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AI-Driven Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention: The Roles of Brand Trust, Consumer Citizenship Behaviour, and Digital Participation among Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence has become an integral component of modern social media marketing, yet limited empirical evidence exists on how AI-driven strategies influence purchase behaviour among Generation Z consumers. This study aims to examine the impact of AI-driven social media marketing on purchase intention, with the mediating roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, and the moderating role of Generation Z orientation. Data were collected from 487 Generation Z consumers in Chennai using a structured questionnaire and analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that AI-driven social media marketing significantly enhances brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, which in turn positively influence purchase intention. Consumer citizenship behaviour emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention. Generation Z was found to strengthen the effects of AI-driven marketing on behavioural engagement and purchase intention**.** AI-driven social media marketing plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour by fostering trust, encouraging engagement, and driving purchasing decisions among young digital consumers.

Keywords: AI-Driven Social Media Marketing, Brand Trust, Consumer Citizenship Behaviour, Digital Participation, Generation Z, Purchase Intention
JEL Classifications: M31, M37, C12, O33

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped the way businesses interact with consumers. Among these technologies, social media has emerged as one of the most powerful tools for communication, engagement, and value creation. What began as platforms for social interaction have now evolved into complex digital ecosystems where brands compete for attention, loyalty, and trust. In recent years, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into social media marketing has further transformed this environment by enabling brands to analyse consumer data in real time, personalise content, automate interactions, and predict consumer behaviour with unprecedented accuracy.

Today's marketing environment is no longer driven solely by creative content or promotional messaging. Instead, it is increasingly shaped by intelligent systems that learn from user behaviour and adapt communication strategies accordingly. AI-driven tools such as recommendation engines, chatbots, sentiment analysis, and predictive analytics allow brands to deliver highly relevant and timely messages to individual consumers. This technological shift has changed not only how marketing campaigns are designed but also how consumers perceive, evaluate, and respond to brands.

Among all consumer groups, Generation Z represents the most digitally immersed and technologically fluent segment. Born into

a world of smartphones, high-speed internet, and social platforms, Gen Z consumers rely heavily on social media for product discovery, brand evaluation, peer communication, and purchasing decisions. Unlike previous generations, they expect brands to understand their preferences, respond instantly, and communicate authentically. As a result, the effectiveness of AI-driven social media marketing is particularly influential in shaping Gen Z's attitudes and behavioural intentions.

A critical outcome of these digital interactions is the development of brand trust. In an online environment characterised by information overload, advertising saturation, and increasing consumer scepticism, trust becomes a central factor that determines whether consumers are willing to engage with a brand and consider purchasing its products. When AI-driven marketing delivers consistent, relevant, and transparent communication, consumers are more likely to perceive the brand as reliable and credible. Over time, this trust forms the foundation for deeper psychological connections between consumers and brands.

Beyond trust, modern consumers increasingly express their relationships with brands through active participation in digital spaces. Consumer citizenship behaviour reflects this transformation in the consumer–brand relationship. It refers to voluntary and supportive actions such as recommending brands, defending them against criticism, sharing content, assisting other consumers, and providing constructive feedback. These behaviours extend beyond basic purchasing and play a vital role in strengthening brand communities and enhancing brand reputation in the social media environment.

At the same time, digital participation has become an essential indicator of consumer engagement. Through activities such as liking, commenting, sharing, reviewing, and creating brand-related content, consumers actively contribute to the visibility and influence of brands on social media platforms. High levels of digital participation not only reflect stronger psychological attachment but also shape the purchasing decisions of other users by creating social proof and reinforcing brand credibility.

Although organisations are investing heavily in AI-driven social media strategies, there remains limited empirical understanding of how these practices influence purchase intention through the combined roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation—particularly among Gen Z consumers. Furthermore, existing research has paid insufficient attention to the moderating role of Generation Z in strengthening these relationships, despite its central importance as a dominant digital consumer group.

Addressing this gap is essential for both academic research and managerial practice. A clearer understanding of how AI-driven social media marketing translates into purchase intention through psychological and behavioural mechanisms can help organisations design more effective marketing strategies, allocate resources more efficiently, and build sustainable relationships with young consumers.

