

Analysis of Digital Content that Captures Gen Z Interest in Marketing Campaigns

Siti Enjang Amanah Sani¹

¹Communication Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Indonesia, Indonesia

Email: sitienjanga@gmail.com

Abstract. *This study addresses the challenges brands face in understanding Gen Z's preferences for digital content amidst the ever-evolving landscape of social media. The aim of this research is to identify key elements in digital content that capture Gen Z's attention and understand the reasons behind their interest, helping brands design effective and relevant marketing campaigns for this generation. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze digital content on Instagram posted by various brands, focusing on Gen Z's preferences regarding visual elements, delivery style, and interactivity. Data was collected through direct observation of brand Instagram accounts and analyzed using content analysis to identify patterns in Gen Z's preferences for engaging content. The findings indicate that marketing campaigns targeting Gen Z succeed in capturing attention through authentic storytelling, interactive visual content, and effective use of social media platforms. This approach fosters emotional engagement and positive responses from Gen Z toward the brand.*

Keywords: *Gen Z, Digital Content, Marketing*

Received: December 26, 2025

Revised: February 27, 2025

Accepted: April 20, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (Gen Z) plays an increasingly vital role in the current digital economy. As a generation that has grown up alongside digital technology, Gen Z possesses high levels of technological literacy and has been using various social media platforms from a young age (Arta et al., 2023). According to Southgate (2017), Gen Z spends more time in the digital world compared to previous generations, making them a highly potential market segment for digital marketing strategies. This fact positions Gen Z as a primary target for many brands looking to increase exposure and consumer engagement through digital platforms (Wulandari et al., 2025). This aligns with research by Munsch (2021), which states that Gen Z tends to be more responsive to innovative and interactive campaigns, necessitating brands to understand this generation's preferences to remain relevant in an increasingly competitive market.

Align with research from Haryati (2024), Gen Z's preferences for digital content also significantly impact marketing strategies, especially regarding the types of content chosen and the platforms used. This generation shows a strong interest in visual and interactive content, such as short videos and content with a strong storytelling element (Chandra, 2023). Furthermore, Gen Z's use of social media reinforces the importance of digital marketing in reaching and maintaining young consumer loyalty (Panjaitan & Simanjuntak, 2024). Additionally, Gen Z prefers brands that demonstrate values aligned with their beliefs, such as sustainability and social justice, making them more responsive to campaigns reflecting these themes (Narayanan, 2022). This demands brands to innovate in creating content that is not only engaging but also relevant to the values highly regarded by Gen Z.

However, while these characteristics have been widely acknowledged, existing studies have not sufficiently explored the specific elements within digital content that most effectively capture Gen Z's attention (Xia et al., 2024). While previous research has highlighted Gen Z's preference for authenticity and interactive media, there remains a research gap in identifying the precise attributes such as storytelling techniques, visual aesthetics, or interactive components that make content more appealing to this generation. The continuously evolving nature of social media further complicates this issue, as brands must constantly adapt their content strategies to align with emerging digital trends (Abdillah et al., 2020). Moreover, Gen Z's relatively short attention span presents an additional challenge, requiring content to be concise yet compelling enough to engage viewers within seconds (Hazriyanto et al., 2025).

This study aims to bridge this gap by identifying the key elements in digital content that effectively capture Gen Z's attention and investigating the underlying reasons behind their interest. Specifically, this research will analyze the role of storytelling, visual design, and interactivity in shaping Gen Z's engagement with digital content. Through this approach, the study seeks to provide valuable insights for brands in designing effective and appealing marketing campaigns tailored to this generation. Furthermore, the findings are expected to serve as practical references for brands looking to enhance engagement with Gen Z, particularly by creating content that is not only captivating but also aligned with their values and digital consumption habits.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze digital content posted by various brands on the Instagram platform. This approach was chosen to understand Gen Z's preferences regarding visual content, delivery style, and interactive elements presented in marketing campaigns. The research subjects consist of digital content from several brands that market products on Instagram, particularly those actively engaging with the Gen Z target audience. The data used includes the types of content posted, the number of likes and comments on each post, as well as the visual elements and message delivery in the content. This data was collected through direct observation of the official Instagram accounts of the brands under study, allowing for an understanding of the trends favored by Gen Z and the types of content that effectively capture their attention. Data analysis was conducted by examining the perceptions and reactions of Gen Z to these contents, reflected in the number of likes, comments, and other interactions on each post. The analysis technique used was content analysis to identify patterns in visual preferences and dominant interactive elements, enabling the conclusion of key elements that appeal to Gen Z. Qualitative data from comments or responses were also analyzed to gain deeper insights into Gen Z's perceptions and expectations regarding the message delivery style of brands. The findings from this analysis will provide in-depth insights into content preferences that brands can use to design more effective campaigns for capturing Gen Z's attention on social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher analyzed 3 different digital contents in product categories that are highly popular among Gen Z: Perfume (hmns.id), Coffee (kopikenangan.id), and Skincare products (skintificid).

