

Influences on Generation Z's Purchasing Decision-Making on E-Commerce Platforms: Beyond Products and Website Design

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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z, whose unique preferences and digital proficiency shape the online retail landscape. This study explores the multifaceted factors influencing Generation Z's purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms, extending the focus beyond traditional elements like product features and website design. This study aims to explore the influence of delivery service quality among logistics providers on Generation Z's online purchasing decisions, emphasizing its role in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty in e-commerce contexts. Utilizing an inductive constructive approach, while incorporating insights from recent literature on logistic service quality, e-commerce, generational characteristics, and service quality theory, this research examines how dimensions such as delivery speed, flexibility, tracking visibility, and cost transparency impact the online shopping experience. We suggest that delivery service quality is intricately linked to Generation Z's preference for convenience, real-time communication, and ethical business practices, including sustainable delivery options. In this context, the study posits that with growing consumer expectations for seamless logistics experiences, the pressures on logistics providers to innovate and meet these standards are heightened, particularly when targeting a digitally adept demographic like Generation Z. Furthermore, such expectations intensify in competitive e-commerce environments, where differentiation often hinges on superior delivery performance. Our findings offer novel insights into how logistics providers and e-commerce platforms can align delivery services with Generation Z's unique preferences, ensuring satisfaction and fostering long-term loyalty and providing actionable insights for e-commerce platforms to refine their strategies. By addressing these dynamics, businesses can not only enhance customer retention but also establish a competitive advantage in the evolving digital marketplace.

Keyword: Influences, Generation Z's Purchasing, Decision-Making, E-Commerce Platforms, Website Design

Introduction

Over the past five years, online shopping has seen significant global expansion. This growth in e-commerce, particularly in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods sector, has heightened international competition and led to a surge in the number of shipments and packages being distributed locally and internationally. This rapid expansion has reshaped how products are bought and sold, leading to increased convenience and accessibility for shoppers, as well as opening up new markets and revenue streams for enterprises. However, it also brings significant challenges, including intense competition, logistical complexities, and heightened consumer expectations. As e-commerce continues to evolve, businesses must adapt and innovate to stay competitive and meet the ever-changing demands of the digital marketplace. As a result, purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms are no longer influenced solely by the variety of product listings and website design, but also significantly by the delivery service quality. According to Kusumawardani & Hastayanti (2020) customer satisfaction and purchase intentions are significantly affected by logistics, which involves the transfer of goods from seller to buyer.

Generation Z, often referred to as Gen Z, follows the Millennial generation and has become a dominant force in shaping the future of e-commerce. This group, recognized for its exceptional ability to navigate and excel in the digital realm, is not only highly active in emerging markets but also plays a pivotal role in global retail trends. As a result, factors such as shipping costs, flexibility in delivery schedules, and visibility in delivery tracking are increasingly important in their decision-making process (Grewal et al., 2017). These logistical elements can greatly impact the success of e-commerce, either encouraging or deterring purchase intentions.

Moreover, delivery tracking visibility is a particularly important logistical factor influencing online buying behavior. Generation Z customers, who are used to instantaneous information, expect this convenience in their shopping experiences as well. For them, the ability to track shipments in real-time, receive continuous updates on delivery progress, and accurately predict arrival times is essential (Rashid & Rasheed, 2024). A McKinsey report (2020) found that modern consumers expect real-time tracking, and a lack of communication or delays can cause frustration and potentially lead to abandoning a purchase. Transparent deliveries provide Generation Z with a sense of control and confidence in the vendor, enhancing their overall shopping experience (Yang et al., 2016).

Further research indicates that online shoppers with access to comprehensive tracking information report higher satisfaction with the entire purchasing process. As agreed by Aljohani (2024) as customer satisfaction with delivery services is a key influencer making the Long Mile Delivery experience mediates the relationship between the online shopping journey and overall customer satisfaction. In addition, knowing the exact location of the package and the expected delivery time can significantly influence the customer's intention to make a repeat purchase (Ray et al., 2019; Choi et al., 2017). Research shows that younger consumers, especially Generation Z, are less inclined to tolerate unclear or delayed delivery status, making visibility not only a convenience but an expectation (Upadhyay et al., 2024).

