

The Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Visual Content and Chat Experience on Gen Z Consumers' Purchasing Decisions

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Abstract

Purpose This study aims to determine the extent of the influence of visual content (images/video) and chat experience in digital marketing on the purchasing decisions of Gen Z (young people aged 12-27) in Palembang City.

Methodology/approach This research used a quantitative (associative) survey method. Data was collected from 100 Gen Z respondents (aged 12-27) in Palembang City via an online questionnaire with a Likert scale. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 24.00 software, employing multiple linear regression, t-tests, and F-tests.

Results/findings The main results show that visual content and chat experience each (partially) have a positive and significant effect on Gen Z's purchasing decisions. When tested together (simultaneously), both factors also had a significant influence. The study found that 74.9% of Gen Z's purchasing decisions can be explained by the combination of visual content quality and chat experience.

Conclusions The main conclusion is that an effective digital marketing strategy for Gen Z must combine two things: emotionally appealing visual elements and a responsive (quick to reply) and trust-building chat experience.

Limitations This study was limited to only two variables (visual content and chat) and was conducted only in Palembang City. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other regions or broader populations.

Contribution This study provides a practical contribution to business practitioners and marketers by offering tangible guidance on the importance of investing resources in quality visual content and chat services to win over Gen Z consumers. Academically, this research serves as a foundation for future researchers in the digital marketing field to explore other factors influencing Gen Z.

Keywords: *Visual Content, Chat Experience, Digital Marketing, Purchase Decision, Generation Z*

1. Introduction

To fully understand Gen Z's purchasing behavior, it is important to examine how the characteristics of this generation, which grew up with digital technology, have influenced their expectations of brands. Gen Z demands a digital experience that is fast, personalized, and emotionally relevant. They tend to respond to content that is both entertaining and informative. In this context, the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies is not only measured by presence on social media, but also by the quality of interaction and the form of visual message delivery that suits their communication style.

2. Literature review and hypothesis/es development

Similar findings were revealed by Ferdianto et al. (2024), which showed that marketing content on TikTok had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.61$; $p < 0.01$) on purchase intention, with customer engagement as the main mediating variable. On a more futuristic level, Mayahi & Vidrih (2022) emphasize that the integration of generative AI (e.g., AI video and image synthesis) enables brands to produce increasingly personalized and immersive content, thereby increasing conversion opportunities.

Beyond visual aspects, digital conversation experiences (chat experiences) through live chat, chatbots, and instant messaging apps have evolved into crucial digital touchpoints. A psychological study by Ding & Najaf (2024) found that interactivity and human-like impressions in AI chatbots increase trust, which then mediates adoption and purchase intentions in e-commerce. In the fashion industry, Azman et al. (2025) proved that the quality of the system and ease of use of chatbots are significant predictors of purchase decisions ($R^2 = 0.48$). Big data analysis of 170,000 chat sessions by Park et al. (2015) also shows that positive sentiment in conversations is more decisive for satisfaction than response duration or frequency.

Despite its great potential, many businesses have not optimized these two aspects in their digital marketing strategies. Therefore, this study aims to determine the extent to which the effectiveness of digital marketing visual content and chat experience influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Type and Approach

This study uses a quantitative associative approach with a survey method. The associative approach was chosen because it aims to analyze the relationship or influence between the independent variables (Visual Content and Chat Experience) on the dependent variable (Purchase Decision) simultaneously and partially. The survey method was used to collect data from respondents directly through a questionnaire instrument, allowing researchers to obtain representative quantitative data that can be analyzed statistically to test the proposed hypothesis.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study was all members of Generation Z residing in the city of Palembang. Generation Z is defined as the age group between 12 and 27 years old who have experienced and are accustomed to digital technology in their daily activities. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives. The inclusion criteria for respondents were:

- Aged between 12 and 27 years
- Residing in Palembang City
- Have ever made an online purchase (online shopping)
- Thus, the number of samples successfully collected and analyzed was 100 respondents.