Therefore, the present study investigates the impact of AI-driven social media marketing on purchase intention, examining the mediating roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, while also analysing the moderating influence of Generation Z. By integrating technological, psychological, and behavioural perspectives, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in digital marketing and provide actionable insights for practitioners operating in an increasingly data-driven marketplace.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. AI-Driven Social Media Marketing

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence into social media marketing has fundamentally transformed the way firms engage with consumers. AI technologies enable brands to analyse vast amounts of consumer data, predict individual preferences, automate communication, and personalise marketing content at scale (Huang and Rust, 2021). These capabilities allow firms to move beyond traditional mass communication toward highly customised interactions, thereby enhancing consumer engagement and marketing effectiveness.

Davenport et al. (2020) argued that AI-driven marketing significantly improves decision-making quality by offering real-time insights into consumer behaviour and enabling proactive marketing responses. Similarly, Grewal et al. (2020) emphasised that AI has become a central element of modern marketing strategy, providing firms with new tools for customer acquisition, retention, and relationship management.

In the context of social media, AI facilitates content recommendation, sentiment analysis, chatbot interactions, and predictive targeting, all of which contribute to more interactive and meaningful consumer experiences. As social platforms become increasingly algorithm-driven, AI-driven social media marketing is now considered a critical determinant of brand success in competitive digital markets.

2.2. Brand Trust

Brand trust plays a central role in shaping consumer behaviour in online environments characterised by uncertainty and information overload. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005) defined brand trust as consumers' confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity. Trust reduces perceived risk, strengthens emotional attachment, and increases the likelihood of long-term brand relationships.

Several studies have confirmed the strong influence of brand trust on purchase intention and brand loyalty. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) demonstrated that trust enhances both behavioural loyalty and attitudinal commitment. In digital contexts, where consumers lack physical interaction with products, trust becomes even more critical (Gefen et al., 2003).

AI-driven social media marketing contributes significantly to trust formation by providing consistent, relevant, and transparent communication. When consumers experience personalised and

responsive brand interactions, their confidence in the brand increases, reinforcing trust and commitment (Huang and Rust, 2021).

2.3. Consumer Citizenship Behaviour

Consumer citizenship behaviour refers to voluntary and supportive actions undertaken by consumers that go beyond basic purchasing activities and contribute to the success of a brand (Ahearne et al., 2005). Such behaviours include recommending the brand, assisting other customers, providing feedback, defending the brand online, and sharing positive brand content.

Recent research has highlighted the growing importance of consumer citizenship in digital and social media environments. Chen et al. (2025) demonstrated that consumer citizenship behaviour plays a vital role in strengthening digital participation and content creation, thereby amplifying brand visibility and engagement on social media platforms. These behaviours not only enhance brand reputation but also influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers through social proof and peer influence.

2.4. Digital Participation

Digital participation represents the degree to which consumers actively engage with brands on digital platforms through activities such as liking, commenting, sharing, reviewing, and content creation. Hollebeek et al. (2014) conceptualised digital engagement as a multidimensional construct reflecting cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement with a brand.

Harrigan et al. (2017) found that higher levels of digital participation significantly strengthen purchase intention and customer loyalty. Active engagement increases emotional attachment, enhances perceived brand value, and reinforces consumer confidence in purchase decisions.

AI-driven social media marketing stimulates digital participation by creating interactive, personalised, and immersive brand experiences that encourage consumers to actively engage with content and communities.

2.5. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention reflects a consumer's willingness and likelihood to purchase a product or service in the future. It serves as a strong predictor of actual purchasing behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Numerous studies have established the influence of trust, engagement, and social interaction on purchase intention in digital contexts.

In social media environments, purchase intention is shaped not only by direct marketing messages but also by peer communication, user-generated content, and community engagement. When consumers trust a brand, participate actively in digital communities, and observe positive interactions among other users, their intention to purchase increases significantly.

2.6. Generation Z and Digital Consumer Behaviour

Generation Z consumers exhibit unique characteristics shaped by lifelong exposure to digital technologies. They display high levels of social media usage, technological literacy, and sensitivity to brand authenticity (Priporas et al., 2017). Francis and Hoefel (2018) argued that Gen Z consumers demand personalised, transparent, and interactive brand communication, making them particularly responsive to AI-driven marketing practices.

Because of these characteristics, Gen Z is expected to strengthen the relationships between AI-driven social media marketing and key behavioural outcomes such as trust, participation, and consumer citizenship behaviour.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the present study is grounded in the integration of digital marketing theory, relationship marketing, and consumer behaviour literature. The model proposes that AI-driven social media marketing acts as a technological stimulus that shapes consumers' psychological responses and behavioural outcomes. Specifically, the framework explains how AI-enabled marketing practices influence purchase intention through the mediating roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, with Generation Z serving as a moderating variable.

