

NIGERIA SMEs IN THE DIGITAL ERA: GEN Z's APPROACH TO ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING CONTENT CREATION

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of digitalization on entrepreneurship development among Gen Z entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The purpose is to appraise the role of digital technologies in fostering entrepreneurial growth, innovation, and sustainability. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study surveyed 500 Gen Z entrepreneurs and conducted in-depth interviews with 20 industry experts. The findings reveal that digitalization has significantly enhanced entrepreneurial opportunities, improved access to markets, and increased innovation among Gen Z entrepreneurs. However, challenges such as digital literacy, cyber-security, and infrastructure limitations hinder the full potential of digital entrepreneurship. This study's originality lies in its focus on Gen Z entrepreneurs and the digitalization of entrepreneurship in a rapidly changing business landscape. The implications suggest that policymakers and entrepreneurship development programs should prioritize digital literacy, infrastructure development, and cyber-security to support Gen Z entrepreneurs. Recommendations include investing in digital infrastructure, providing training and resources for digital entrepreneurship, and promoting online platforms for entrepreneurial networking and collaboration.

Keywords: *Gen Z entrepreneurs, Digitalisation, Start-up culture, Young entrepreneurs, Purpose-driven business, Social entrepreneurship, Digital marketing, Business innovation*

INTRODUCTION

Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is redefining entrepreneurship with their tech-savviness, creativity, and purpose-driven mind-set. This generation's interface with digitalization is revolutionizing business practices, enabling them to launch and grow successful ventures. To understand who or what Generation Z is, it's first important to clarify what a generation itself is. According to Pilcher (1994) a generation comprises individuals of similar ages who are exposed to the same political, social, and economic events, and have a collective consciousness based on shared values, beliefs, and attitudes. Hence, a generation is more than just people from the same chronological age span. It's a sociologically meaningful unit that forms characteristics, attitudes, and values along the historical events of its time. Researchers agree on this matter. The era in which we are born and grow up matters; it has an impact on our perspective and behavior. Campbell et al. (2015) argue that the time which we are born, and the events that we experience shape us and our culture, and they appear to make a strong bond between members of a generation. Understanding the values and attitudes that a generation share helps in better comprehending what defines the generation, how it's characterized, and what influences it (Luttrell & McGarth, 2021; Magano, et al., 2020; Andrione, 2018).

What exactly constitutes Gen Z? In research, there are various approaches defining the age range of Gen Z. For the purposes of this study, I will limit the age range to the years from 1995 to 2010. I believe that these particular cohorts are shaped by similar events such as digitization, climate change, or the impacts of war and terrorism. Above all, they share similar attitudes towards sustainability, trends, personal development, and digital media. Especially those born before 1995 are simply not as influenced by digitalization as those born between 1995 and 2010, who grew up with it. And those born after 2010 already have too much distance from certain issues that are