HMNS

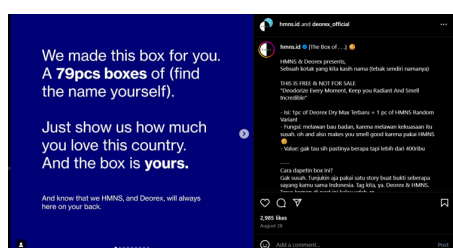


Figure 1. HMNS Product Instagram Content

The Instagram content of HMNS (hmns.id) collaborated with Deorex to offer a special gift box containing the latest Deorex Dry Max product and a randomly selected HMNS perfume. The caption on this post encouraged users to show their love for Indonesia by posting on their Instagram Story, tagging both HMNS and Deorex accounts, and commenting on the post. With a total of 2,985 likes and 221 comments, this content successfully captured significant attention from Instagram users.

In terms of comment content, there was high enthusiasm from users. Many expressed interest and amazement at the collaboration between the two local brands, showing pride in local products that can compete in the market. Comments such as "awesome collab" and "the best" indicated positive acceptance of the collaboration. Some comments also highlighted HMNS's creativity in producing products accompanied by a strong message of nationalism, aligning with the Indonesian Independence Day moment. This shows that HMNS's content strategy successfully blends product promotion with nationalist elements, making the collaboration more meaningful.

Additionally, the humorous and friendly interaction in the caption ("fighting body odor, because fighting authority is hard") received positive responses from followers, increasing HMNS's connection with its audience. Users also responded with funny and supportive comments, such as "long live sweat-free and body-scented" and "hope it smells all day." This demonstrates that HMNS and Deorex's strategy of creating emotionally and nationally relevant engagement challenges proved effective in generating active interaction and positive responses from their audience.

Kenangan Coffe (kopikenangan.id)



Figure 2. Kenangan Coffee Product Instagram Content

The Instagram content of Kenangan Coffee (@kopikenangan.id) in collaboration with the comic account Tahilalats focused on the launch of their newest product variant, Sunny PeachAmericano. The post combined unique illustrations and Tahilalats' signature humor, depicting a barista searching for inspiration for a new flavor, only to find the answer within themselves. Through entertaining narration and creative visual messaging, this content successfully captured user attention, generating high interaction with 38,377 likes and 345 comments. The visual description and story text encouraged the audience to try the new variant while incorporating appealing values of humor and creativity.

A deeper analysis of the comments revealed diverse responses from the audience, many focusing on the concept and humorous elements related to the "secret" behind the Sunny PeachAmericano. Comments such as "Must be the wise person's name, kangkontoliang" or "The power from within ☀️" indicated a comedic response to the narrative. Other comments, such as "sunny peach americano, sunny which means the sun is associated with the color yellow, and peach here

represents the barista," showed creative interpretations from the audience related to the product. This highlights Kenangan Coffee's success in leveraging entertaining storytelling that aligns with the humor preferences of young people and Instagram users.

From a marketing perspective, the use of collaborative content helped create a positive impression and increased interest in the new product through direct interaction with the audience. The use of hashtags like #OPXTL, #OnePieceTahilalats, and #KopiKenangan further boosted the visibility of the post, expanded promotional reach, and invited a wider audience to engage. Overall, this strategy emphasized an approach to communication that resonates closely with the audience through engaging visuals and relatable humor, making the post successful in fostering brand engagement and interaction among Instagram users.