Artificial intelligence technologies enable firms to personalise communication, predict customer needs, automate engagement, and deliver relevant content in real time. Such capabilities significantly enhance the quality and effectiveness of marketing interactions (Huang and Rust, 2021; Davenport et al., 2020). These improved interactions strengthen consumers' perceptions of brand reliability and credibility, thereby fostering brand trust (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

Brand trust plays a critical role in the development of strong consumer-brand relationships and serves as a key driver of behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Furthermore, when consumers perceive a brand positively and develop trust, they are more likely to engage in voluntary supportive behaviours referred to as consumer citizenship behaviour, including recommending the brand, defending it online, and assisting other consumers (Ahearne et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2025).

At the same time, AI-driven social media marketing enhances digital participation by encouraging consumers to actively engage with brand content through liking, commenting, sharing, reviewing, and creating content. Such participation strengthens emotional attachment and reinforces purchasing decisions (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2017).

Given the digital fluency and technology dependence of Generation Z, the framework further proposes that Gen Z strengthens the influence of AI-driven social media marketing on brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation (Priporas et al., 2017; Francis and Hoefel, 2018). The proposed conceptual framework of the study is presented in Figure 1.

3.2. Hypotheses Development

- H_1: AI-Driven Social Media Marketing → Brand Trust.

AI-driven social media marketing enhances personalisation, responsiveness, and transparency in brand communication, which significantly strengthens consumer trust in brands (Huang and Rust, 2021; Grewal et al., 2020).

- H_1: AI-driven social media marketing has a significant positive effect on brand trust.
- H_2: AI-Driven Social Media Marketing → Consumer Citizenship Behaviour.

Advanced digital engagement and personalised experiences encourage consumers to develop stronger relationships with brands, motivating them to engage in voluntary supportive actions (Ahearne et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2025).

- H_2: AI-driven social media marketing has a significant positive effect on consumer citizenship behaviour.
- H_3: AI-Driven Social Media Marketing → Digital Participation.

Interactive and intelligent marketing technologies stimulate active user engagement and participation on social media platforms (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2017).

- H_3: AI-driven social media marketing has a significant positive effect on digital participation.
- H_4: Brand Trust → Purchase Intention.

Brand trust reduces perceived risk and strengthens consumers' confidence in purchasing decisions (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2005).

- H_4: Brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H_5: Consumer Citizenship Behaviour → Purchase Intention.

Voluntary supportive behaviours reinforce emotional attachment and brand preference, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase (Ahearne et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2025).

- H_5: Consumer citizenship behaviour has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H_6: Digital Participation → Purchase Intention.

Active digital engagement strengthens psychological commitment and enhances purchase intention (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Harrigan et al., 2017).

- H_6: Digital participation has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.
- H_7-H_9: Moderating Role of Generation Z.

Gen Z consumers exhibit higher responsiveness to technology-enabled marketing and digital engagement (Priporas et al., 2017; Francis and Hoefel, 2018).

- H_7: Generation Z moderates the relationship between AI-driven social media marketing and brand trust.
- H_8: Generation Z moderates the relationship between AI-driven social media marketing and consumer citizenship behaviour.
- H_9: Generation Z moderates the relationship between AI-driven social media marketing and digital participation.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among AI-driven social media marketing, brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, digital participation, and purchase intention, with Generation Z serving as a moderating variable. A quantitative approach is appropriate for testing complex causal relationships and evaluating theoretical models using statistical techniques (Hair et al., 2017). This design allows for objective measurement of perceptions and behaviours of Gen Z consumers and supports generalisation of findings within the study context.

The study follows a cross-sectional survey method, a widely accepted approach in marketing and behavioural research (Malhotra, 2019), where data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. This approach is widely employed in marketing and social sciences research for examining consumer attitudes, behavioural intentions, and technology-driven phenomena.

4.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in Chennai, one of India's major metropolitan city with high digital penetration and strong Gen Z presence, making it an appropriate context for examining technology-driven consumer behaviour (Statista, 2024). Chennai represents a highly suitable setting for this research because of its high concentration of Gen Z population, widespread smartphone usage, strong internet penetration, and active engagement with social media platforms. The city hosts a diverse mix of students, young professionals, and early-career employees who frequently interact with brands through digital platforms, making it an ideal environment for investigating AI-driven social media marketing and consumer behaviour.

