media platforms, such as

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and others. Compared to other platforms, Facebook is presently the most widely used communication platform globally (TPG, 2021).

Additionally, Facebook has 449 thousand users in the Gambia, meaning that practically all of the country's mobile phone users utilize Facebook (TPG, 2021). A chance for businesses to vie for the greatest content to draw in potential customers. Customers can have impulsive buying feelings and make purchases without considering the potential implications when presented with varied and engaging content. Many Gambian customers tend to shop impulsively which contributes to the impulsive buying phenomenon in the Gambia. According to studies conducted in the United States, Europe, and Asia, over half of the participants in each study including the Gambia engage in impulsive buying. It indicates that society has accepted impulsive purchasing. Economic growth is also influenced by communication. On the internet, human-to-human communication is changing quickly. Distance, time, location, culture, and language are all broken down by the internet (Achmad Zainal Abidin et al., 2021). The character mindset of this generation is receptive to new experiences in life. The impulsive age group is one of this generation's bad behaviors. One indicator of the young people's way of life is their propensity to use social media to shop for new culinary treats, particularly when the social media display features eye-catching images. The use of technology to expand business, sell, and buy goods is known as electronic commerce. It is used to market and purchase a variety of goods and services both digital and physical. According to website¹, Surabaya was formerly the biggest city in the Dutch East Indies and a commercial hub for the archipelago comparable to Shanghai and Hong Kong. Thus, the advent of the internet undoubtedly affects businesspeople as small medium and large entrepreneurs use internet media to further their business endeavors and influence the

economy ensuring the success of online businesses like marketplaces, e-commerce, and online shops in Surabaya (Sugeng Purwanto et al., 2023).

Generation Z has a lot of potential as consumers, even though the majority of them do not have their source of income, but they do have a sizable budget. Research supports this (Grigoreva et al., 2021). Because they already have a job or income, members of Generation X and Y make these purchases. Businesses must innovate and adjust as e-commerce develops further to remain competitive and satisfy the dynamic needs of the online market. As a result, the quality of delivery services now plays a major role in e-commerce platform purchasing decisions, in addition to the variety of product listings and website design. Kusumawardani et al., (2020) claim that logistics which includes moving items from seller to buyer has a big impact on buyer contentment and intentions to purchase.

According to (Amaliya et al., 2024) After the Millennial generation, Generation Z, or simply Gen Z, is now a major influence on how e-commerce will develop in the future. This group is well-known for its remarkable aptitude for navigating and succeeding in the digital sphere. It is also quite active in emerging areas and has a significant influence on global retail trends. Thus, in their decision-making process elements like shipping costs, delivery schedule flexibility, and delivery tracking visibility are becoming more and more significant (Grewal et al., 2017). E-commerce success can be significantly impacted by these logistical factors, which can either promote or discourage intentions to buy.

Additionally, delivery tracking visibility is a practical concern that significantly influences online buying behavior. Customers from Generation Z who are accustomed to fast information also anticipate this convenience when they shop. They must be able to track shipments in real time get constant updates on the status of deliveries and precisely forecast arrival timeframes

(Rashid et al., 2024). According to a McKinsey analysis from 2020, consumers now expect real-time tracking, and delays or a lack of communication can irritate them and possibly force them to back out of a transaction. Generation Z's entire purchasing experience is improved by transparent delivery, which gives them a sense of control and trust in the seller (Yang et al., 2016).

According to Waworuntu et al. (2022), Gen Z is the generation of individuals that uses social media and advertising the most. Instagram is the most popular content category among Gen Z, and they spend an average of two hours a day on these sites. Because they believe traditional advertising to be inauthentic, Gen Z is more liable to be persuaded by social media influencers and user-generated content than by traditional advertising. Memes and influencer marketing are therefore good ways to interact with this generation. Authenticity, sensitivity, and raw content should be given top priority by brands hoping to attract Gen Z. They ought to welcome user-generated content and collaborate with content producers. (Ben Messaoud, 2022) Consumer behavior shifts are a significant element influencing the number of people switching to online shopping, one factor influencing consumer behavior is digital internet marketing, digital advertisements are the practice of using social media to promote goods or services. E-commerce customers' shopping decisions are influenced by social media marketing, which also raises brand exposure.

In conclusion, social media continues to have a substantial influence on consumer behavior while also changing the contours of e-commerce globally, and businesses in The Gambia's West Coast Region must adapt to these transformations taking place in the digital space. Therefore, this study will examine the powerful force of social media marketing in converting a purchase/increasing brand engagement among Gen Z which can derive helpful implications for marketers, business owners, and policymakers. Such research will provide multiple benefits

including a greater insight into how consumers have adopted digital platforms and to what extent they have integrated into them as relevant purchasing and marketing channels.

Analyzing the elements influencing Gen Z's buying behavior will enable e-commerce companies to adapt their marketing strategies according to consumer needs and desires. This study will contribute to the global discussion about the influence of online advertising on business success and consumer interaction in developing economies, given the expansion of the digital industry in The Gambian nation. The current research uses both theoretical frameworks and actual data to try to offer practical guidance and recommendations for businesses looking to enhance their online visibility and match their marketing tactics with the expectations and values of Gen Z.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to close this gap by examining how social media marketing strategies influence Gen Z e-commerce purchasing decisions and brand engagement in the West Coast Region. This research will explore the effectiveness of different digital marketing techniques, such as influencer collaborations and interactive content to targeted advertisements, and will help businesses understand which strategies work best in the Gambian market.

1.2. PROBLEM FORMULATION

The problem formulation in this study is as follows, which is based on the background description given above:

1. Does social media advertising impact Gen Z Purchasing decision?
2. Does Influencer Marketing Impact on Gen Z Purchasing Decision
3. Does Impulsive buying mediate the impact of social media advertising on Gen Z purchasing decision?

4. Does Impulsive buying mediate the impact of Influencer Marketing on Gen Z purchasing decision?

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Given the above-described challenges, the following are the study objectives:

1. To analyze how social media advertising impacts Gen Z purchasing decisions.
2. To analyze how Influencer Marketing Impacts Gen Z Purchasing Decision.
3. To analyze how Impulsive buying mediates the impact of Social Media Advertising on Gen Z purchasing decision.
4. To analyze how Impulsive buying mediates impact Influencer Marketing on Gen Z Purchasing Decision.

1.4. BENEFITS OF RESEARCH

It is expected that this study will have benefits such as:

1. Theoretical Support

The current research uses digital engagement theory and traditional marketing to examine how internet usage affects Generation Z within West Coast Region The Gambia's. It examines sociocultural and economic factors influencing purchasing patterns and brand perception contributing to the understanding of social marketing and consumer behavior.

2. Practical Aspect

a) For Companies:

This study helps businesses find the most effective social media marketing strategies for Gen Z customers, which boosts engagement and revenue. In the highly competitive world of e-commerce, it helps businesses adjust their marketing plans, distribute

advertising dollars, and improve service delivery by providing insight into consumer behavior.

b) Regarding Academic Institutions:

The investigation contributes to what is previously known about digital marketing, e-commerce, and consumer behavior. It is a valuable resource for business and marketing education, assisting instructors in creating pertinent course materials. It also leads to fresh conversations on how new digital phenomena affect customer involvement and purchasing patterns.

c) For Scholars:

This study aims to enable future researchers to examine a range of subjects such as the effects of digital advertisement, IT purchase trends, and the use of e-commerce products and services. The study provides the frameworks and characteristics that facilitate additional research on the issues of how different marketing strategies or social media influencers affect consumer behavior in particular nations.