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**International Journal on Research and Development - A
Management Review**

ISSN: 2319 - 5479

Volume 15 Issue 01, 2026

Sustainable Digital Promotions and Gen Z Preferences for Smart Gadgets: A Study on Instagram Marketing Influence in Chennai

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Peer Review Information	Abstract
<p><i>Submission: 10 Feb 2026</i> <i>Revision: 22 Feb 2026</i> <i>Acceptance: 03 March 2026</i></p>	<p>In the digital age, Generation Z represents a key demographic for Technology brands, particularly in the smart gadget market. With the increasing environmental awareness among younger consumers, sustainable digital marketing has become a key strategy for smart gadget brands. This study explores the influence of sustainable digital promotions on Gen Z consumers' preferences and satisfaction regarding smart gadgets, focusing specifically on Instagram-based marketing in Chennai. Generation Z, being highly active on social media and socially conscious, responds differently to brand messaging that emphasizes ethical practices, environmental responsibility, and product sustainability. Instagram, as a visually dominant and influencer-driven platform, plays a vital role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. The research focuses on how Instagram-based promotional content, including influencer endorsement, brand campaigns, and eco-conscious messaging, shapes the perception and purchase intentions of Gen Z users toward smart gadgets. It analyzes key factors such as content trust, influencer credibility, brand transparency, and post-purchase satisfaction are also examined to understand their impact on Gen Z consumer behavior.</p>
<p>Keywords</p> <p><i>Sustainable Digital Marketing, Instagram Marketing, Generation Z, Purchase Intention, Smart Gadgets</i></p>	

Introduction

The rise of social media has transformed the way brands communicate and engage with consumers, especially among younger generation who are constantly connected to digital platforms. Gen Z this generation, born between the mid 1990s and early 2010s, is known for its digital fluency, heightened social consciousness, and strong preference for personalized, authentic brand interactions. One of the most influential platforms among Gen Z is Instagram, a space where visual storytelling, influencer marketing, and brand authenticity converge. As Instagram becomes a preferred channel for marketing smart gadgets, brands are leveraging its reach to promote not only product features but also their commitment to sustainability. This shift reflects a broader trend where environmental and ethical considerations are becoming central to consumer

decision-making, particularly among younger audiences.

Smart gadgets, including wearables, smartphones, and connected devices, represent a significant part of Gen Z's lifestyle. These products are not only viewed for their functionality but also as reflections of personal values and identity. Gen Z consumers are increasingly seeking product that align with their ethical and environmental beliefs, making sustainability a key differentiator in marketing strategies. Therefore, the way these gadgets are promoted particularly on platforms like Instagram has a profound impact on consumer perception, trust, and purchase intention. This study aims to explore the intersection of sustainability digital marketing and Gen Z consumer behavior, with a specific focus on Instagram promotion in Chennai. It seeks to

understand how eco-conscious messaging, influencer endorsement, and transparent branding influence Gen Zs consumers' preferences and satisfaction regarding smart gadgets.

Objectives of the study

- To analyze how Instagram-based promotional elements (influencer endorsements, eco-conscious campaigns, and brand messaging) influence Gen Z's perception and purchase intention.
- To examine the influence of Instagram-driven sustainable marketing on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention, preference, and overall satisfaction.

Scope of the study

The present study investigates the impact of sustainable digital promotion on Instagram on Generation Z consumers' preferences and satisfaction in the smart gadget segment, with specific reference to the urban market of Chennai, India. The research specifically evaluates how promotional elements such as influencer endorsement, eco-conscious brand campaigns, and transparent messaging shape Gen Z's perception and purchase-related decisions. The scope is limited to Instagram as the primary social media platform due to its high popularity among Gen Z and its strong visual and influencer-driven nature.

Limitation of the study

The study is subject to certain limitations that may influence the interpretation of its results. The research is confined to Instagram as the sole social media platforms, and therefore the results may not be applicable to other digital platforms. The study focuses only on Generation Z consumers in Chennai, which limit the generalizability of the finding to other age group or geographical regions. The study relies on self-reported data collected through a questionnaire, which may be affected by response bias and individual opinions. The use of convenience sampling and a limited sample size may also affect the representativeness of the results.

Review of Literature

Mudasir Ahmad Tass et al (2025) this study investigates the factors influencing green purchase intentions and green consumption behavior among Generation Z using smartPLS for analysis and data collected from over 298 respondents. this relationship underscores the need for marketing strategies and digital engagement tools that align with the environmental values of younger consumers.

Xiao Liu & Xiaoyoung Zheng (2024) studies show that social media influencers significantly impact consumer attitudes, guided by the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. Informative content, authenticity, and homophily enhance parasocial relationships, boosting purchase intentions and brand credibility. Persuasion knowledge can weaken the credibility link but does not affect purchase intention, highlighting the nuanced role of influencers in digital marketing.

Sandy Bulmer et al (2024) this study research on Instagram brand messaging highlights how authenticity in sustainability and activism can drive both positive and negative consumer responses. A case study of Patagonia, with 104 posts and 5541 responses, identifies eight consumer reaction types. The study extends the concept of "authentic brand sustainability activism," offering theoretical insights and managerial implications for brand communication.