Shipping cost is another critical logistics factor that influences online shopping decisions. Despite competitive product prices on many e-commerce sites, shipping charges often deter potential buyers. Generation Z, in particular, is very sensitive to these side costs. A survey from Statista (2021) revealed that almost 80% of Generation Z consumers are discouraged from making a purchase if they feel the shipping cost is too high or if there is no free shipping option available. This is in line with the findings by Coughlan et al. (2019), who argue that delivery costs have a significant impact on purchase decisions, especially for younger and more frugal consumers. Same result of study explained by Zakiah et al. (2022), shipping cost become major contribution to purchase decisions for online user and seller used shipping promotion to persuade and influence online buyer perception.

In today's fast-paced environment, delivery schedule flexibility has become increasingly important, especially for Generation Z. This demographic values speed, convenience and control over delivery schedules. According to (Do et al., 2023; Masuch et al., 2024), 58% of Generation Z customers choose flexible delivery options, such as same-day delivery or the ability to schedule delivery at a convenient time, reflecting their high standards for efficiency and speed. Offering customers the option to choose their delivery time has become a competitive advantage for many e-commerce platforms (Deshpande & Pendem, 2023; Oyama et al., 2024). Generation Z, raised in an "instant gratification" culture with services like streaming, gaming and messaging that offer near-instant responses, find the flexibility of delivery especially appealing. Fast delivery has become important for companies to remain competitive in the e-commerce industry (Chopra & Meindl, 2013). Allowing customers to choose a delivery window or providing same-day or next-day delivery can increase sales and increase customer satisfaction (Masuch et al., 2024; Oyama et al., 2024; Saha et al., 2020).

Additionally, a flexible delivery schedule can reduce the frustration associated with waiting for items without knowing when they will arrive. Since Generation Z is less tolerant of uncertainty in the delivery process, the ability to select a specific time slot or receive updates on the estimated delivery window significantly improves their shopping experience (Gao et al., 2015).

Generation Different and Characteristic of GEN Z

Babby Boomers Until Alpha

Generational differences have emerged as an interesting and important area of research, especially when analyzing how different age groups engage in the workplace and wider society. This group is usually categorized into different generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z, each shaped by the socio-economic and technological context of their formative years (Twenge, 2023).

Baby Boomers, born from 1946 to 1964, experienced post-war economic growth and significant societal change. They are known for their strong work ethic, loyalty to employers, and preference for hierarchical organizational structures (Costanza et al., 2012). This generation is characterized by their stability and long-term commitment to a single employer, highlighting their dedication and reliability (Twenge, 2010).

Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, grew up with the advent of personal computers and the internet. They are known for their independence, adaptability, and skepticism of authority. Unlike previous generations, Gen X prioritizes work-life balance and is more likely to change jobs for better opportunities (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Serving as a bridge between the analog and digital eras, they have deftly navigated rapid technological change throughout their careers (Twenge, 2023).

Millennials, or Generation Y (born 1981–1996), are true digital natives, having integrated the internet and social media into their daily lives from a young age. They are characterized by their technological excellence, preference for a collaborative work environment, and a strong desire for meaningful work (Costanza et al., 2012). For Millennials, flexibility is paramount, often prioritizing personal growth and fulfillment over traditional career paths (Twenge, 2010).

Generation Z, born from 1997 onwards, is the first generation to grow up with smartphones and social media. With nearly 81% regularly using social media and more than half of their purchasing decisions made online, this highly connected generation spends their free time multitasking across multiple digital activities (Hulyk, 2015; McCrindle, 2018). They value diversity, are pragmatic about career goals, and possess a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Digital communication is second nature to them, and they prefer employers that align with their values and offer personal and professional growth opportunities (Twenge, 2023; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Understanding these generational differences is important for organizations that aim to create an inclusive and productive work environment. By recognizing the unique strengths, preferences and motivations of each generation, employers can adapt their management strategies to effectively engage and inspire a diverse workforce (Costanza et al., 2012)