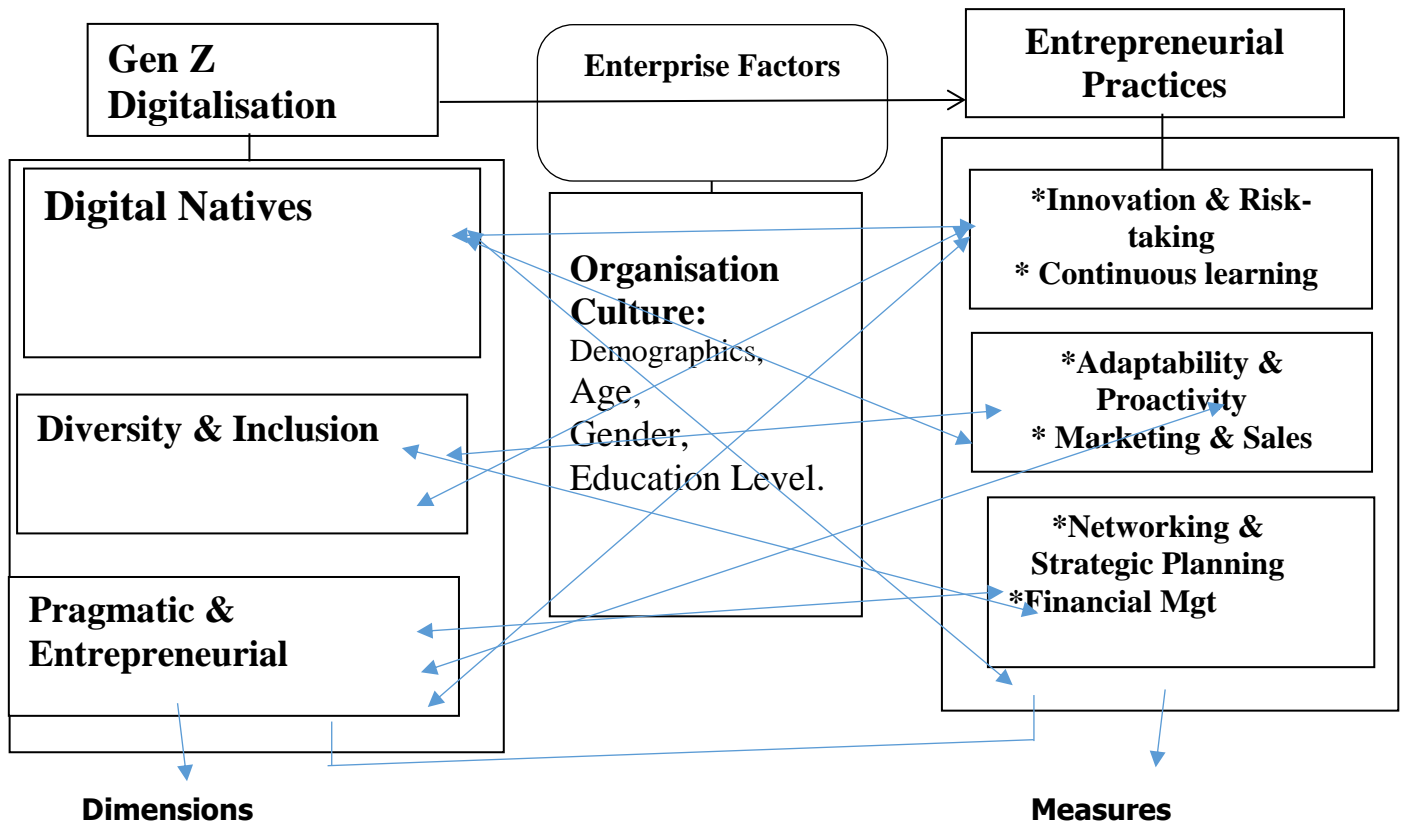
normal for them, such as personal development and individual interpretation. The cohorts from 1995 to 2010 are marked by a variety of changes, a period of transition that other cohorts may not have been as acutely aware of. Despite the various approaches to defining who belongs to Gen Z, there is one characteristic that unites them all: Gen Z was born into Technology. This generation has grown up with digital media, and for most of them, a life without the internet and smartphones is unthinkable. Therefore, this generation is often referred to as the 'children of the internet,' 'digital Generation,' 'Digital natives,' or 'iGen'. However, it's not just unlimited access to digital media that has shaped this generation; many social, political, and economic events, such as wars, Covid-19, natural disasters, and environmental crises, have also influenced this generation. Many of these events and occurrences are why this generation is rightfully different from previous ones. In the literature, Gen Z is often referred to as the engine of innovation and change. This generation has a completely different dynamic and perspective than previous ones. I will further explore the characteristics that make Gen Z distinct or different in the following sections, (Magano, et al., 2020; (Dragolea, et al., 2023; D'Arco et al., 2023).

Strong Characteristics of Gen Z

A generation is so much more than just a time span, and what exactly makes Generation Z stand out, which positive traits have emerged, and what values this generation strives for will be clarified in the foregoing. Gen Z and their behaviors have been extensively studied by many researchers, attempting to find explanatory approaches. There is agreement that Gen Z's mentality is different. Freedom and independence are immensely important to this generation. They make decisions for themselves, are very flexible, and keep the possibility open to change their minds whenever and however they want to. According to Magano, et al. (2020), Gen Zer's do not like stereotypes; their identity shapes over time, and they are very individual and versatile in their nature. Liang et al. (2022) describe this generation as confident individuals who love self-expression, are happy, creative, adventurous, and more eager to achieve their values. Values such as individual development, enjoyment of life, and a spirit of experimentation are very important to this generation. Gen Zer's, in particular, have developed into responsible adolescents. They are more willing to stand up, especially concerning environmental issues, and civil rights. They have been taught that they have a voice and that what they do and say matters. Activism is part of their identity, at least for most of this generation. Movements like FridaysForFuture or the #Metoo movement are just examples of the pressure and power Gen Z can bring. FridaysForFuture, initiated by Greta Thunberg, aims for climate protection. The #Metoo movement was started by Tarana Burke, a sexual harassment survivor, with the intention of giving victims of sexual violence a platform to speak, be heard, and listened to, (Brand, et al., 2022, Berkup, 2014; Niezurawska-Zajac et al., 2023).