Skintific (skintific.id)

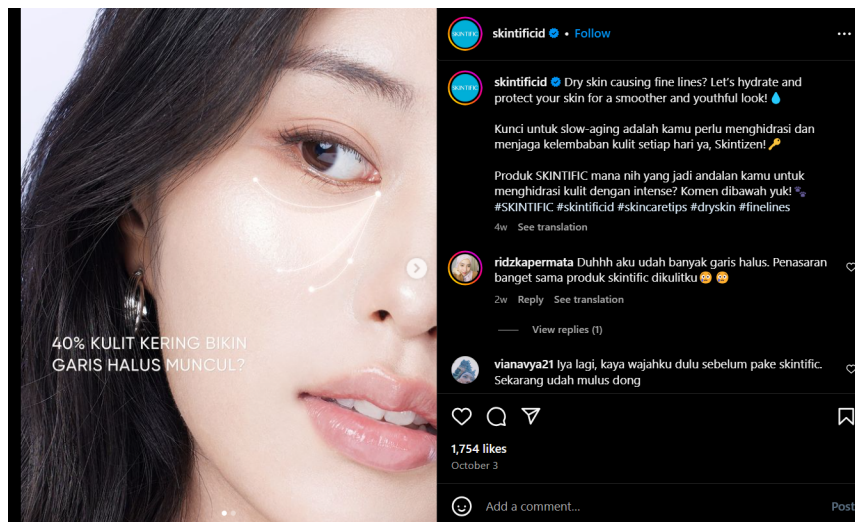


Figure 3. Skintific Product Instagram Content

The Instagram content of Skintific (@skintificid) in this post received significant engagement from its followers, as seen from the 1,754 likes and 438 comments. In the image description, Skintific emphasized the importance of hydration to combat dry skin, which can lead to fine lines and reduced elasticity. This description was supported by a scientific reference from the *Journal of Clinical, Cosmetic, and Investigational Dermatology* (2015), adding credibility to the information presented. The caption also encouraged users, called "Skintizens," to share their experiences using Skintific products, reinforcing the connection with the audience.

Comments from followers reflected interest and curiosity about Skintific products, particularly related to skin hydration. Many followers expressed concerns about fine lines or dry skin, aligning with the topic of the post. For example, a user like @navisasabila_ commented, "huhu really need it because my skin is super dry 😭😭," while others asked for products suitable for dry or combination skin. These comments show that the followers felt connected to the message in the content, and their need for effective skincare solutions was evident.

Additionally, there were positive and expressive comments praising Skintific products, such as "@mirarhmwtii_" who said, "The product never fails 🧡💖," and "@fiss_aliando" expressing love with a heart emoji. Many followers also used emojis to show their enthusiasm for the products, such as 🧡 and 💖, signifying satisfaction and interest. These comments confirm that many followers view Skintific as a reliable skincare brand, especially for hydration, and highlight the effectiveness of Skintific's engagement strategy on Instagram.

Comparative Analysis

While all three brands prioritize authenticity and platform-specific interactivity, their approaches diverge based on product category and audience psychographics:

Table 1. Comparative Analysis Brand Campaign

Element	HMNS	Kenangan Coffee	Skintific
Core Strategy	Affective nationalism	Meme-driven storytelling	Edu-tainment
Theoretical Basis	Social identity theory	Participatory culture	Cognitive engagement
Engagement Driver	Cultural pride	Humor as social currency	Trust in expertise

HMNS and Kenangan Coffee employ narratives tied to cultural identity (nationalism) and absurdist humor, respectively, both resonating with Gen Z's demand for relatable authenticity (Erwin et al., 2024). Skintific, however, adopts a functional authenticity, prioritizing transparency and scientific rigor to build trust. While HMNS and Kenangan Coffee rely on emotionally charged visuals, Skintific uses educational infographics, reflecting Gen Z's bifurcated content preferences: emotional resonance for lifestyle products vs. functional clarity for health-related purchases. Kenangan Coffee's TikTok/Instagram focus contrasts with Skintific's Instagram-centric strategy, underscoring the platform's role in either fostering playful interaction (TikTok) or building community (Instagram).

Elements of Digital Content That Capture Gen Z's Interest in Marketing Campaigns

In marketing campaigns targeting Gen Z, three brands HMNS, Kenangan Coffee, and Skintific successfully captured the attention of young audiences through creative and relevant digital content elements. Based on the content analysis of marketing campaigns from these three brands, several key elements emerged that attract Gen Z in digital marketing campaigns:

Use of Authentic Storytelling as a Key Element

Brands like HMNS and Kenangan Coffee utilize narratives that are relatable to Gen Z. HMNS highlights themes of daily life and modern aspirations, while Kenangan Coffee focuses on stories from employees and customers that emphasize community values. This aligns with findings from Erwin (2024), which indicate that Gen Z is more drawn to content with personal and authentic stories because they feel more connected to brands that reflect personalities or experiences similar to their own daily lives.