Gen Z

The most popular generation Z device is the smartphone. In a survey conducted by IBM, 75% of Gen Z respondents reported that their mobile phone is the device they use most often, with many having had a phone since they were 12 years old. This early and continuous exposure to mobile technology has significantly influenced their behavior and choices. Smartphones are not just communication tools for this generation; it is an essential device to access the internet, social media, and various applications that facilitate their daily activities. This generation is characterized by shorter attention spans than Millennials. Research shows that the attention span of Generation Z is estimated to be only 8 seconds (Arthur, 2016). This short attention span reflects their need for instant gratification and quick access to information. The constant bombardment of information and the fast-paced nature of digital content has forced them to process information quickly and move on to the next thing immediately. This impatience is not only limited to content consumption but also extends to their expectations in various aspects of life, including shopping, entertainment, and even education.

Additionally, 55% of Generation Z spend more than 5 hours a day on their phones (Steven, 2024; Watson, 2019). This widespread use of smartphones highlights the importance of mobile-friendly content and platforms to reach this demographic. High engagement with

their devices means businesses must prioritize mobile optimization in their marketing strategy. Mobile apps, responsive websites and social media platforms are critical channels through which Generation Z consumes content, interacts with brands and makes purchasing decisions.

When it comes to making purchasing decisions, Generation Z relies heavily on social media and search engines to gather information about the products (Prakash Yadav & Rai, 2017; Vițelar, 2019) they are interested in purchasing. They are adept at conducting thorough research, using various online resources to compare products, read reviews and watch unboxing videos or tutorials. This generation doesn't take marketing claims at face value; instead, they're looking for authentic, user-generated content that provides genuine insight into the product they're considering. Nearly 81% of Generation Z actively use social media, and more than half of their purchasing decisions occur online as they spend their free time multitasking, including surfing the internet, chatting with friends, watching movies and completing homework simultaneously (Hulyk, 2015; McCrindle, 2018). As the most knowledgeable and advanced generation, conventional marketing strategies that worked with previous generations no longer applicable to Generation Z.

They are adept at navigating the digital landscape to find the best deals, high-quality products and brands that align with their values. This research-driven approach to shopping means businesses need to ensure their online presence is strong, transparent and engaging. Product information should be easily accessible, detailed and supplemented with real customer reviews and testimonials. Understanding this behavior is important for businesses aiming to market effectively to Generation Z. It emphasizes the need for quick, engaging and easily accessible information via mobile platforms and social media. Brands that can capture this generation's attention in the critical 8 seconds and provide a seamless, informative and enjoyable online experience are more likely to win their loyalty and business. By recognizing and adapting to the unique preferences and behaviors of Generation Z, businesses can better meet their expectations and build lasting relationships with this influential demographic. Table below illustrate the summary of the differences between all generation.

Table 1

Summary of Differences between all Generation

Generation	Birth Years	Key Characteristics	Technology & Communication	Work Preferences	Shopping Behavior
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	Strong work ethic, loyalty to employers, preference for hierarchical structures	Adapted to technology later in life, prefer face-to-face or phone communication	Value stability, long-term commitment, and loyalty	Traditional shopping methods, value quality and brand loyalty
Generation X	1965-1980	Independent, adaptable, skeptical of authority, prioritize work-life balance	Grew up with personal computers, comfortable with both analog and digital communication	Prefer flexible work environments, often change jobs for better opportunities	Use online reviews and comparison sites, value convenience and efficiency
Millennials	1981-1996	Digital natives, prefer collaborative work environments, seek meaningful work	Heavily use social media and mobile devices, prefer digital communication	Value flexibility and personal growth, seek work-life integration	Rely on social media and online reviews, prioritize authentic and user-generated content
Generation Z	1997 onwards	Highly connected, value diversity, pragmatic career goals, entrepreneurial spirit	Grew up with smartphones and social media, short attention spans, prefer digital communication	Seek employers aligning with their values, prefer personal and professional growth opportunities	Conduct thorough online research, use social media and search engines for purchasing decisions, value authenticity and quick access to information

Purchase Intention in E-Commerce Platforms

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness and likelihood to make a future purchase. In e-commerce, it specifically indicates an individual's readiness to complete an online transaction. This concept has become crucial in e-commerce, encompassing not only the initial inclination but also various factors that influence and reinforce consumers' decisions throughout their digital shopping journey (Gao et al., 2015). As e-commerce has evolved, so has the understanding of purchase intention, expanding beyond trust to include factors like ease of use, personalization, and logistical support.