Rodrigues (2018) has also elaborated on a variety of trends of this generation. They are not in a hurry to grow up or to surrender to the pressure of society. They take the time to find themselves and their path. They embrace inclusiveness and equality. Both physical and mental health are very important to them. Especially in terms of emotions, they are open to display. Lastly, an important aspect that defines this generation is the internet and digital devices. They are technology savvy; they recreate, learn, and work in a digital world. They are well informed and educated due to the spread of communication technologies. In-person communication has shifted towards electronic interaction. Many Gen Zer's feel more comfortable and confident in the virtual world. According to Berkup (2014) this generation is able to be interested in more than one issue at a time, which is highly advanced. They are thought to have the highest motor skill synchronization for hand, eye, and ear in the history of humanity, which shows their multitasking ability. It is therefore not without reason that this generation is referred to as the "Children of the Internet". (Luttrell & McGarth, 2021; Rodrigues, 2018)

Figure 2.1. Operationalization of the Conceptual framework of: Gen Z's Digitalization of Entrepreneurship Practices



A Construct Depicting predictor, criterion, mediating, intervening variables and Hypotheses construction; for the analysis of the interface between Gen Z Digitalisation and Entrepreneurial practices.

Source: Anukam (2025)

Weak Characteristics of Gen Z

Alongside all these positive traits, there are also a variety of weaknesses present in this generation. And most of them can be attributed to the use of digital media. This generation is online 24/7 and therefore easily influenced by opinion leaders. Their constant interaction and engagement with smartphones, video games, and social media have, in many cases, led to media dependency. The consequences include anxiety, depression, stress, and a lack of sleep quality. Fears such as Fear of Living Online (FOLO) or Fear of Missing out (FOMO) are no longer uncommon. Dr. Nicola Davies has analyzed a variety of negative effects in relation to nomophobia (a term encompassing FOMO and FOLO). Nomophobia mainly presents symptoms such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, shortness of breath, panic, and fear. Migraines, weight loss or gain, fatigue, and other symptoms are increasingly being associated with Gen Z. Furthermore, according to Berkup (2014), they have a short attention span and are impatient. Their social and communicative skills also suffer from the constant influence of digital media. They are much more individualistic, have limited communication skills in terms of in-person interaction, shy away from teamwork, and are discussion-averse. Due to the constant influence of social media, many Gen Zer's have become insecure. The continuous positivity and presentation of a perfect life by various opinion leaders lead to low self-esteem and self-confidence among Gen Zer's, ultimately resulting in behavioral patterns such as

depression, anxiety, or panic attacks, (Rodrigues, 2018; Scholz, 2014; Luttrell & McGarth, 2021; Pichler et al., 2021).

Gen Z and Their Perception towards Sustainability

As mentioned earlier, Gen Z is a generation that is informed and stands up for values that are important to them. This includes environmental issues and the negative consequences of unsustainable behavior. Gen Z is very environmentally conscious and aware of sustainability issues, and in the literature, it is often referred to as the 'Generation Green'. They actively advocate for a sustainable lifestyle, and literature suggests that this generation is the first to naturally recognize the importance of the environment, specific consumption patterns, and adopting sustainable behaviors. Climate change, pollution, and resource depletion are among the top vital challenges for Gen Z. They are more concerned than other generations about global warming and environmental degradation and feel a strong responsibility towards the environment and its natural resources (Dragolea et al., 2023; Brand et al., 2022; D'Arco et al., 2023).