Dynamic and Interactive Visual Content

Skintific, in its skincare product campaigns, employs visual content that is not only aesthetically appealing but also educational through interactive infographics and tutorial videos. This approach matches the characteristics of Gen Z, who enjoy visual and multimedia-based content (Sakti & Deslia, 2024). Short videos, reels, and TikTok-style content that provide information in a brief yet comprehensive way are more likely to grab their attention compared to long text or static visuals (Demetrio et al., 2024).

Use of Appropriate and Responsive Social Media Platforms

Kenangan Coffee optimizes the use of Instagram and TikTok, where the brand actively engages in comments and responds to audience interactions, creating emotional closeness (Putra et al., 2025). Gen Z values brands that can interact directly and quickly, making them feel heard and appreciated as consumers (Anggriani & Efnita, 2024). Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels are ideal due to their fast content format and ability to reach a wide Gen Z audience with the interactive style that this generation prefers (Rusdin et al., 2025).

Theoretical Implications

The findings underscore three theoretical lenses critical to understanding Gen Z engagement: (1) Social Identity Theory (Ross & Rouse, 2022): Brands like HMNS succeed by aligning with collective identities (e.g., nationalism), while Skintific builds micro-communities ("Skintizens"); (2) Uses and Gratifications Theory (Mahardika & Safira, 2023): Gen Z's

engagement with humor (Kenangan) or education (Skintific) reflects their dual needs for entertainment and self-improvement; (3) Parasocial Interaction Theory (Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011): Responsive platforms like TikTok facilitate quasi-personal relationships, fulfilling Gen Z's desire for reciprocal brand interactions. This study advances the discourse on Gen Z marketing by demonstrating how cultural narratives, humor, and educational content intersect with psychological needs and platform dynamics. Future research could quantify these strategies' long-term impacts on brand loyalty, particularly in Southeast Asia's evolving digital landscape.

CONCLUSION

This research indicates that the key elements in digital content that capture Gen Z's attention include authentic storytelling, dynamic and interactive visual content, and the selection of appropriate and responsive social media platforms. The use of storytelling that is relevant and close to Gen Z's life, as demonstrated by HMNS and Kenangan Coffee, helps create a strong emotional connection. Meanwhile, visually appealing and educational content, as seen in Skintific's campaigns, has proven effective in attracting the audience's interest. In the context of social media platforms, Instagram and TikTok have proven to be ideal media for accommodating Gen Z's preference for interactive and fast-paced content. These findings suggest that effective marketing strategies for Gen Z should prioritize a personal and authentic approach to storytelling and maximize visual and interactive elements in digital campaigns. For companies, understanding the content preferences of Gen Z can help design campaigns that are more relevant and engaging for this young audience. By utilizing platforms with interactive features such as Instagram and TikTok, brands can more easily establish an emotional connection with Gen Z, who tend to favor fast and direct interactions from brands.

SUGGESTION

Future research is recommended to explore the impact of specific visual elements, such as color and font usage, in capturing Gen Z's interest in digital content. Additionally, researchers could consider studying the differences in content preferences across various social media platforms to understand the optimal ways to engage with Gen Z on each platform. Given the rapid pace of technological advancement, further studies on the latest trends in social media are also important to ensure that brands can continue to adapt their digital strategies according to Gen Z's evolving preferences.

