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DISCUSS IMPACT OF NOSTALGIC REELS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF GENZ'S

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of social media platforms has significantly transformed the way individuals interact with digital content and marketing communication. Short-form video content such as reels has emerged as one of the most widely consumed forms of digital media, particularly among younger audiences. Within this format, nostalgic content has become an increasingly popular trend, combining memories of past cultural experiences with modern digital storytelling techniques. Nostalgic reels frequently include references to childhood experiences, classic music, earlier television shows, school memories, and older cultural trends that evoke emotional responses among viewers.

The purpose of this research is to examine how nostalgic reels influence the consumer perception of Generation Z audiences. Generation Z represents one of the most digitally connected generations, spending a substantial amount of time on social media platforms where they encounter large volumes of visual content. Understanding how nostalgic themes affect their emotions, engagement behaviour, and perception of brands is therefore highly relevant for digital marketing strategies.

The study uses a descriptive research design and collects primary data through a structured questionnaire distributed among 100 respondents belonging to the Generation Z age group. The collected data was analysed using percentage analysis to identify patterns related to social media usage, emotional responses to nostalgic content, and its influence on brand recall and consumer perception.

The findings indicate that nostalgic reels create positive emotional engagement among viewers and encourage higher levels of interaction, including liking, sharing, and commenting on content. Many respondents also reported that nostalgic themes make certain brands more memorable. The research highlights the importance of nostalgia as an emotional marketing strategy that can strengthen the relationship between digital content and consumer perception in the modern social media environment.

1.INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has reshaped communication patterns, entertainment habits, and marketing strategies across the world. Over the past decade, social media platforms have evolved from simple communication tools into complex digital ecosystems where users interact with various forms of content, including images, videos, live streams, and short-form clips. Among these formats, short-form video content has experienced extraordinary growth due to its ability to deliver engaging messages in a short period of time.

Reels and other short-video formats have become particularly popular because they combine visual storytelling, music, editing effects, and creative expression within a brief time frame. Social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube have actively promoted short-form videos by integrating features that encourage content creation and rapid sharing among users. As a result, reels have become a central element of digital culture, influencing entertainment trends as well as marketing communication.

Within this environment, nostalgic content has emerged as an influential theme that resonates strongly with audiences. Nostalgia can be described as a sentimental reflection on past experiences or memories that evoke emotional responses. These memories may include childhood activities, older songs, school experiences, cultural traditions, or media content that individuals associate with earlier stages of their lives. When nostalgia is presented through reels, it allows viewers to reconnect with these memories in a modern digital format.

Although nostalgia is often associated with older generations, it has also gained popularity among younger audiences, including Generation Z. This generation is commonly defined as individuals born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s. Members of Generation Z have grown up in a highly digital environment characterized

by constant internet access, smartphones, and social media interaction. Because of their familiarity with digital platforms, they frequently consume and share online content, making them a highly influential audience group in the digital marketplace.

Interestingly, Generation Z often engages with nostalgic content even when the cultural references originate from earlier time periods that they may not have directly experienced. This engagement may occur because nostalgic content provides emotional storytelling, cultural curiosity, and a sense of shared identity among viewers.

From a marketing perspective, nostalgia has long been recognized as an effective strategy for influencing consumer perception. When individuals associate a brand or message with positive emotions, they are more likely to develop favourable attitudes toward it. Nostalgic themes can strengthen this emotional connection by reminding viewers of meaningful moments or familiar cultural symbols.

The integration of nostalgia into short-form video content has therefore created new opportunities for marketers and content creators. By combining emotional storytelling with visually engaging reels, brands can capture audience attention while building stronger relationships with viewers.

This research aims to explore how nostalgic reels influence the consumer perception of Generation Z. Specifically, the study examines how such content affects emotional responses, engagement behaviour, and brand recall among young social media users.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the concept of nostalgia and its role in digital marketing on social media platforms.
2. To examine the popularity and consumption of reel-based short-form video content among Generation Z users.
3. To analyse how nostalgic elements in reels influence the emotions and engagement of Generation Z viewers.
4. To evaluate the impact of nostalgic reels on consumer perception and brand recall among Generation Z audiences.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of nostalgia has been widely studied in psychology, sociology, and marketing research. Nostalgia was originally understood as a longing for the past, often associated with memories of meaningful experiences or personal relationships. Over time, researchers have recognized nostalgia as a complex emotional phenomenon that can influence attitudes, behaviour, and decision-making processes.

Psychological studies have shown that nostalgic memories often involve positive emotions such as happiness, comfort, and belonging. These emotional responses can enhance an individual's mood and create a sense of continuity between past and present experiences. Because nostalgia evokes such emotional responses, it has been widely adopted in advertising and marketing communication.

Marketing researchers have emphasized that emotional appeals are highly effective in influencing consumer perception. Emotional marketing focuses on creating experiences that connect with the feelings and personal memories of consumers rather than simply presenting factual information about a product or service. Nostalgia represents one of the most powerful emotional appeals because it triggers memories that consumers often associate with positive life experiences.

In traditional advertising, nostalgia was frequently used through visual imagery, music, and storytelling that reminded audiences of earlier cultural moments. Classic advertisements often featured retro themes, historical references, or re-introduced popular products from previous decades. These strategies aimed to create familiarity and trust by connecting brands with cultural memories that consumers recognized.

With the expansion of digital media, nostalgia has found new forms of expression in online environments. Social media platforms enable users to combine audio, visuals, and storytelling elements in ways that were not previously possible. This has allowed nostalgic content to become more interactive and widely shared among users.