4.3. Population and Sample

The target population of the study comprises Generation Z consumers residing in Chennai who actively use social media platforms for information search, brand interaction, and online purchasing. For the purpose of this research, Generation Z includes individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, who represent the most digitally connected segment of consumers.

A total of 487 valid responses were collected. This exceeds the recommended minimum sample size for PLS-SEM, which is well-suited for complex models with multiple constructs and moderating relationships (Hair et al., 2017). Prior methodological studies suggest that PLS-SEM performs reliably with medium to

large sample sizes and offers strong predictive accuracy when testing advanced consumer behaviour models.

4.4. Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling, which is appropriate when respondents must possess specific characteristics related to the research objective (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Only individuals who belonged to Generation Z and who actively used social media platforms were included in the survey. This sampling method was chosen to ensure that the data accurately reflected the behavioural patterns and perceptions of the specific consumer group under investigation.

Purposive sampling is particularly appropriate in studies focusing on technology adoption and digital behaviour, where researchers seek respondents with direct experience and familiarity with the phenomenon being examined.

4.5. Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture respondents' perceptions of AI-driven social media marketing practices, brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, digital participation, and purchase intention. The survey was distributed through popular social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and LinkedIn, which are widely used by Gen Z consumers.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted to test the clarity, reliability, and relevance of the questionnaire items. Based on feedback from the pilot study, minor modifications were made to improve the wording and structure of the survey instrument.

4.6. Statistical Tools and Techniques

Data were analysed using PLS-SEM, which is particularly suitable for prediction-oriented research involving mediation and moderation (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009). PLS-SEM was selected because it is highly suitable for complex models involving multiple latent constructs, mediating relationships, and moderating effects. It is particularly effective when the research objective is prediction and theory development rather than theory confirmation.

The analysis process included assessment of the measurement model (reliability and validity tests) and the structural model (hypothesis testing, path coefficients, coefficient of determination, and effect sizes). In addition, the moderating effect of Generation Z was examined using interaction term analysis within the PLS framework.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study based on data collected from 487 Generation Z consumers in Chennai. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS to evaluate the measurement model and test the proposed hypotheses. The results include assessment of reliability and validity, structural relationships, mediation effects, and moderation effects, followed by interpretation of the key findings.

5.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined to understand the composition of the sample and to ensure that the participants were appropriate for investigating AI-driven social media marketing and consumer behaviour. The profile of the respondents reflects a diverse and digitally active group of young consumers, which is consistent with prior research indicating that Generation Z represents one of the most active and influential consumer segments in digital marketing environments (Priporas et al., 2017). The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The profile provides insight into the composition of the sample and confirms that the data were collected from a relevant and appropriate target group for the study.

5.1.1. Interpretation

The demographic profile indicates a well-balanced representation of male and female respondents. The majority of the participants fall within the age range of 22-25 years, reflecting the dominant segment of active Gen Z consumers. Most respondents are either undergraduate or postgraduate students, with a substantial proportion currently pursuing higher education. A significant number of respondents reported spending 3-5 h daily on social media, highlighting their high engagement with digital platforms and reinforcing the relevance of the sample for examining AI-driven social media marketing and digital consumer behaviour.

5.2. Measurement Model Results

5.2.1. Indicator reliability

Indicator reliability was assessed using the outer loadings of the measurement items. According to Hair et al. (2017), outer loadings should exceed 0.70 to confirm that each item contributes adequately to its construct. As shown in Table 2, all measurement items exhibited loadings above the recommended threshold, indicating strong indicator reliability.

5.2.1.1. Interpretation

All outer loadings exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming strong indicator reliability and demonstrating that

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	238	48.9
	Female	249	51.1
Age Group	18-21 years	162	33.3
	22-25 years	211	43.3
	26-29 years	114	23.4
Educational qualification	Undergraduate	184	37.8
	Postgraduate	221	45.4
	Others	82	16.8
Occupation	Student	286	58.7
	Employed	158	32.4
	Self-employed	43	8.9
Daily time spent on social media	<1 h	41	8.4
	1-3 h	176	36.1
	3-5 h	198	40.7
	More than 5 h	72	14.8

Source: Primary data

the measurement items effectively represent their corresponding constructs (Hair et al., 2017).