3.3. Data Collection Technique

Data was collected using an online questionnaire distributed through a digital platform, making it easier for Generation Z respondents, who are generally digitally active, to access. This questionnaire uses a 1-5 Likert scale, with answers ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This scale is used to measure the level of agreement of respondents to questions that reflect the indicators of the variables being studied.

Table 1. Indicators and sample questions for each variable

Variabel	Indikator	Example of Question Items
Visual Content X1	Aesthetics	The visual design displayed by the brand caught my attention
	Clarity of Message	The visual message conveyed is easy for me to understand
	Relevance	The visual content presented is relevant to my needs and interests
Chat Experience X2	Speed Response	The chat response to my questions is fast and accurate
	Interactivity	The chat experience felt interactive and personal
	Trust	I feel confident in the quality of the chat service provided
Purchase Decision Y	Purchase	I intend to purchase the product promoted through that digital content
	Final Decision	I finally decided to purchase the product after viewing the content and chat
	Satisfaction Purchase	I am satisfied with the purchase decision I made based on the information provided

3.4. Operational Definition of Variables

Visual Content X1 The quality and appeal of visual content presented in digital marketing, measured through indicators of aesthetics, clarity of message, and visual relevance to consumer needs.

Chat Experience X2 The experience of interacting through digital chat services, including response speed, interactivity, and the level of consumer trust in chat services.

Purchase Decision Y The consumer's purchase decision-making process, demonstrated through purchase intent, final purchase decision, and satisfaction with the purchase made.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is conducted in stages as follows:

Validity and Reliability Tests are conducted to ensure that the questionnaire instruments measure variables accurately and that the measurement results are consistent.

Classical Assumption Tests include data normality tests to ensure that the data distribution is close to normal, multicollinearity tests to test the correlation between independent variables, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure that the residual variance is consistent across all observations.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was used to test the relationship between the independent variables (Visual Content and Chat Experience) and the dependent variable (Purchase Decision).

Hypothesis testing consists of a t-test to see the partial effect of each independent variable and an F-test to see the simultaneous effect of both independent variables on the dependent variable.

The coefficient of determination R^2 is measured to determine how much the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variable.

4. Results and discussion

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

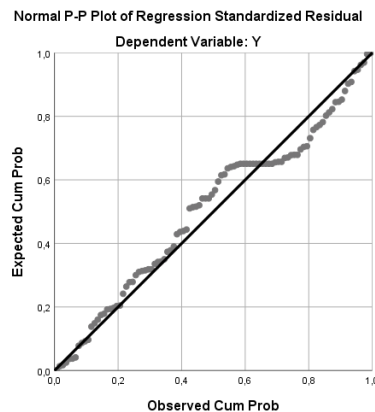


Figure 1. Normality Test Results

Based on Figure 1 above, it can be seen that the data is distributed along the diagonal line, meaning that the data between the dependent and independent variables has a normal relationship or distribution or meets the normality assumption test.

4.1. Multicollinearity

The multicollinearity test is used to determine whether there is a high correlation between the independent variables in the regression model, with the following conditions: If Tolerance is less than 0.1 or equal to VIF is greater than 10, then there is a serious multicollinearity problem. If Tolerance is greater than 0.1 or equal to VIF is less than 10, then there is no multicollinearity problem.

Using SPSS version 24.00

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients ^a			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		

	Visual Content	,214	4,663
	Chat Experience	,214	4,663
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision			

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value for the Visual Content variable (X1) is 4.663 and for the Chat Experience variable (X2) is 4.663. Each independent variable has a value smaller than 10. Similarly, the Tolerance value for the Visual Content variable (X1) is 0.214, and for the Chat Experience variable (X2) is 0.214. The tolerance value for each variable is greater than 0.1, so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables, as indicated by the tolerance value for each independent variable being greater than 0.1 and the VIF value being less than 10.

4.2. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted to determine whether there was variance inequality in the regression model from one observation to another.