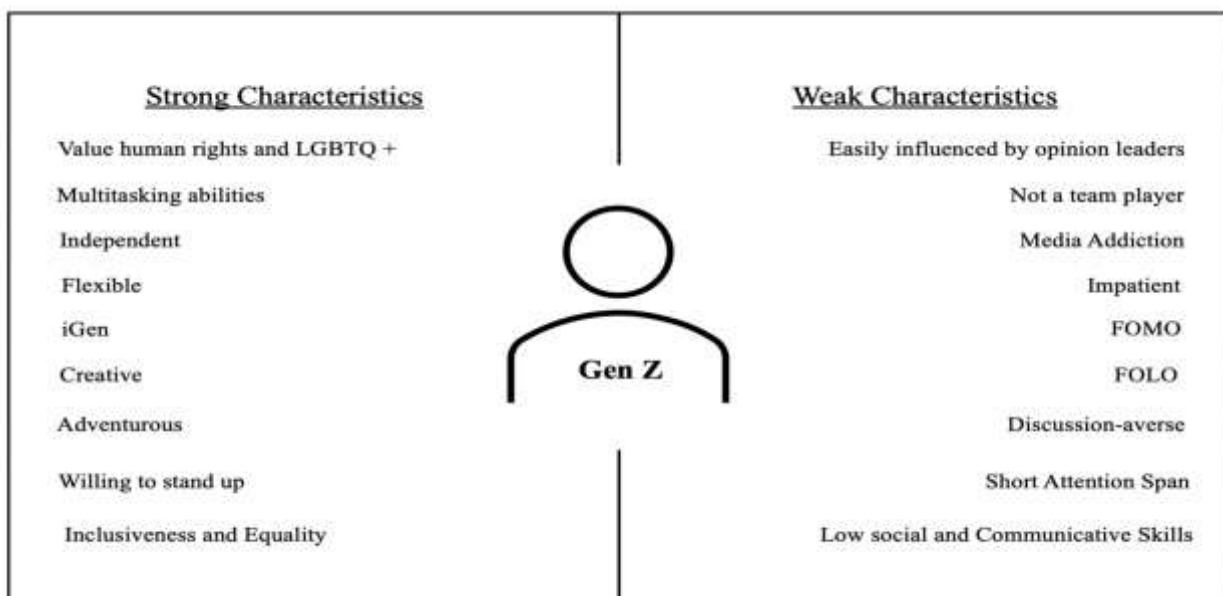


Figure 2. 2: Characteristics of Gen Z
 Source: researchgate.com

Particularly through movements like FridaysForFuture, where they express their pro-environmental commitment, one can see how intensely issues such as the negative implications of non-environmental development, the exploitation of nature, unbalanced ecosystems, and human ignorance towards environmental sustainability move them. These attitudes are also reflected in their intention to purchase green products. This attitude is also closely related to their knowledge and awareness of nature. In this context, environmental knowledge refers to the understanding and awareness of environmental problems and possible solutions to those problems (Zsóka et al., 2013, Rashmita et al., 2023; Alvarez-Monzoncillo, 2023; FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE, 2024).

To continue engaging with this generation in the future and to meet their demands for more sustainable practices, it is important to adapt marketing strategies and meet the expectations of sustainable consumers. From a marketing perspective, it is therefore extremely important to understand Gen Z and their environmental concerns, acquire deeper knowledge, and utilize marketing resources better and more efficiently to continue engaging with this generation, (Gomes et al., 2023; (Dragolea, et al., 2023).

Attitude-Behavior-Gap

Although sustainability and a sustainable lifestyle are important to this generation, their attitude is only partially reflected in the purchase of sustainable products, which is why there is also talk of a credibility problem in this regard. While Gen Z values a sustainable lifestyle, it seems difficult for them to integrate green behavior into their daily routines. This leads to one of the biggest challenges of the future, the Attention-Behavior-Gap. This gap, especially in the context of environmental sustainability, is referred to as the 'Green Gap' phenomenon, which is also closely linked to the Theory of planned behavior (Elhaffar, et al., 2020, Mamun, et al., 2018; Kleiser, et al., 2023).

According to Elhaffar et al. (2020), the Attitude-Behavior-Gap is the problem where consumers who declare positive attitudes and intentions to act in a pro-environmental manner do not transform these thoughts into actual behavior. Kleiser et al. (2023) speak of a discrepancy between the communicated attitude and the actual actions of a person. Especially, Gen Z prefers to reflect their social status and prestige, which is why they are also very likely to be involved in compulsive buying behavior of non-environmentally friendly products. A very good example here is fashion items. White, et al. (2019) have shown in his research that 65% of the surveyed participants would buy sustainable products, but only 26% actually do so. On one hand, Gen Z possesses a strong underlying concern for environmental issues, which also reflects in their subjective norms. But on the other hand, they are deeply involved in over-consumption and non-environmentally friendly consumption. This discrepancy gives rise to the problem of the so-called 'Green Gap'.

The Green Gap is the inconsistency between what the individual says regarding his/her growing concern about the environmental problems and what he/she does in terms of actions, behaviors, and contributions to lessen the consequences of these problems. Several studies have already explored the reasons for the Attitude-Behavior-Gap. Bocti et al. (2021) argue that reasons for the Green Gap can include lack of availability of sustainable products, pressure of social norms to keep up with social obligations ('to do what others do'), lack of information and legitimacy (consumers have difficulty finding the right information and mistrust the legitimacy of the information provided), limited budget and high prices, or even the motivation to behave sustainably, (Elhaffar et al., 2020).

Entrepreneurial Content Marketing

The concept of Digital Marketing emerged in the 1990s and early 2000s and further sophisticated in the late 2000s and 2010s, changing the way brands and businesses use technology for marketing. Digital Marketing refers to the use of technologies to aid marketing activities in order to improve customer knowledge by matching their needs. Over time, companies have realized the importance of Digital Marketing and have incorporated it into their strategies. As consumers become more reliant on digital electronics in their daily lives, digital marketing campaigns are becoming more efficient. Digital Marketing, or Internet Marketing, unlike traditional marketing instruments, enables real-time communication and marketing, flexibility, and is cost-effective. Furthermore, Digital Technologies have opened new possibilities for selling products. It enables continuous online shopping, products and services can be updated in real-time, content can be shared limitlessly, and greater engagement can be achieved. Digital Marketing can take various forms, the most well-known being Search Engine Optimization, Social Media Marketing, Affiliate Marketing, Pay-per-Click, Email Marketing, among others. In this work, I mainly focus on Social Media Marketing, as Social Media has the greatest influence on Gen Z, (Vaibhava, 2019; Bala & Verma, 2018).