5.2.2. Reliability and convergent validity

The reliability and convergent validity results are presented in Table 3. The reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model were examined using Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 2: Measurement items and outer loadings

Construct	Item code	Measurement statement	Outer loading
AI-driven social media marketing	AI1	The brand uses AI technologies to personalise content on social media.	0.772
	AI2	The brand provides recommendations based on my preferences using AI.	0.817
	AI3	The brand uses intelligent systems to respond quickly on social media.	0.776
	AI4	AI helps the brand deliver relevant advertisements to me.	0.787
	AI5	The brand uses AI tools to improve my online experience.	0.806
Brand trust	BT1	I trust this brand to keep its promises.	0.820
	BT2	This brand is reliable.	0.798
	BT3	I feel confident in this brand.	0.843
Consumer citizenship behaviour	CCB1	I recommend this brand to others on social media.	0.793
	CCB2	I express favourable opinions about this brand in online discussions.	0.845
	CCB3	I share positive information about this brand online.	0.839
Digital participation	DP1	I actively engage with this brand's content on social media.	0.833
	DP2	I frequently like, comment on, or share this brand's posts.	0.819
	DP3	I create content related to this brand online.	0.778
Generation Z orientation	GEN1	I rely heavily on social media when making purchase decisions.	0.794
	GEN2	I expect brands to communicate quickly online.	0.729
	GEN3	I prefer personalised content from brands.	0.806
	GEN4	I value authenticity in brand communication.	0.818
Purchase intention	PI1	I intend to purchase products from brand.	0.722
	PI2	I will consider this brand for future purchases.	0.817
	PI3	I am likely to buy from the following brand.	0.849
	PI4	I would recommend this brand to others.	0.857

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values >0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency, while AVE values above 0.50 confirm adequate convergent validity (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al., 2017).

5.2.2.1. Interpretation

The results demonstrate strong internal consistency and convergent validity for all constructs. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming satisfactory reliability. In addition, all AVE values are above 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators. These findings confirm that the measurement model possesses adequate reliability and convergent validity, making it suitable for subsequent structural model analysis (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017).

5.2.3. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct be greater than its correlations with all other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017). This criterion ensures that each construct captures a unique concept and is empirically distinct from other constructs in the model.

5.2.3.1. Interpretation

As shown in Table 4, the diagonal values, representing the square root of AVE for each construct, are higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. This confirms that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, establishing adequate discriminant validity for the measurement model.

5.3. Structural Model Results

After establishing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesised relationships among the constructs. The structural model with path coefficients and R^2 values is illustrated in Figure 2. The assessment involved examining path coefficients, their significance levels, and the model's explanatory power (R^2). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was performed to determine the significance of the path relationships (Hair et al., 2017).

5.3.1. Path coefficients and hypothesis testing

Table 5.

5.3.1.1. Interpretation

The structural path coefficients and hypothesis testing results are presented in Table 5. The results indicate that AI-driven social media marketing has a strong and significant positive effect on brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and

Table 3: Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AI-driven social media marketing	0.851	0.854	0.894	0.627
brand trust	0.757	0.757	0.861	0.673
Consumer citizenship behaviour	0.767	0.770	0.866	0.682
Digital participation	0.739	0.746	0.851	0.657
Purchase intention	0.827	0.826	0.886	0.661

Table 4: Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	AI-driven social media marketing	Brand trust	Consumer citizenship behaviour	Digital participation	Purchase intention
AI-driven social media marketing	**0.792**				
Brand trust	0.757	**0.821**			
Consumer citizenship behaviour	0.675	0.672	**0.826**		
Digital participation	0.702	0.736	0.746	**0.810**	
Purchase intention	0.659	0.604	0.715	0.647	**0.813**

Note: Diagonal values (in bold) represent the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 5: Structural path coefficients

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	P-value	Result
H_1	AI-driven SMM→Brand trust	0.757	27.305	<0.001	Supported
H_2	AI-driven SMM→Consumer citizenship behaviour	0.675	19.368	<0.001	Supported
H_3	AI-driven SMM→Digital participation	0.702	20.644	<0.001	Supported
H_4	Brand trust→Purchase intention	0.149	2.771	0.006	Supported
H_5	Consumer citizenship behaviour→Purchase intention	0.482	8.187	<0.001	Supported
H_6	Digital participation→Purchase intention	0.177	2.751	0.006	Supported

Table 6: R^2 Values of endogenous constructs

Construct	R^2	Interpretation
Brand trust	0.594	Moderate-strong
Consumer citizenship behaviour	0.553	Moderate
Digital participation	0.566	Moderate
Purchase intention	0.549	Moderate