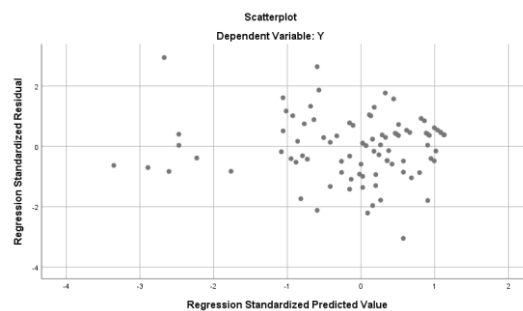


Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Based on Figure 2 above, it can be seen that the distribution of residuals is irregular and does not form a pattern. This can be seen in the scattered points or plot. The conclusion that can be drawn is that there is no heteroscedasticity.

4.3. Multiple Linear Regression Test

The following are the results of data management using SPSS version

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.808	1.238		2,268	,026
	X1	,210	,064	,358	3,299	,001
	X2	,313	,064	,535	4,921	,000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

The results were entered into a multiple linear regression equation to obtain the following equation:

$$Y = 2.808 + 0,210_1 + 0,303_2$$

Explanation: The constant of 2.808 indicates that if the value of the independent variable is considered constant, the purchase decision for online shops will increase by 2.808 among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business. β_1 of 0.210 with a positive relationship indicates that if Visual Content increases, it will be followed by an increase in purchase decisions of 0.210, assuming that other independent variables are considered constant. β_2 of 0.313 with a positive relationship indicates that if Chat Experience increases, it will be followed by an increase in purchasing decisions of 0.313, assuming other independent variables are held constant. The following are the t-test results conducted in this study

Table 4. Partial t-Test Results

Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.808	1.238		2,268	,026
	X1	,210	,064	,358	3,299	,001
	X2	,313	,064	,535	4,921	,000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

Based on Table 4, the t-count for the Visual Content variable (X1) is 3.299, while the t-table value is 1.985. Because the t-count (3.299) is greater than the t-table (1.985) and the significance probability value (sig) is 0.001 (smaller than alpha 0.05), it can be concluded that Visual Content Digital Marketing has a positive and significant effect on the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers. This result is in line with the definition of Visual Content presented by Budi Sunarso (2023), which states that visual content is designed to convey messages in an attractive and effective manner and has the expressive power to build emotional connections with consumers and increase the overall effectiveness of digital campaigns. In addition, this finding is also supported by Ferdianto et al., who show that marketing content has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

Next, based on Table 4, the t-count for the Chat Experience variable (X2) is 4.921, while the t-table value is 1.985. Since the t-value (4.921) is greater than the t-table value (1.985) and the significance probability (sig) is 0.000 (less than alpha 0.05), it can be concluded that Chat Experience has a positive and significant effect on Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with the concept of Chat Experience according to Graeme McLean & Kofi Osei-Frimpong (2017), which refers to customer satisfaction with live chat service interactions that reflect perceptions of service quality and information. Furthermore, these results are reinforced by the psychological study by Ding & Najaf (2024), which found that interactivity and human-like impressions in AI chatbots increase trust, which mediates adoption and purchase intentions in e-commerce. Similarly, Azman et al. cite_start also prove that system quality and ease of use of chatbots are significant predictors of purchase decisions. This aspect of trust aligns with the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) theory by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), which emphasizes that assurance (trust and competence) is the core of effective chat services.

These results are also consistent with the general finding that the quality of interactions and information provided in a digital environment has a significant impact on consumer behavior.

Based on the data processing results, the following outcomes were obtained:

Table 5. Simultaneous Test Results (F-Test)

Simultaneous Test Results (F-Test)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2220.692	2	1110.346	148,948	,000b
	Residual	723,098	97	7,455		
	Total	2,943,790	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Visual Content, Chat Experience						

Based on Table 5, the F-count for the Visual Content and Chat Experience variables is 148.948, where the F-table is 3.09. Since the F-calculated (148.948) is greater than the F-table (3.09) and the significance value (sig) is 0.000 (less than alpha 0.05), Visual Content Digital Marketing and Chat Experience simultaneously (together) have a positive and significant effect on the purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers. This means that the hypothesis stating that "Visual Content and Chat Experience simultaneously influence purchasing decisions" is accepted. The results of this study consistently support the concept described by Budi Sunarso (2023) regarding the importance of visual content in increasing attractiveness and conversion, as well as Graeme McLean & Kofi Osei-Frimpong (2017) regarding chat experience satisfaction that influences purchasing behavior. Additionally, these findings are also relevant to the definition of purchasing decisions by Maria Agatha Sri Widyanti Hastuti & Muhammad Anasrulloh (2020) as the process of selecting consumer actions to fulfill needs and desires.