Entrepreneurial Social Media Marketing (ESMM)

Through the use of digital media and the daily use of social media, companies are presented with entirely new possibilities in their communication and communication channels. According to Bala & Verma (2018), the internet is now the most powerful tool for business. Social Media is a global phenomenon and the way we interact and socialize has drastically changed. People use the internet

and social media to inform themselves, communicate, and interact. Due to the availability of Social Media, the nature of communication has changed significantly. In this Context we speak of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapshot.

Thanks to Social Media, geographical barriers between users are breaking down, facilitating communication, and creating the opportunity to connect people from all over the world. This is referred to as a two-way conversation, meaning the exchange both from consumer to supplier and from consumer to consumer. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to position themselves, be present, and develop strategies to engage with potential customers on social networks. Hence the term 'Social Media Marketing'. This means marketing using Social Media. Social Media Marketing is the endeavour to make one's own content, products, or services known on social networks and to connect with many people, especially potential customers (Weinberg, et al., 2012; Garzotto, 2016).

Kreutzer & Hinz (2010) refer to a few core elements that must be pursued for Social Media Marketing to be successful. He mainly speaks of concepts such as authenticity, honesty, transparency, or the ability to accept criticism from. The user should be at the center here. The goal of Social Media Marketing is to build long-term customer relationships, create loyalty and trust, improve image and awareness, increase share of voice; increase traffic, as well as increase brand awareness. Or ideally, also achieving viral marketing through e-word-of-mouth. This means that the shared content spreads and is shared exponentially, greatly promoting the brand's traffic (Bala & Verma, 2018).

According to Li, et al. (2021), social media has led to three fundamental shifts: (1) Social Media enables Firms and customers to Connect in ways that were not possible in the past; (2) Social Media has transformed the ways Firms and Customers interact and influence each other; (3) Better Management of Customer Relationship. Through the use of Social Media, however, the power balance between consumers and companies has also changed. Marketing now often takes place without the involvement of companies. Consumers are increasingly empowered by social media. They become creators, collaborators, and commentators of messages and are almost in control of marketing communication. Companies do not have direct control; the rules are defined, monitored, and possibly further developed by users. Therefore, communication on an equal footing, the creation of transparency and valuable content, and especially engaging with customers properly are immensely important. Social Media Marketing has diverse approaches, and below I would like to discuss the most important strategies. (Holland, 2016; Kreutzer & Hinz, 2010).

Forms of Entrepreneurial Social Media Marketing Strategies

To attract the attention of potential customers, companies employ various social media marketing strategies. Below, I would like to discuss the following strategies: Influencer Marketing, Content Marketing, Community Management, Paid Media, and Owned Media. The collaboration between companies and popular users, aimed at promoting a brand, is known as *Influencer Marketing*. Influencer marketing is a new strategy for companies, and when implemented effectively, it can be extremely successful. Influencers or popular users are individuals who have a large network of followers who trust them and follow their daily lives. Influencers are 'Opinion Leaders' and therefore play an important role in introducing new products and services. Social Media platforms like Instagram and TikTok stand out in terms of their importance in Influencer Marketing, as they are the preferred platforms used to convey the marketing message to younger customers. According to Martínez-López et al. (2020), Influencer Marketing can lead to better engagement results and even double its ROI. Influencer Marketing is successful because it reaches a broad audience, and consumers perceive it as more reliable, personal, less commercial, and more authentic, (Haenlein et al., 2020, (Haenlein et al., 2020, Alvarez-Monzoncillo, 2023).

Content Marketing has become a leading marketing technique in digital marketing communication. Content Marketing is the strategic marketing approach of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience with the objective of driving profitable customer action (Content Marketing Institute, n/d). According to Patrution Baltes (2015), Content Marketing is the art of communicating with your customers and prospects without selling. Content Marketing is a pulling technique, and the attraction of customer attention is paramount. The focus lies in the creation of authentic brand stories and follows a consumer-centered philosophy. It aims to create relevant and compelling content to earn the admiration of consumers. The goal of Content Marketing is to achieve brand awareness, foster relationships, reach new customers, create customer loyalty, promote consumer engagement, and generally build an audience, (Patrutio Baltes, 2015; Du Plessis, 2017).