Table 7: Mediation effects of the model

Relationship	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Mediation type
AI-driven SMM→Brand trust→Purchase intention	0.563***	Significant	Partial mediation
AI-driven SMM→Consumer citizenship behaviour→Purchase intention	0.563***	Significant	Partial mediation
AI-driven SMM→Digital participation→Purchase intention	0.563***	Significant	Partial mediation

**P<0.001

digital participation, supporting hypotheses H_1, H_2, and H_3. Furthermore, brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation each exert a significant positive influence on purchase intention, confirming hypotheses H_4, H_5, and H_6. Among the predictors of purchase intention, consumer citizenship behaviour demonstrates the strongest effect.

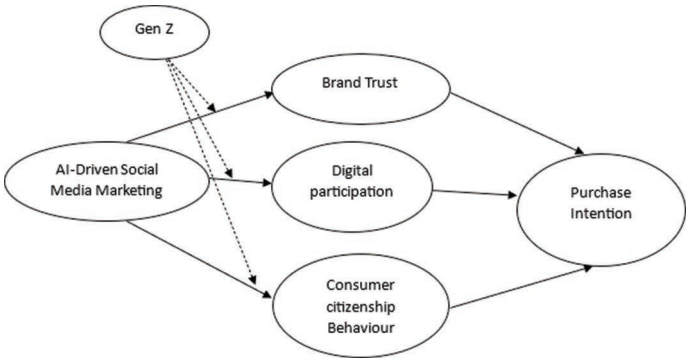
5.3.2. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) values for the endogenous constructs are presented in Table 6. R^2 represents the proportion of variance explained by the independent variables and is a key indicator of the model's explanatory power in PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2017).

5.3.2.1. Interpretation of R^2 Values

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was examined to evaluate the explanatory power of the proposed structural model. As shown in Table 6, the model explains 59.4% of the variance in Brand Trust, indicating a moderate to strong level of explanatory power.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



This suggests that AI-driven social media marketing substantially influences consumers' trust in brands.

Similarly, the model accounts for 55.3% of the variance in consumer citizenship behaviour and 56.6% of the variance in digital participation, both of which represent moderate levels of explanatory strength. These results indicate that AI-driven social media marketing effectively predicts consumers' voluntary supportive behaviours and their active engagement with brand content in digital environments.

Furthermore, 54.9% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation. According to established guidelines for PLS-SEM interpretation (Hair et al., 2017), these R^2 values demonstrate that the proposed model possesses adequate predictive accuracy and provides meaningful insights into the factors shaping purchase intention among Generation Z consumers.

Overall, the R^2 results confirm that the structural model has satisfactory explanatory power and is suitable for understanding consumer behaviour in AI-driven social media marketing contexts.

5.4. Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis results are presented in Table 7. The mediating roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and

Figure 2: Structural model. Values on arrows represent standardised path coefficients. Values inside the circles represent R^2

