

Understanding Purchase intention of Gen Z: Combined role of Social Media Influencers, Government initiatives and User Experience

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Abstract

As consumer markets evolve with an increasing emphasis on digital solutions and sustainability, it becomes crucial to comprehend the factors influencing purchase intentions, particularly concerning emergent technologies such as electric vehicles (EVs). This research investigates the combined effects of social media influencers, governmental initiatives, and user experience on Generation Z's intentions to purchase Electric vehicles. Employing the source credibility model as a foundational framework, the analysis assesses how dimensions of social media influencer's attitudes such as trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise, affect purchase intention. In parallel, the investigation considers governmental initiatives, including financial incentives and infrastructure enhancements, as significant motivational elements. Moreover, user experience factors, encompassing perceived ease of use, satisfaction, and performance, are analysed as a vital moderating component. The study employs a survey based quantitative methodology, utilizing structural equation modelling to interpret responses from potential EV purchasers. Initial findings indicate that the credibility of influencers and government support are substantial determinants of purchase intention, while a favourable user experience further enhances this relationship. These insights provide practical implications for marketers, policymakers, and technology developers seeking to increase consumer adoption through effective influence and robust support frameworks.

Keywords: Electric vehicles, Purchase intention, social media influencer, Government initiatives, user experience.

Introduction:

The rapidly changing dynamics of consumer behaviour, influenced by swift technological progress and increasing sustainability concerns, have positioned Generation Z (Gen Z) as a central focus in market research. Individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, Gen Z represents a cohort that is not only digitally literate but also socially aware and significantly interconnected. This demographic is starting to wield considerable influence over global consumption patterns (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Gaining insight into the determinants of Gen Z's purchasing intentions, particularly concerning emerging sustainable technologies like electric vehicles (EVs), is essential for businesses, policymakers, and scholars.

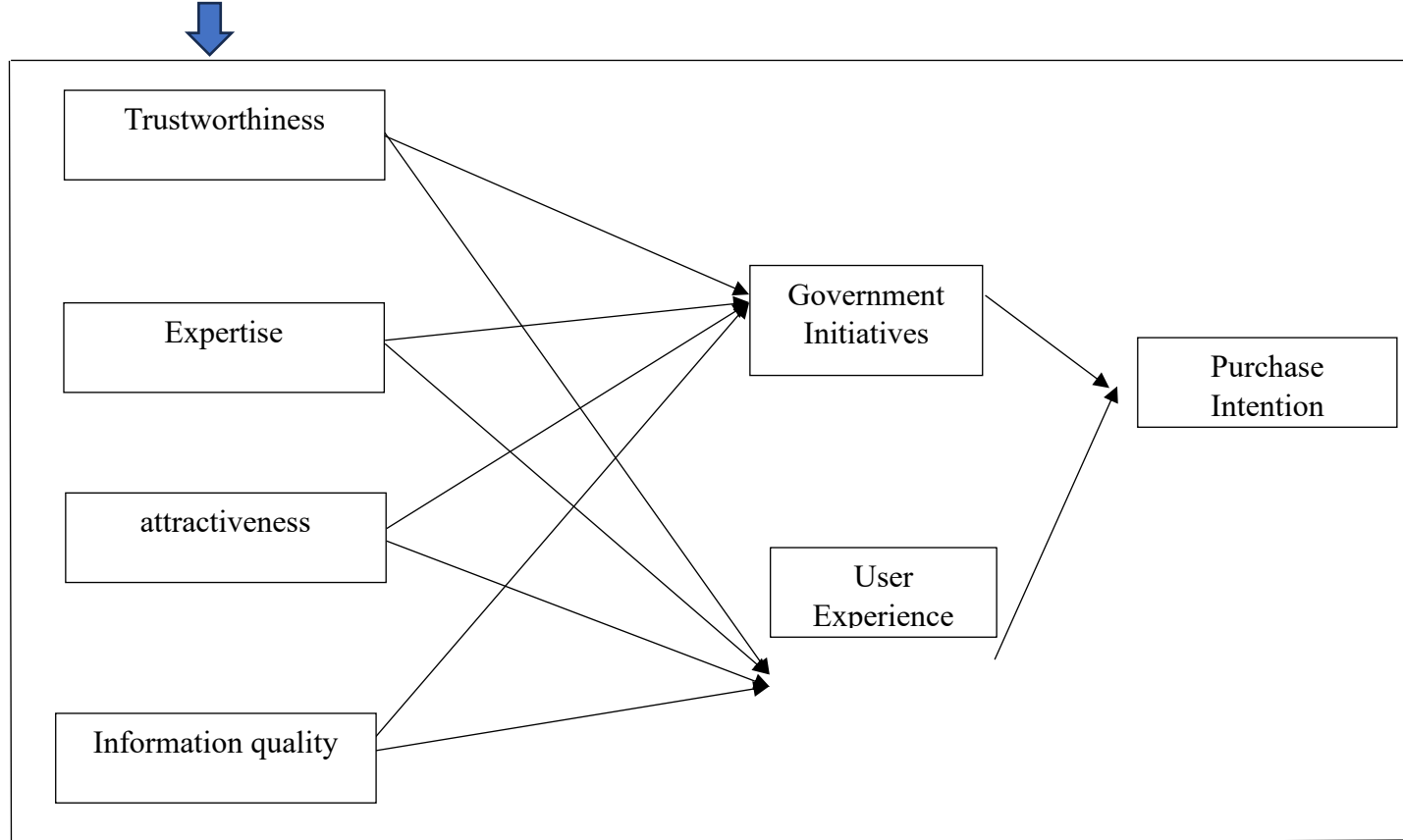
A distinguishing characteristic of Gen Z is their profound engagement with digital platforms, especially social media. Unlike prior generations, Gen Z not only accepts digital marketing but is also profoundly influenced by social media figures and influencers, who are often viewed as credible sources of product information (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Utilizing the source credibility model allows for a theoretical exploration of how the trustworthiness, appeal, and expertise of these influencers shape consumer choices, particularly concerning high-stakes and innovative product categories such as EVs. Moreover, government programs are crucial in facilitating the uptake of sustainable products by alleviating financial obstacles and fostering supportive infrastructure. Initiatives like tax incentives, purchase subsidies, and investments in charging stations have been demonstrated to effectively promote EV adoption (Hardman et al., 2017). Nevertheless, examining their specific impact on the Gen Z demographical group characterized by a stronger social motivation compared to economic considerations—remains an area ripe for further research. Another significant yet often overlooked aspect is the user experience related to the perceived usability, satisfaction, and efficacy of complex and relatively new technologies. A favourable user experience can enhance trust and mitigate perceived risks,