Table 6. Determination Test Results

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.869a	.754	.749	2.730
a. Predictors: (Constant), Visual Content, Chat experience				
b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision				

From Table 6 above, it can be seen that the R value is 0.869 or 86.9%, which means that the relationship between purchasing decisions and the independent variables, Visual Content and Chat Experience, is strong. The R-Square value in this study is 0.754, which means that 75.4% of the variation in purchasing decisions is explained by the independent variables, namely Visual Content and Chat Experience. The remaining 12.5% is explained by other variables not examined in this study. The R-Square (R²) value or coefficient of determination in this study is 0.749, which means that 74.9% of Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions can be explained by Visual Content and Chat experience. Meanwhile, 12.9% can be explained by other factors not examined in this study.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is formulated to answer the research objectives that have been set. Based on data analysis, the research objectives have been achieved:

Regarding the first objective (analyzing the partial effect of visual content), this study found that Visual Content (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y). This is indicated by a t-value (3.299) that is greater than the t-table (1.985) and a significance value of 0.001 (less than 0.05).

Regarding the second objective (analyzing the partial effect of chat experience), this study found that Chat Experience (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y). This is evidenced by the t-value (4.921) which is greater than the t-table (1.985) and a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05).

Regarding the third objective (analyzing the simultaneous effect), this study found that Visual Content (X1) and Chat Experience (X2) simultaneously (together) have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y). This is indicated by the F-calculated value (148.948), which is much greater than the F-table value (3.09) with a significance value of 0.000.

The Coefficient of Determination (Adjusted R Square) value is 0.749, indicating that 74.9% of the variation in Gen Z consumers' Purchase Decisions can be explained by Visual Content and Chat Experience.

5.2. Limitation

This study has several limitations that must be considered:

Limited Variables: This study only focuses on two independent variables (Visual Content and Chat Experience). There is 25.1% (or 12.9% according to other sources) of variation in Purchase Decisions that is not explained by this model, indicating that there are other factors that were not examined.

Geographic Scope: The research sample was limited to 100 Gen Z respondents in the city of Palembang. This may limit the generalization of findings to other geographic regions or different cultural contexts.

Sampling Methodology: This study used purposive sampling. While useful for targeting specific criteria (Gen Z aged 12-27), this method is prone to selection bias and may not fully represent the entire Gen Z population in Palembang.

Quantitative Design: As a survey-based quantitative study, this research successfully measured what and how much influence there was, but did not explore in depth why respondents felt that way.

5.3. Suggestion

Based on the findings and limitations identified, here are some suggestions:

For Business Practitioners:

Prioritize Investment: Given the significant influence of both variables, businesses targeting Gen Z should invest in optimizing visual content strategies (to build emotional connections) and chat experience quality (to build trust through responsive service).

Strategy Integration: The most effective digital marketing strategy should integrate emotionally appealing visual elements with a seamless conversational experience that builds trust.

For Future Researchers:

Examine Other Variables: Future research should include other independent variables not examined in this study, such as influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), price, or brand reputation, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving Gen Z purchasing decisions.

Expanding the Sample: Future studies can replicate this research with a larger sample size and broader geographic coverage (e.g., inter-city comparisons or national scale) to test the generalizability of the findings.

Using Mixed Methods: To overcome the limitations of quantitative design, future research could use a mixed-methods approach by adding qualitative interviews to explore the nuances and underlying reasons behind Gen Z's perceptions of visual content and chat experience.

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