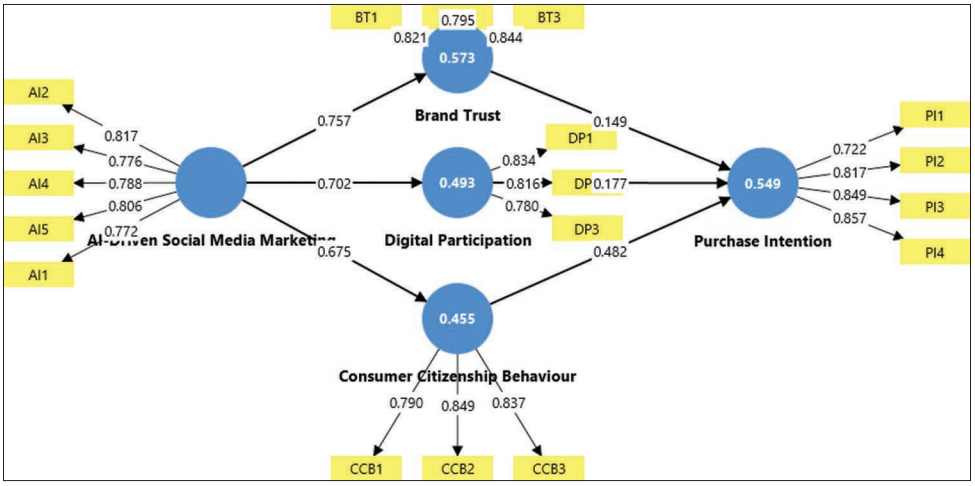
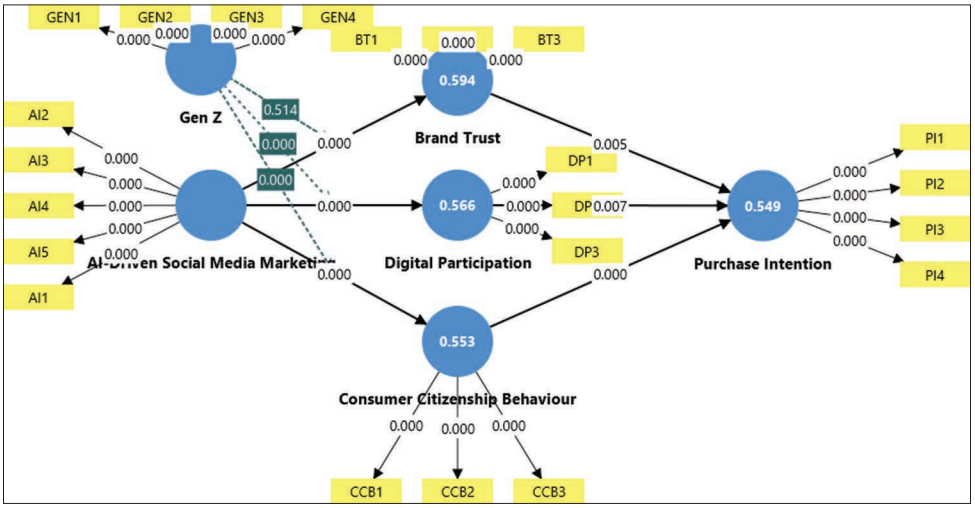


Figure 3: Measurement model



digital participation in the relationship between AI-driven social media marketing and Purchase Intention were examined using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS with 5,000 resamples. Mediation is established when the indirect effect is statistically significant and the direct effect remains significant (Hair et al., 2017). The measurement model results are presented in Figure 3.

5.4.1. Interpretation

The results indicate that AI-driven social media marketing exerts a significant direct effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.563$, $P < 0.001$). At the same time, AI-driven social media marketing significantly influences brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, which in turn significantly affect Purchase Intention. The persistence of the direct effect alongside significant indirect effects confirms that all three variables act as partial mediators in the model.

Among the mediators, consumer citizenship behaviour demonstrates the strongest mediating influence, followed by digital participation and brand trust. These findings suggest that AI-driven marketing increases purchase intention not only through building psychological trust but also by encouraging consumers' voluntary supportive behaviours and active digital engagement.

Overall, the mediation analysis highlights the critical mechanisms through which AI-driven social media marketing translates into stronger purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers.

5.5. Moderation Analysis

This section examines the moderating effect of Generation Z on the relationships between AI-driven social media marketing and the key outcome variables using interaction terms in the PLS-SEM framework. The moderation analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to determine the significance of the interaction effects (Hair et al., 2017).

5.5.1. Interpretation

The moderation effects are presented in Table 8. The results indicate that Generation Z significantly strengthens the influence of AI-driven social media marketing on consumer citizenship behaviour, digital participation, and purchase intention, but does not significantly moderate the relationship between AI-driven

Table 8: Moderation effects

Interaction path	β	t-value	P-value	Results
Gen Z×AI-Driven SMM→Brand trust	0.012	0.653	0.514	Not supported
Gen Z×AI-Driven SMM→Consumer citizenship behaviour	0.071	3.887	<0.001	Supported
Gen Z×AI-Driven SMM→Digital participation	0.084	4.284	<0.001	Supported
Gen Z×AI-Driven SMM→Purchase intention	0.05	4.035	<0.001	Supported

social media marketing and brand trust. This suggests that Gen Z consumers are particularly responsive to AI-enabled engagement mechanisms and behavioural incentives, although trust formation appears to occur consistently regardless of generational orientation.

These findings emphasise the importance of tailoring AI-driven marketing strategies to the behavioural preferences of Gen Z consumers in order to maximise engagement and purchase outcomes.

5.6. Summary of Findings

The present study examined the influence of AI-driven social media marketing on purchase intention among Generation Z consumers, with the mediating roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, and the moderating role of Generation Z orientation.