subsequently reinforcing the intention to adopt or purchase. Despite an increasing interest in these individual factors, there is a noticeable gap in research exploring their collective effect on Gen Z's purchasing intentions, particularly within the framework of emerging sustainable technologies. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the interrelated impacts of social media influencers' credibility, government initiatives, and user experience on Gen Z consumers' intent to purchase. Employing a survey-based quantitative methodology and utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM), the study will assess the proposed relationships. By merging these three critical dimensions, this research contributes to the broader discourse on digital marketing, consumer behaviour, and the adoption of sustainable technologies. Furthermore, it aims to provide valuable insights to marketers, technology developers, and policymakers striving to connect with Gen Z and foster environmentally sustainable consumption choices.

Materials and Methods

Social Media Influencer

Attributes



Research Design:

This study uses a quantitative research design to examine the influence of social media influencers, government initiatives, and user experience on the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers. A structured questionnaire was developed based on validated measurement scales from previous literature, and data were collected using an online survey platform. The research model was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to assess the relationships between variables and test the proposed hypotheses.

- **H1:** Trustworthiness of social media influencers has a positive effect on Gen Z's purchase intention.
- **H2:** Attractiveness of social media influencers has a positive effect on Gen Z's purchase intention.
- **H3:** Expertise of social media influencers has a positive effect on Gen Z's purchase intention.

- **H4:** Information quality provided by social media influencers positively influences Gen Z's purchase intention.
- **H5:** Government initiatives (e.g., subsidies, tax benefits, EV infrastructure) have a positive effect on Gen Z's purchase intention.
- **H6:** A positive user experience with electric vehicles has a direct positive effect on Gen Z's purchase intention.
- **H7:** User experience moderates the relationship between social media influencer credibility and Gen Z's purchase intention, such that the relationship is stronger when user experience is positive.
- **H8:** User experience moderates the relationship between government initiatives and purchase intention, such that the relationship is stronger when user experience is positive.