There are various ways for companies to reach their audience. Another one is *Community Management*; creating communities for their brands. Habibi, et al. (2014) refer to communities as being at the intersection of brands and social media, groups or communities of brand admirers which we label social media-based brand communities. Community Management is one of the most effective instruments for the management activities of companies. Communities allow consumers to talk to the brand and among each other to reduce information asymmetry between them and the brand. Such communities offer the opportunity to generate and exchange information. The core idea is that users can interact with each other based on common interests, goals, or activities. Through consumer engagement in social media brand communities, trust, brand loyalty, and brand awareness can be created. Above all, marketers use these communities to connect with consumers and understand their needs and desires (Kavoura, 2014, Santos et al., 2022).

Social Media advertising has also gained increased attention. This is referred to as *Paid Media*. Paid Media describes the placement of brand advertisements on platforms of choice in exchange for compensation, and in return, the social media platforms display these posts to targeted users. It is thus a form of Internet advertising, but specifically placed within Web 2.0. According to Herver & Guitart (2022), Social Media ads create new product awareness, generate curiosity, and induce consumers to visit the brand's website. The challenge, according to Alalwan (2018), is to plan and design social media ads in a more effective and attractive manner. The goal is to increase brand awareness, build knowledge, shape customer perception, and motivate customers to make purchases through paid ads. According to Herver & Guitart (2022), paid ads will have a positive impact on website visits. Furthermore, the content provided should be vivid, interactive, entertaining, and social to generate content engagement (Wahid, 2021).

Owned Media is driven by brand officials and describes the brand's communication, created and shared through its own social network accounts. This involves the social media presence that allows them to interact directly with their consumers. According to Liadeli, et al. (2023), shared content can be distinguished under informative and emotional aspects, known as functional benefits and hedonic benefits. These benefits are then shared in the form of videos, images, and stories on the brand's own channels. Brands will be successful in the long term with this strategy only if they generate a strong social media presence. According to Colicev, et al. (2018) and Zhou, et al. (2023), owned media has a positive effect on brand awareness and customer satisfaction, as well as on online traffic and image. Since Owned Media is based on the principle of 'on its own control', one should also be aware that the shared content is the most positive information and positively overwhelming, which does have a negative impact on the authenticity and transparency provided.

When discussing Owned and Paid Media, the term *Earned Media* also arises. Earned Media refers to social media activities that a company does not directly generate or control. The social media exposure arises through voluntary brand mentions and recommendations. While a company may

pursue and encourage the goal of earned media, it is not a direct social media marketing strategy since it is beyond the control of the company, (Colicev, et al. 2018; & Zhou, et al. 2023).

Forms of Entrepreneurial Social Media Content

Content can be diverse and is as important as the conversation taking place, overtime, in the form of comments, mentions, hashtags, ratings, location and followers. Organic posts can take the form of text, images, or videos. Posts, surveys, stories, live streams, or giveaway actions are all potential content forms used on social media. When considering the type of content, two types can be distinguished: User-generated content and Firm-generated content, (Gemma & Antoni, 2022, Faster Capital, 2024)

User-generated content refers to consumers expressing themselves, sharing their experiences, being entertained, informed, and socializing with others by consuming, contributing, and creating brand-related content. It is a form of non-sponsored brand content, public content. Creative content is designed freely outside of professional routines and practices. Potential consumers appreciate user-generated content due to its high credibility According to research, there is a link between User-generated content and purchase intention. Positive User-generated content can increase product sales (Tyrväinen, et al., 2023; .Müller & Christandl, 2019).

Firm-generated content refers to firm-managed marketing communications. The goal of Firm-generated content is to influence consumers' brand perception and consequently includes information that increases consumers' knowledge of the brand. According to research, Firm-generated content has a strong impact on sales and is therefore highly efficient. A very effective approach of Firm-generated content is 'Storytelling'. Storytelling is a narrative practice in which people express themselves, tell stories, and try to convey emotions. It is a representation of content that forms a strategy in the mind of the receiver. Through the conveyance of stories, a variety of touch points emerge, such as emotional connection, communication of brand values, or authenticity. Storytelling can influence consumers' values and perceptions. Benefits of this type of content include an increase in the ability to recall information and a positive relationship towards brand trust and loyalty (Laurell & Söderman).

In connection with user-generated content and firm-generated content, Tyrväinen, et al. (2023) formulated attributes that social media content should fulfill to be efficient. These include information quality, which is a characteristic of information that satisfies consumers' expectations; information credibility, which refers to the trustworthiness of the provided information; and information usefulness, which is especially important in the context of Firm-generated content. It pertains to information that will enhance consumers' performance. Positive emotions should be conveyed through the content, as emotional states such as entertainment, enjoyment, and arousal influence consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Self-congruity refers to choosing brands and products that fit one's self-image. Lastly, interactivity, especially in the realm of social media, plays a focal role in generating brand loyalty.