REFERENCES

- Abdillah, L. A., Alwi, M., Simarmata, J., Bisyri, M., Nasrullah, N., Asmeati, A., ... & Affandy, N. A. (2020). *Aplikasi Teknologi Informasi: Konsep dan Penerapan*. Medan: Yayasan Kita Menulis
- Anggriani, D., & Efnita, Y. (2024). Pengaruh Product Quality dan Product Packaging terhadap Purchase Decision melalui Brand Trust pada Produk Kosmetik Make Over (Studi Kasus pada Perempuan Gen Z di Kota Pekanbaru). *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan dan Kemasyarakatan*, 18(1), 308-329. <http://dx.doi.org/10.35931/aq.v18i1.2994>
- Arta, A., Faizal, M. A., & Asiyah, B. N. (2023). The role of Edupreneurship in gen Z in shaping independent and creative young generation. *Maro: Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah dan Bisnis*, 6(2), 231-241. <https://doi.org/10.31949/maro.v6i2.5673>
- Chandra, E. (2023). Kekuatan Algoritma Dalam Komunikasi Pemasaran Digital Aplikasi Tiktok. *Maha Widya Duta: Jurnal Penerangan Agama, Pariwisata Budaya, dan Ilmu Komunikasi*, 7(2).
- Demetrio, Y. A., Kedoh, L. N., & Bastian, M. D. (2024). Produksi Video Berita pada Media Sosial Tiktok EKORA NTT. *Arus Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora*, 4(3), 2319-2328. <https://doi.org/10.57250/ajsh.v4i3.912>
- Erwin, E., Judijanto, L., Yuliasih, M., Nugroho, M. A., Amien, N. N., & Mauliansyah, F. (2024). *Social Media Marketing Trends*. Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.

- Hartmann, T., & Goldhoorn, C. (2011). Horton and Wohl revisited: Exploring viewers' experience of parasocial interaction. *Journal of communication*, 61(6), 1104-1121. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01595.x>
- Haryati, R. (2024). Analisis Perilaku Belanja Online Generasi Z Studi Kasus Pada Pengguna Tiktok Di Kota Bandung. *Jurnal Ilmiah Magister Ilmu Administrasi*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.56244/jimia.v18i1.857>
- Hazriyanto, H., Sari, A. P., & Afrinanda, A. (2025). *Strategi Pemasaran Digital*. Sumatera Barat: CV. Gita Lentera.
- Mahardika, B. A., & Safira, M. R. (2023). Motivasi Penonton Vice Indonesia Dengan Keterikatan Menonton. *Jurnal Ekonomi Kreatif dan Manajemen Bisnis Digital*, 1(3), 448-461. <https://doi.org/10.55047/jekombital.v1i3.443>
- Munsch, A. (2021). Millennial and generation Z digital marketing communication and advertising effectiveness: A qualitative exploration. *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science*, 31(1), 10-29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21639159.2020.1808812>
- Narayanan, S. (2022). Does Generation Z value and reward corporate social responsibility practices?. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 38(9-10), 903-937. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2022.2070654>
- Panjaitan, G. M., & Simanjuntak, M. (2024). Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen Gen Z; Analisis Strategi Brand Awareness, Loyalitas, dan Organisasi Pemasaran. *Jurnal Ilmu Multidisiplin*, 2(1), 46-64. <https://doi.org/10.53935/jim.v2.i1.14>
- Putra, J. E., Sulistyani, N. W., Ramadhan, F., & Hidayat, H. (2025). Effectiveness of Content Marketing in Attracting Generation Z Consumer Loyalty. *Oikonomia: Journal of Management Economics and Accounting*, 2(2), 45-58. <https://doi.org/10.61942/oikonomia.v2i2.309>
- Ross, A. D., & Rouse, S. M. (2022). (Young) generations as social identities: The role of Latino* Millennial/Generation Z in shaping attitudes about climate change. *Political Behavior*, 44(3), 1105-1124. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09649-8>
- Rusdin, F. R., Sos, S., Kom, M. I., Ramonita, L., Kom, M. I., Ayu, I. S., ... & Sos, S. (2025). *Digital Branding (Strategi Merek Di Dunia Digital)*. Jawa Barat: Penerbit Widina.
- Sakti, T. A., & Deslia, I. F. (2024). Analisis Isi Konten Marketing Akun Instagram@ mop. beauty dalam Meningkatkan Engagement Followers. *Syntax Idea*, 6(9), 4023-4036. <https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v6i9.4462>
- Southgate, D. (2017). The emergence of Generation Z and its impact in advertising: Long-term implications for media planning and creative development. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 57(2), 227-236. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2017-028>
- Wulandari, S., Zahiroh, M. Y., Maknunah, L. L., & Halizah, S. N. (2025). Peran Konten TikTok dalam Mengembangkan Branding sebagai Media Bisnis Digital yang Berprofitabilitas. *Journal of Science and Education Research*, 4(1), 71-78. <https://doi.org/10.62759/jser.v4i1.175>
- Xia, Y., Deng, Y., Tao, X., Zhang, S., & Wang, C. (2024). Digital art exhibitions and psychological well-being in Chinese Generation Z: An analysis based on the SOR framework. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02718-x>