Short-form video platforms have played a particularly important role in the spread of nostalgic content. Reels, short videos, and clips allow creators to present nostalgic themes in a visually engaging format that captures

attention quickly. For example, creators may use old movie scenes, childhood television programs, classic songs, or cultural references that evoke memories among viewers.

Several studies have highlighted that Generation Z consumers are highly responsive to creative and authentic content on social media. This generation values originality, emotional expression, and relatable storytelling. Nostalgic reels often satisfy these preferences because they present familiar cultural elements while also encouraging viewers to reflect on shared experiences.

Another important area of research concerns the relationship between emotional marketing and brand perception. Brand perception refers to the way consumers interpret and evaluate a brand based on their experiences and interactions with marketing communication. When consumers encounter marketing messages that evoke positive emotions, they are more likely to form favourable impressions of the brand.

Research has also shown that nostalgia can enhance brand recall. When a brand is associated with meaningful memories or cultural symbols, consumers are more likely to remember it and develop stronger emotional attachment.

Despite these findings, there is still limited research specifically focused on nostalgic reels and their influence on Generation Z audiences. Most existing studies focus either on traditional advertising nostalgia or general social media content. Therefore, examining nostalgic reels as a distinct form of digital storytelling represents an important contribution to contemporary marketing research.

3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology provides the framework that guides the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data in a systematic manner. The present study adopts a descriptive research approach to examine the relationship between nostalgic reel content and consumer perception among Generation Z audiences.

Descriptive research is particularly useful when the objective is to observe and describe patterns, attitudes, and behaviours within a specific population. Rather than attempting to manipulate variables or establish direct causal relationships, descriptive studies focus on presenting an accurate representation of existing trends and opinions.

The research uses both primary and secondary data sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Primary data was collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire designed to gather information about social media usage patterns, engagement with reel content, and emotional responses to nostalgic themes.

The questionnaire included multiple sections that addressed demographic characteristics, frequency of social media usage, familiarity with nostalgic reels, and perceptions related to brand recall and emotional engagement. Secondary data was obtained from academic literature, marketing textbooks, research articles, and online reports related to consumer behaviour and digital marketing trends. These sources provided theoretical insights that helped contextualize the research findings.

The target population for the study consists of individuals belonging to Generation Z. This generation was selected because of its strong presence on social media platforms and its frequent interaction with digital content.

A sample of 100 respondents was selected for the survey using convenience sampling. This sampling technique involves selecting participants who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study. Although convenience sampling may not perfectly represent the entire population, it allows researchers to gather useful insights within practical time and resource constraints.

The questionnaire included both multiple-choice questions and Likert scale statements designed to measure respondents' attitudes toward nostalgic reel content. Likert scale responses allowed participants to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to emotional engagement and brand perception.

After the data collection process was completed, the responses were organized and analysed using percentage analysis. The results were presented through tables and graphical representations in order to clearly illustrate patterns and trends among the respondents.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. Participants were informed that their responses would be used solely for academic purposes, and their personal identities were kept confidential.

4.RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the collected data reveals several important patterns related to social media usage and engagement with nostalgic reel content among Generation Z respondents.

One of the most noticeable trends observed in the study is the high level of social media usage among participants. A significant proportion of respondents reported spending multiple hours each day browsing social media platforms. This finding highlights the central role that digital platforms play in the daily lives of Generation Z users.

The data also indicates that Instagram is the most frequently used platform for watching reels, followed by YouTube. These platforms have successfully integrated short-form video features that encourage users to continuously explore new content.

Another important observation from the study is the widespread awareness of nostalgic reel content. A large majority of respondents indicated that they regularly encounter nostalgic themes while watching reels.

The types of nostalgic content preferred by respondents vary, but several categories appear particularly popular. These include classic songs, childhood cartoons, school memories, and older cultural trends. Such content allows viewers to revisit moments that evoke emotional connections and shared experiences.

The emotional responses reported by respondents demonstrate that nostalgic reels are capable of generating positive feelings such as happiness and relaxation. Many participants also described feeling emotionally connected to the memories represented in the content.

In addition to emotional engagement, nostalgic reels also appear to influence social interaction among users. A substantial proportion of respondents reported sharing nostalgic reels with friends and followers, which contributes to the rapid spread of such content across social media networks.

The study further suggests that nostalgic reels can influence brand perception by strengthening brand recall. When nostalgic themes are combined with marketing messages, viewers may find the brand more memorable and relatable.

These findings support the idea that nostalgia functions as an effective emotional communication strategy within the digital marketing environment.

5.CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of nostalgic reels on the consumer perception of Generation Z audiences in the context of modern social media platforms. The results demonstrate that nostalgic content plays an important role in shaping emotional engagement, content sharing behaviour, and brand recall among young digital users.

The findings suggest that nostalgic reels are widely recognized and appreciated by Generation Z audiences. These reels create emotional responses by connecting viewers with memories, cultural references, and storytelling elements that evoke a sense of familiarity and positivity.

The research also highlights that nostalgic content encourages higher levels of interaction, including sharing and engagement with social media posts. Such interactions increase the visibility of nostalgic reels and contribute to their widespread circulation across digital platforms.

Furthermore, nostalgic themes appear to strengthen the memorability of brands when they are incorporated into marketing communication. By associating brand messages with emotional storytelling, marketers can create more meaningful connections with audiences.

Overall, the study emphasizes that nostalgia is not limited to older generations but can also be effectively used to engage younger audiences in the digital age.