Gen Z and Social Media Entrepreneurship

Gen Z's interface with digitalization of entrepreneurship is revolutionizing the way businesses are started and run. Here are some key dimensions:

i). Digital Natives:

Gen Z's familiarity with technology allows them to swiftly adopt new tools and platforms, creating innovative business models and disrupting traditional industries.

ii). Purpose-Driven:

Gen Z entrepreneurs prioritize social impact and sustainability, integrating these values into their business models to appeal to their target audience.

iii). Digital Storytelling:

Gen Z entrepreneurs leverage social media and content creation to build personal brands, engage with customers, and drive business growth.

Platforms and Purposes, (Virtual--Offices, Showrooms, Warehouses, Supermarkets)

- a). TikTok: Ideal for idea testing, virality, product storytelling, and short-form video content that showcases creativity and authenticity. TikTok Shop is also a great feature for seamless transactions.
- b). Instagram: Perfect for brand building, community engagement, DMs for orders, and visual marketing. Features like Instagram Shopping and live-streams can enhance customer interaction.
- c). Discord: Useful for beta feedback, customer support, and community building, especially for product development and customer engagement.
- d). YouTube Shorts: Great for long-form product education and visibility, allowing for more in-depth content and product showcases. YouTube: Excellent for educational, fun content that relates to your brand, building trust and establishing authority in your niche.
- e). Twitter/X: Effective for thought leadership, soft launches, and real-time conversations, keeping your audience engaged with timely updates.
- d). Pinterest: Suitable for visual marketing and affiliate-style commerce, ideal for businesses with visually appealing products.

Opportunities for Gen Z Entrepreneurs

i). E-commerce and Digital Marketplaces:

Platforms like Tiktok, Whatapp, Shopify, Etsy, Amazon, among others, enable Gen Z entrepreneurs to start online stores with low entry barriers.

ii). Social Media Ventures:

Gen Z leverages social media platforms to build personal brands, influencer careers, and content-based businesses.

iii). Freelancing and Gig Economy:

Platforms like Upwork and Fiverr provide flexible income streams for Gen Z entrepreneurs.

iv). Subscription-Based Models:

Gen Z's preference for unique experiences makes subscription-based businesses lucrative.

Challenges and Strategies

a). Competition:

Gen Z entrepreneurs face intense competition, but their authenticity and digital storytelling skills help them stand out.

b). Leveraging Technology:

Gen Z entrepreneurs use digital tools to streamline operations, reach customers, and drive growth.

c). Digital Natives:

Gen Z entrepreneurs are born with technology at their fingertips, giving them a unique advantage in leveraging digital tools to create innovative business solutions.

d). Purpose-Driven:

They prioritize social impact and sustainability, often integrating these values into their business models to appeal to conscious consumers.

e). Digital Storytelling:

Gen Z entrepreneurs use social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to build personal brands, engage with customers, and drive business growth.

f). Authenticity: Prioritize raw, real, and relatable content that resonates with Gen Z's desire for authenticity.

g). Interactivity: Encourage participation through comments, DMs, and social listening to build a loyal community.

h). Influencer Partnerships: Collaborate with influencers who align with your brand values and target audience, promoting authenticity and trust.

i). Clear CTAs: Ensure clear calls-to-action to guide Gen Z consumers through the sales funnel.

Gen Z, also known as iGen, as discussed in previous chapters, has grown up with digital technology. Therefore, both mobile phones and Social Media are integrated into their daily lives, which is also reflected in their media usage. They watch Netflix instead of TV, they listen to Spotify instead of Radio and instead of reading magazines, and they rely on Reddit, (Haenlein, et al., 2020).

According to a study of Deck (2022), German Gen Z individuals in 2020, had a total daily usage time, including video, audio, text, and internet, of 621 minutes. In 2022, 54% of respondents spent at least 4 hours daily on social media alone, with 38% spending even more according to Netpulse AG (2023). In 2023, the internet was the primary source of information for 72.8% of surveyed Gen Z individuals in Germany. Similar results were found in a study of Appinio Research (2022). When examining the platforms where this generation spends their time, surveys indicate that 68% use Instagram, 59% use YouTube, and 46% use TikTok. The same studies also revealed that every second individual purchases products due to advertised content on Social Media channels: Instagram (53%), YouTube (51%), and TikTok (51%). Additionally, it was analyzed that 40% of Gen Z individuals use Social Media for entertainment purposes, and TikTok is the platform where the most content is shared (32%). This highlights the potential for viral marketing. The following will explain how Gen Z responds to various social media strategies and what type of content is expected, (Die Medienanstalten (2023).