Anitha Nallasivam & S Mahalakshmi (2023) Gen Z, comprising about 250 million in India, increasingly uses Instagram not only for social connection but also as a marketplace shaped by post-covid digital transformation. With heightened concern for sustainability and ethics, Gen Z present marketers both challenges and opportunities. Studies note Instagram's role in influencing purchase intentions through targeted digital marketing that connects conscious consumers with suitable brands.

Research Methodology

Research is defined as a systematic and scientific process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to gain insights into a specific problem. In this study, the research methodology is designed to examine the influence of Instagram-based sustainable digital promotions on purchase intention and Gen Z consumer's preference. The methodology provides a structured approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation to ensure reliable and valid results.

Data Collection

The data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. The source of primary data is through a structured questionnaire based on the objectives. The secondary data were collected from books, journals, websites and other published sources.

Sample design

A self designed questionnaire was developed an given to general public. The questionnaire focused on sustainable promotional content on Instagram, influencer credibility, content trust,

purchase intention, and consumer preference. The sample size of the study is 108.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1:

S.No	Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N=108)	Percentage (100%)
1	Age	16 – 18	16	14.8%
		19 – 21	21	19.4%
		22 – 24	49	45.4%
		25+	22	20.4%
2	Gender	Male	50	46.3%
		Female	58	53.7%
3	Education Level	Higher Secondary	24	22.2%
		Undergraduate	56	25.9%
		Postgraduate	28	51.9%

Interpretation

This study involved 108 respondents, predominantly from the 22 – 24 years age group (45.4%), followed by 25 years and above (20.4%). While the least represented were 16 – 18 years (14.8%). The gender distribution was fairly balanced with 53.7% females and 46.3%

males. In terms of education, more than half (51.9%) were postgraduates, 25.9% undergraduates, and 22.2% higher secondary students. Overall, the sample mainly represents educated young adults, especially those in their early twenties.

Table 2: Instagram-Based sustainability Promotion - Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation

S.No	Statement	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation
1	I follow influencers who promote smart gadgets on Instagram	3.768519	1.115787
2	I have seen brands promote environment friendly smart gadgets on Instagram	3.888889	1.113497
3	I trust influencers who promote eco-conscious smart gadgets.	3.916667	1.068889
4	Sustainable messages in Instagram promotions increase my interest in the brand.	3.944444	1.00311
5	I prefer brands that highlight ethical and green practices in their Instagram posts.	3.861111	1.131192
6	Instagram promotions influence my perception of a brand’s values	3.925926	1.029506
7	I am more likely to buy a gadget if it is promoted through a transparent and authentic campaign	3.824074	1.109253
8	Instagram campaigns with sustainability themes are more appealing to me than regular advertisements.	3.861111	1.089099

Interpretation

The results show that respondents generally agree with the role of Instagram-based sustainable promotions, as all weighted mean range between 3.76 and 3.94. the highest agreement is on sustainability messages increasing interest in brands (3.94), while the lowest is on following influencers (3.76).

standard deviations near 1 indicate consistent responses across participant.

Table 3: Purchase Intention on Gen Z Preference for Smart Gadgets – Regression

Summary Output

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Srd. Error of the Estimate
1	0.783	0.613	0.610	0.598

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	60.133	1	60.133	168.164	.000
Residual	37.903	106	0.358	-	.000
Total	98.037	107	-	-	-

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.125	0.222	5.067	.000
Purchase Intention	0.724	0.056	12.968	.000

Hypothesis

H₁ : Purchase intention has a significant influence on Gen Z consumers’ preference for smart gadgets through Instagram marketing

H₀ : Purchase intention has no significant influence on Gen Z consumers’ preference for smart gadgets through Instagram marketing.

Interpretation

The results show a strong positive relationship between purchase intention and Gen Z consumers’ preference for smart gadgets ($\beta=0.724$, $p<0.001$). This model explains 61.3% of the variance in consumer preference ($R^2=0.613$) and is statistically significant ($F=168.16$, $p<0.001$). This finding suggest that higher purchase intention, influenced by Instagram-based sustainable digital promotions, significantly enhances Gen Z consumers’ preference for smart gadgets in Chennai.

Conclusion

The study examined the influence of sustainable digital promotions on Gen Z consumers’ preference for smart gadgets, with specific reference to Instagram marketing in Chennai. The

findings indicate that Instagram has emerged as a powerful digital platform for emerged Gen Z consumers by delivering sustainability-oriented content that emphasizes eco-friendly practices, ethical branding, and transparency. Such promotional strategies significantly shape consumers attitudes, trust, and overall perception of smart gadget brands. The study reveals that Gen Z consumers show a strong preference for brands that actively communicate sustainability initiative through Instagram posts, influencer endorsements, and interactive content. Sustainable digital promotions enhance brand awareness and positively influence purchase intention and consumer preference. The findings indicate that purchase intention serves as a key link between digital promotional efforts and consumer decision-making, highlighting the effectiveness of sustainability-focused messaging. Sustainable Instagram marketing strengthens consumer engagement, brand preference, and long-term customer satisfaction among Gen Z consumers. Adopting authentic and value-driven digital marketing strategies aligned with Gen Z’s environmental concerns can help smart gadget companies achieve a competitive advantage in the digital marketplace.

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