Research on purchase intention in e-commerce is vital for business success. Understanding these intentions helps platforms optimize for customer satisfaction and retention. By aligning resources, improving website quality, and personalizing offerings to match customer expectations, platforms can increase sales and reduce cart abandonment rates (Alalwan et al., 2017). Additionally, understanding purchase intention aids in customer segmentation, allowing businesses to tailor marketing efforts based on buying motives (Grewal et al., 2017). For instance, logistics efficiency—such as fast delivery and easy returns—can attract and retain Generation Z customers, who highly value speed and convenience (Do et al., 2023; Singh & Banerjee, 2021). Research also shows that platforms emphasizing ethical practices and sustainability see increased purchase intentions among younger, socially conscious consumers, aligning with the broader trend towards responsible consumerism (HO et al., 2020; Morais et al., 2022).

Studies on purchase intention consistently highlight factors such as perceived ease of use, trust, and positive user experiences, with a particular focus on Generation Z's preferences. Lim & Dubinsky (2004) demonstrated that website quality, from design to content, is essential for building purchase intention. Trust remains pivotal; for example, Gefen & Straub (2000) found that consumers' trust in e-commerce websites positively impacts purchase intention, especially for high-value items. Gao et al. (2015) further showed that social proof, including reviews and ratings, enhances purchase intentions by increasing perceived reliability. Specific studies on Generation Z's purchase intention reveal a preference for seamless transactions, with features like social media integration and one-click payments being influential (Vițelar, 2019). Logistics efficiency is another significant factor, particularly for Generation Z, who value rapid and reliable delivery services. Studies indicate that innovative logistics, such as same-day delivery, influence purchase intention by providing the immediate gratification consumers seek in online shopping (Kawa & Światowiec-Szczepańska, 2021; Wang et al., 2020). These findings underscore the importance of optimizing logistics alongside platform features to strengthen consumer purchase intentions in the evolving e-commerce landscape.

Table 2

Key Factors Influencing E-Commerce Decision-Making

Factor category	Key findings	Citation
Website Design	Aesthetic appeal, ease of navigation, and clear product presentation significantly affect purchase intent.	Sulikowski et al. (2022)
Trust and Security	Secure payment systems, transparent policies, and trust-building mechanisms are critical for online transactions.	Krishna et al. (2023)
Social influence	User reviews, social media recommendations, and influencer endorsements drive consumer choices.	Weismueller et al. (2020)
Pricing strategy	Competitive pricing and perceived value play an essential role in attracting and retaining customers.	Pandey et al. (2020)
Convenience and user experience	Seamless experiences, fast loading times, and mobile-friendly designs enhance user satisfaction.	Sikder (2023)
Personalization	AI-driven recommendations and tailored marketing messages increase purchase likelihood.	Chowdhury et al. (2024)
Psychological Factors	Impulse buying, fear of missing out (FOMO), and emotional brand attachment influence purchasing decisions.	Saibaba (2024)
Sustainability Concerns	Ethical practices and sustainable product offerings are increasingly important to e-commerce consumers.	Oláh et al. (2023)

Discussion and Conclusion

Generation Z is particularly selective when it comes to shipping costs and options. If shipping is affordable—or better yet, free—it can significantly influence whether they decide to buy something online. This generation closely evaluates the total cost, including shipping fees, before making a decision, and values transparency in pricing (ShipStation, 2024). When e-commerce platforms offer competitive shipping rates or free shipping deals, they're much more likely to attract Gen Z shoppers and convert visits into actual purchases. This age group prioritizes value for money, so platforms that maintain low shipping costs or provide free shipping options tend to see better results with Gen Z customers (Aljohani, 2024; Lewis, 2006; Zakiah et al., 2022).

