

## **Social Media Consumption in Klang Valley: Generation Z's Desired Content on Instagram**

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**Abstract.** *Social media has become an integral part of Generation Z's daily lives, with platforms like Instagram being particularly dominant in shaping their consumption habits and interaction patterns. This study investigates the social media consumption behavior of Generation Z in Klang Valley, focusing on their preferred content types and the underlying motivations for engaging with digital marketing content on Instagram. Employing the Uses and Gratifications Theory, this research seeks to understand how Generation Z interacts with content, what drives their engagement, and what types of content they are most likely to share or respond to.*

*The findings suggest that entertainment is the primary motivator for Instagram use, although factors such as aesthetics, brand reputation, and discounts also significantly influence their engagement. However, the consumption of content does not always align with engagement patterns, indicating that passive consumption might be prevalent. The research also highlights the role of Instagram as a medium for entertainment and visual appeal, with Gen Z valuing content that is easy to engage with and visually stimulating. Brands targeting this demographic should focus on these factors to enhance interaction and engagement with their products.*

*In conclusion, the study offers insights into how brands can adapt their strategies to align with Generation Z's preferences by emphasizing entertainment value, visual quality, and ease of interaction. By tailoring marketing strategies to meet these needs, brands can enhance their online presence and engagement with the young, tech-savvy population of Generation Z in Klang Valley.*

**Keywords:** *consumption habits, gratifications theory, social media*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The rise of social media has transformed the landscape of marketing, particularly with platforms like Instagram becoming key players in shaping the consumption patterns of Generation Z. As the first generation to grow up entirely within the digital era, Generation Z exhibits unique behavioral traits, especially in how they interact with brands and digital content. Instagram, with its highly visual and user-centric interface, has emerged as one of the most popular social media platforms for this demographic. This study focuses on understanding Generation Z's social media consumption habits in Klang Valley, Malaysia, and how they interact with Instagram content.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory offers a useful framework for studying Generation Z's motivations behind their Instagram use. This theory suggests that individuals actively seek out media that satisfies specific needs or desires, such as entertainment, information, or social interaction. Given the widespread use of Instagram among Generation Z, it is crucial to explore what kinds of content are most appealing to them and why.

Social media platforms like Instagram are not merely passive conduits of information. They allow users to engage with content actively through likes, comments, and shares, and thus influence the online marketing strategies of brands. For businesses, understanding these preferences can lead to more effective digital marketing strategies tailored to Generation Z's desires and behaviors.

In Klang Valley, a rapidly growing urban region, the young population is particularly tech-savvy, and their interactions on platforms like Instagram offer valuable insights into the broader trends shaping social media marketing today. Studies have shown that Generation Z prioritizes visually appealing and easily digestible content, with a strong preference for entertainment. However,

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the interplay between entertainment, brand loyalty, and actual engagement is complex. While Generation Z may passively consume a great deal of content, it does not always translate to active engagement, such as making purchases or interacting with brand messages.

This research investigates two primary objectives: (1) to explore the types of content that Generation Z in Klang Valley prefers to consume on Instagram, and (2) to examine how they engage with digital marketing content on the platform. The findings of this study will provide useful insights for marketers aiming to target Generation Z more effectively and foster higher levels of engagement with their content.

With Instagram being a platform that prioritizes aesthetics, it is crucial for brands to understand what visually appeals to Generation Z and how they can tailor their content to meet these preferences. Moreover, the study also seeks to understand how factors like convenience, promotions, and discounts influence the decision-making process when Generation Z interacts with branded content. By exploring these dynamics, brands can develop more nuanced and effective strategies to capture the attention of this influential demographic.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the social media consumption behavior of Generation Z in Klang Valley. The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for a deeper understanding of participants' subjective experiences and interactions with Instagram content. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with 20 Generation Z participants residing in Klang Valley, focusing on their Instagram usage patterns, preferred content types, and motivations for engaging with digital marketing content.

The interview questions were designed to explore the types of content they consume on Instagram, the factors influencing their engagement, and their perceptions of digital marketing strategies employed by brands. The data was then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in participants' responses.