Sample and Data Collection:

Generation Z individuals who are active on social media and are potential buyers of electric vehicles. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to reach respondents with relevant demographic and behavioural characteristics. The online questionnaires were distributed through social media platforms (Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and university networks across urban regions) and online data collection tools (such as Google forms) were involved. Out of the collected 412 responses, 381 valid responses were kept for analysis following data cleaning. Participants had to be aware of electric vehicles and follow at least one social media influencer in order to be eligible.

Measurement Instruments: Credibility of Social Media Influencers (using the Source Credibility Model): Credibility, Beauty, and Proficiency (Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Information quality is evaluated according to how pertinent, understandable, and helpful the information provided by influencers is. Government Initiatives are Assessed using questions about perceptions of the efficacy and awareness of infrastructure, tax breaks, and subsidies (Hardman et al., 2017). User Experience items assessed EVs' perceived performance, simplicity of use, and satisfaction (Venkatesh et al., 2003). A 3-item scale that was modified from earlier studies on behavioural intention in technology adoption (Ajzen, 1991; Pavlou, 2003) was used to measure purchase intention.

Data Analysis Techniques:

Data were analysed using SPSS for preliminary descriptive statistics and AMOS/SmartPLS for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis followed a two-stage approach. For testing reliability Cronbach's alpha test was done and the results are shown below.

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Trustworthiness	4	0.86	0.88	0.65
Attractiveness	3	0.81	0.85	0.66
Expertise	4	0.84	0.87	0.63
Information Quality	4	0.85	0.89	0.68
Government Initiatives	4	0.83	0.86	0.61
User Experience	5	0.89	0.91	0.69
Purchase Intention	3	0.87	0.90	0.74

Structural Model Results:

Hypothesis	Path	β (Standardized Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	Supported
H1	Trustworthiness $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.22	4.13	< 0.001	Yes
H2	Attractiveness $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.11	2.34	0.019	Yes
H3	Expertise $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.18	3.67	< 0.001	Yes
H4	Information Quality $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.25	5.01	< 0.001	Yes
H5	Government Initiatives $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.29	5.88	< 0.001	Yes
H6	User Experience $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.31	6.15	< 0.001	Yes
H7	Mediating Effect of User Experience	Significant moderation detected	-	< 0.01	Yes

H1: Trustworthiness of social media influencers significantly impacts purchase intention ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that Gen Z consumers value authentic and credible endorsements when considering EV purchases.

H2: Attractiveness also has a positive, albeit smaller, effect ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.019$). While appearance or relatability influences perceptions, it is secondary to expertise and information quality.

H3: Expertise of influencers contributes positively to purchase intention ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the idea that knowledgeable influencers foster trust and perceived value.

H4: Information quality was the strongest among influencer-related factors ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$). Accurate, detailed, and relevant content shared by influencers significantly enhances the likelihood of Gen Z considering EVs.

H5: Government initiatives have a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$). Incentives like subsidies, tax reductions, and improved infrastructure meaningfully drive purchase intention.

H6: User experience emerged as the most influential direct predictor ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$). This highlights the importance of EV usability, satisfaction, and perceived performance in shaping Gen Z's decisions.

H7: A significant mediating effect of user experience was detected ($p < 0.01$), indicating that a positive experience strengthens the influence of influencer credibility and government support on purchase intention.

Discussions: A total of 381 valid responses were collected from Generation Z individuals aged between 18 and 29. Of these, 52% identified as female and 48% as male. Approximately 78% were undergraduate students, while 22% were recent graduates or early-career professionals. Most respondents reported active daily use of social media platforms, particularly Instagram and YouTube. Social media influencer attributes especially trustworthiness, expertise, and information quality significantly influence Gen Z's EV purchase intentions. Government initiatives play a substantial role. User experience has both a direct positive effect and a mediating effect, strengthening the influence of other variables on purchase intention. Gen Z responds more strongly to influencers who are seen as credible and informative rather than merely popular. Trustworthiness and expertise significantly enhance the persuasive impact of influencer messages related to sustainability and technology adoption. As with earlier research (Hardman et al., 2017), this study confirms that government incentives remain

essential in offsetting perceived financial and functional risks associated with EV adoption. Influencer marketing without a supportive user experience may not translate into actual purchase decisions.

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