The Effect on Social Media Strategies towards Gen Z

In previous sections, various approaches to social media marketing have been examined. Many researchers have also focused on understanding the impact of Social Media Marketing on Gen Z. According to Anjum et al. (2020), Gen Z is highly attracted to Social Media Marketing Strategies, making this generation the primary focus of companies. Studies show that social media marketing does affect the purchase intention of Gen Z according to Waworuntu, et al., (2022) and furthermore increases brand awareness, perception, and brand loyalty. Social media platforms are perceived as the most influential platforms, especially in the form of audiovisual advertisements as Gen Z does have shorter attention spans (Kontos, 2023).

According to Nguyen, et al. (2022), Influencer Marketing has a significant effect on the consumption behavior of Gen Z. This is also reflected in the exponential use of this methodology with the aim of building brand reputation. In this Context Instagram and TikTok are perceived as particularly well-

suited for Influencer Marketing. Influencer Marketing is so effective precisely because it has a marginal influence on the decision-making process of Gen Z. Through this form of marketing, Gen Z develops a kind of loyalty and friendly relationship. This methodology is even more effective when it involves major influencers or even celebrities. Researchers have also found a positive effect of Content Marketing on the purchase intention of Gen Z. This generation prefers compelling and creative content rather than lengthy policies and information, making Content Marketing a very effective strategy.

According to Anjum, et al. (2020), Paid Media also has a positive effect, especially when used personally and targeted. In general, various studies have shown that Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on Gen Z in terms of interaction, engagement, and purchase intention. In particular, the interaction between companies and consumers is the most influential factor in purchase intention according to research. The same study also demonstrated that Instagram has the greatest effect on impulsive buying behavior and that TikTok and Instagram are the best-suited platforms for marketing local products due to their potential for large reach. In conclusion, social media marketing is successful with Gen Z when it fulfills the principle of ad recall, meaning that advertisements are designed to be memorable to the target audience, and the more a target group is exposed, and the better, (Waworuntu, et al., 2022; Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023).

Gen Z and Entrepreneurial Social Media Marketing Content

Not only the type of strategy to reach Gen Z is important, but also the content that is shared is fundamentally important. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the expectations of this generation regarding social media content and to respond to them. Initially, it should be noted that each platform has its own language and culture, which is why marketing should be targeted and individually placed. Gen Z advocates for values such as diversity and equality, so they also want to see these reflected in advertising. Advertising should be creative and stand out, both visually and verbally. Furthermore, they value communication on a personal level, so advertising should be personalized and unique (Anjum, et al, 2020; Haenlein, et al., 2020).

Authenticity is also expected from this generation, not just hoped for. They want to see the human side, unfiltered stories, behind the scenes. The more honest and vulnerable the conversation, the stronger the bond. Furthermore, the video content revolution should be embraced. This refers to the adoption of short-video features, which also results from the short attention span of this generation. User-generated content, which stands for authenticity, trustworthiness, and transparency, is also increasingly expected, as well as the rise of social advocacy. Companies should stand up for social and political issues and position themselves (HGS Interactive, 2023).

According to Liu, et al. (2022), Gen Z also responds more to content that is interactive, entertaining, and trending. The same result is shown in the longitudinal study of Appinio, Research (2022), in which 40% of Gen Z use Social Media because of its entertaining factor. Wahid, (2021) refers to good content as being vivid, interactive, and social, but above all, it should be consistent. Since Gen Z is a generation for whom sustainability is important, this aspect of sustainability should also be reflected in Social Media advertising.

Concluding Thoughts

The main achievement of this section is an attempt to explore the study contexts and lay the foundational study rationale with an overall stimulus for understanding sustainability practices from previous academic scholarships. Germany as a developed economy and Nigeria, a sample of an emerging economy, was explored with a focus on multinationals company and small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and their significance for social and economic development. That necessitated the historical exploration of multinational operations in Germany and Nigerian. The

economic conceptualizations in Germany and Nigeria, and the comparative features of Coca Cola operations with diverse global and regional counterparts to substantiate the potential ingenuity and contributions of the sector.

Finally, the various state interventions and support for Germany and Nigerian firms were explored to understand the peculiarity and progress the sector has evolved through the years amidst policy and governmental constraints. That includes broad literal examinations of business operations and research within Germany and Nigeria, the distinct impact of the Sustainability practices on both countries gross domestic product (GDP) and top-management responsibility as a pivotal element for business responsibility.

Gen Z's interface with digitalization is transforming entrepreneurship, enabling them to create innovative ventures that prioritize social impact, sustainability, and purpose. As this generation continues to shape the business landscape, understanding their unique approach to digital entrepreneurship is crucial for success. The following recommendations are needed. To Succeed, Gen Z Entrepreneurs should:

- a). Leverage Technology: Use more of digital tools to streamline operations, reach customers, and drive growth;
- b). Build Community: Form partnerships and engage with fellow creators and co-builders to amplify their work;
- c). Prioritize Authenticity: Use digital storytelling skills to stand out in a competitive market and build a loyal customer base.

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