Additionally, the study incorporates a focus group discussion to gain further insights into collective opinions and attitudes toward Instagram content consumption. The qualitative nature of this research enables the collection of rich, detailed data, which is essential for understanding the complexities of social media interactions in a nuanced and meaningful way. This method provides a holistic view of Generation Z's preferences and helps in uncovering subtle motivations that drive their engagement with digital content on Instagram.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study revealed several key insights into Generation Z's Instagram consumption behavior in Klang Valley. The data collected from interviews and focus group discussions highlight the following themes:

**Entertainment as Primary Motivation:** The overwhelming majority of participants cited entertainment as the primary reason for using Instagram. Whether through humorous content, engaging visuals, or viral trends, Generation Z views Instagram as a space to unwind and enjoy themselves. While informative and educational content is consumed, it is not the main driver of engagement. Entertainment-centric content that requires little cognitive effort tends to perform better among this demographic.

**Visual Appeal and Aesthetic Content:** Instagram's focus on images and videos aligns perfectly

with Generation Z's preference for visual content. Participants reported that they are drawn to well-curated, aesthetically pleasing posts. Brand advertisements or sponsored content that lack aesthetic appeal are often ignored or quickly scrolled past. This reinforces the idea that visual quality is a critical factor in attracting and retaining the attention of Generation Z.

**Engagement vs. Passive Consumption:** Interestingly, while many participants consume vast amounts of content daily, not all actively engage with it. Passive consumption, such as scrolling through content without liking or commenting, was a common practice. This suggests that brands need to find more interactive and engaging ways to encourage active participation from Generation Z, such as through polls, quizzes, or interactive stories.

**Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intent:** Brand loyalty among Generation Z is relatively fluid. While participants showed a preference for brands that align with their values or offer aesthetically pleasing content, they are also heavily influenced by discounts and promotions. Participants reported that their purchase intentions on Instagram were largely driven by special offers or limited-time promotions, highlighting the importance of these tactics in converting passive consumers into active buyers.

**Influence of Peer Networks:** Peer influence plays a significant role in shaping Generation Z's content consumption habits. Participants noted that they are more likely to engage with content shared by friends or individuals they trust, rather than content pushed by brands. This indicates that peer recommendations and user-generated content (UGC) can be powerful tools for brands aiming to reach Generation Z.

The findings align with previous research on Generation Z's social media behavior, reinforcing the idea that entertainment and visual appeal are key drivers of engagement on Instagram. However, the distinction between passive consumption and active engagement presents a challenge for brands. While Generation Z may spend considerable time consuming content, converting this into meaningful interactions remains difficult.

Brands that wish to engage Generation Z effectively must focus on creating content that is not only visually appealing but also interactive and easy to engage with. Simple, low-effort interactions, such as Instagram polls or swipe-up features, could be effective in encouraging greater engagement. Additionally, offering exclusive promotions or discounts can further incentivize interaction and drive purchase behavior.

The study also highlights the fluid nature of brand loyalty among Generation Z. While participants showed some attachment to brands they perceive as visually appealing or value-driven, their loyalty is not unwavering. Special offers, peer influence, and aesthetics play a significant role in shaping their purchasing decisions. This suggests that brands should adopt a more dynamic approach to maintaining customer loyalty by continuously refreshing their content and offering incentives to keep Generation Z engaged.

Peer networks, as observed in this study, play a pivotal role in shaping consumption habits. Generation Z is more likely to trust and engage with content recommended by friends than by brands. This points to the increasing importance of user-generated content and influencer marketing in reaching this demographic. Brands should consider collaborating with micro-influencers who have a genuine connection with their audience to enhance trust and engagement.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that brands must be adaptable and innovative in their approach to social media marketing. By understanding the nuanced preferences of Generation Z, brands can tailor their Instagram content to better meet the entertainment-driven, visually focused, and socially influenced behaviors of this demographic.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study explores the social media consumption habits of Generation Z in Klang Valley, focusing on their preferred content types and motivations for engaging with digital marketing content on Instagram. The research suggests that entertainment is the primary motivator for Instagram use, with factors such as aesthetics, brand reputation, and discounts also significantly influencing engagement. However, passive consumption may be prevalent. The study also highlights the role of Instagram as a medium for entertainment and visual appeal, with Gen Z valuing content that is easy to engage with and visually stimulating. Brands targeting this demographic should focus on these factors to enhance interaction and engagement with their products. The findings suggest that brands should adapt their strategies to align with Generation Z's preferences by emphasizing entertainment value, visual quality, and ease of interaction.

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