Affordable shipping aligns with Gen Z's budget-conscious mindset and enhances their overall shopping satisfaction, which encourages them to complete more purchases online. According to a ShipStation survey, 21% of Gen Z respondents believe retailers should never charge for shipping, while 17% expect delivery within 24 hours, emphasizing their demand for both affordability and quick delivery options (ShipStation, 2023). Furthermore, research indicates

that free shipping not only increases purchase likelihood but also strengthens customer loyalty. A report by Walker Sands found that 60% of consumers are willing to buy more items to qualify for free shipping, which can lead to higher average order values for retailers (Walker Sands, 2023). This strategy is a win-win, attracting initial purchases and fostering customer loyalty. In short, affordable and free shipping options are essential for capturing Gen Z's attention and encouraging them to buy more online. By catering to these preferences, e-commerce platforms can boost their appeal to this influential group, driving higher purchase rates and building stronger customer loyalty (Iqbal et al., 2023; Lewis, 2006; Uzir et al., 2021).

Delivery tracking visibility, which allows customers to monitor the real-time status and location of their orders, plays a significant role in influencing purchase intentions on e-commerce platforms. This visibility is essential as it reduces uncertainty and builds customer trust by providing accurate information about delivery times and potential delays (Hancko, 2024). When customers can track their orders, they feel more in control and reassured about their purchases, increasing the likelihood of completing a transaction. The importance of delivery tracking visibility is highlighted by its impact on improving customer satisfaction and retention. By alleviating delivery anxiety and fostering a positive shopping experience, transparent tracking systems make customers feel valued and informed (Iqbal et al., 2023; Rashid & Rasheed, 2024). This, in turn, can lead to repeat purchases and long-term loyalty to the e-commerce platform. For Generation Z, who are digital natives and highly value convenience and efficiency, the ability to track deliveries in real-time is particularly appealing. Previous studies have demonstrated that enhanced logistics service quality, including transparent tracking, positively affects repurchase intentions among young consumers (Le et al., 2023). Research indicates that when customers are kept informed about their order status, they are more likely to develop a positive perception of the e-commerce platform, which can translate into increased purchase intentions. Additionally, the ability to track deliveries can mitigate the negative impact of any potential delays, as customers appreciate being kept informed and are more forgiving when they are well-informed.

Delivery time flexibility, the capability of an e-commerce platform to offer various delivery options to cater to different customer needs, such as same-day delivery, scheduled delivery, next-day delivery, and specific time slots, plays a vital role in influencing purchase intentions (Joerss et al., 2016). This flexibility provides customers with control over when they receive their orders, enhancing convenience and satisfaction. For example, if a customer needs an item urgently, they might choose same-day delivery. Alternatively, if they can only receive packages at certain times, they can schedule a delivery accordingly. This variety caters to different lifestyles and schedules, improving the overall shopping experience.

In today's fast-paced world, the ability to choose when and how products are delivered is vital. Consumers expect quick and convenient delivery options. Delivery flexibility not only increases customer satisfaction but also plays a significant role in retention and loyalty. If customers can rely on a retailer to meet their delivery preferences, they are more likely to shop there again (Uzir et al., 2021). Studies show that 25% of consumers are willing to pay significant premiums for same-day or instant delivery, while 55% would switch to a retailer that offers faster delivery options (Drenik, 2023; Aljohani, 2024).

There is a strong connection between delivery time flexibility and purchase intention. Offering a range of delivery options makes it more likely that customers will complete their purchases, as they meet their specific needs and preferences. Flexible delivery caters to the demand for immediacy and convenience, particularly valued by Generation Z, which leads to higher conversion rates and increased customer loyalty (de Grahl et al., 2012).

To summarize, delivery tracking visibility and time flexibility are critical factors in shaping purchase intentions on e-commerce platforms, especially for Generation Z. By providing real-time updates, reducing uncertainty, and offering a range of delivery options that accommodate diverse needs, e-commerce platforms can enhance customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, ultimately driving higher sales and repeat business. Retailers must prioritize these aspects to stay competitive and appeal to this influential generation (Drenik, 2023).

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