The results of the structural model analysis demonstrate that AI-driven social media marketing significantly enhances brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, thereby confirming the central role of intelligent digital marketing technologies in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours. These findings align with earlier studies suggesting that artificial intelligence enables more personalised, responsive, and effective marketing communication, which strengthens consumer-brand relationships (Davenport et al., 2020; Huang and Rust, 2021).

Furthermore, brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation were found to exert significant positive effects on purchase intention, highlighting that both psychological attachment and active consumer engagement are critical determinants of purchasing decisions in digital environments. In particular, consumer citizenship behaviour emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, supporting the view that voluntary supportive actions such as advocacy and positive word-of-mouth play a crucial role in influencing market performance (Groth, 2005; Van Doorn et al., 2010).

The mediation analysis revealed that the effect of AI-driven social media marketing on purchase intention is transmitted both directly and indirectly through the three mediating variables, indicating partial mediation. This confirms that AI-driven marketing not only influences consumer behaviour directly but also operates through deeper relational and behavioural mechanisms, consistent with relationship marketing and engagement theory (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012).

The moderation analysis further showed that Generation Z significantly strengthens the relationships between AI-driven social media marketing and consumer citizenship behaviour, digital participation, and purchase intention, though not with brand trust. This finding underscores the distinctive behavioural characteristics of Generation Z, who are highly responsive to interactive, personalised, and technology-enabled marketing environments (Priporas et al., 2017; Djafarova and Bowes, 2021).

Overall, the findings confirm that AI-driven social media marketing constitutes a powerful strategic tool for influencing young consumers by fostering trust, encouraging active participation, and stimulating voluntary brand-supportive behaviours, which together translate into stronger purchase intentions.

6. DISCUSSION

This study examined the impact of AI-driven social media marketing on purchase intention among Generation Z consumers, with the mediating roles of brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation, and the moderating effect of Generation Z orientation. The findings confirm that AI-driven marketing significantly enhances brand trust, stimulates voluntary consumer engagement behaviours, and increases active digital participation, all of which positively influence purchase intention.

Among the predictors of purchase intention, consumer citizenship behaviour emerged as the strongest factor, highlighting the growing importance of consumer advocacy and engagement in digital marketing environments. The mediation results indicate that AI-driven social media marketing affects purchase intention both directly and indirectly through relational and behavioural mechanisms, demonstrating the comprehensive influence of intelligent marketing technologies.

The moderation analysis further reveals that Generation Z strengthens the influence of AI-driven marketing on behavioural engagement and purchase intention, underscoring the distinctive responsiveness of young consumers to personalised and technology-enabled marketing strategies. Overall, the findings suggest that AI-driven social media marketing plays a critical role in shaping modern consumer behaviour by building trust, encouraging engagement, and driving purchasing decisions in digital contexts.

7. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study provides empirical evidence on how AI-driven social media marketing influences purchase intention among Generation Z consumers by operating through key psychological and behavioural mechanisms. The findings demonstrate that AI-enabled marketing practices significantly enhance brand trust, stimulate consumer citizenship behaviour, and encourage active digital participation, all of which contribute positively to

consumers' purchasing decisions. Among these factors, consumer citizenship behaviour emerges as the most influential predictor of purchase intention, highlighting the growing importance of voluntary brand-supportive actions in digital environments.

The results further reveal that the impact of AI-driven social media marketing on purchase intention is both direct and indirect, confirming the presence of partial mediation through brand trust, consumer citizenship behaviour, and digital participation. Moreover, the moderating role of Generation Z strengthens the relationships between AI-driven marketing and behavioural engagement, indicating that young consumers are particularly responsive to intelligent, personalised, and interactive marketing strategies.

Overall, the study extends existing digital marketing literature by integrating technological, relational, and behavioural perspectives into a unified framework. From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable guidance for organisations seeking to design effective AI-driven social media strategies that build trust, encourage engagement, and drive sustainable consumer relationships in an increasingly data-driven marketplace.

The findings of this study offer several practical insights for marketing managers and brand strategists. First, organisations should invest in AI-driven social media technologies to deliver personalised content, real-time responses, and predictive recommendations, as these significantly enhance brand trust and consumer engagement. Second, managers should actively encourage consumer citizenship behaviours such as online advocacy, content sharing, and positive word-of-mouth, as these behaviours have the strongest influence on purchase intention. Third, marketing campaigns targeting Generation Z should focus on interactive and personalised digital experiences, since this group responds more strongly to AI-enabled marketing strategies. By strategically integrating artificial intelligence into social media marketing practices, firms can build stronger customer relationships and improve long-term business performance.

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