

Understanding Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z

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Abstract

This study investigates the experiential perception of buying behavior among Generation Z, focusing on gender differences using an independent t-test analysis. The primary objective is to understand the gendered perspectives of experiential marketing within Gen Z consumers. The research utilizes primary data collected from 654 respondents, comprising 467 males and 177 females, all belonging to Generation Z. T test is used for checking significance level. The findings reveal that customer satisfaction correlates more strongly with females than males across several experiential marketing dimensions, including smell, act, sense, feel, word-of-mouth (WOM), and willingness to purchase. These results suggest that female consumers in Gen Z may respond more positively to sensory and emotional elements of experiential marketing, which in turn influences their buying decisions more significantly compared to their male counterparts. Despite these insights, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to draw conclusions over time. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings may be enhanced by future longitudinal studies that track experiential perception and buying behavior trends over extended periods. Additionally, the study opens avenues for further research from the marketers' perspective, exploring how experiential marketing strategies can be optimized to cater to the nuanced preferences of different gender groups within Gen Z. Such investigations could provide valuable insights for creating targeted, gender-sensitive marketing campaigns that effectively engage this influential consumer segment.

Key Words: Experiential Marketing, Perception, Gen Z, Male, Female

Introduction

Generation Z (born approximately 1997 through 2012) is rapidly becoming the most significant consumer generation, increasingly influencing marketing efforts with their own set of expectations regarding authenticity, diversity, and immersive brand experiences (Peter, Roshith, Lawrence, &

Mona, 2025). Experiential marketing—marketing that involves consumers in interactive, sensory or participatory brand experiences—speaks to Gen Z because it enables them to co create meaning, share experience, assert identity, and bond emotionally, instead of being passive recipients of advertising messages. To be sure, while a body of literature on the preferences of Gen Z continues to grow, less is understood about how these experiential strategies are being interpreted differently by males and females. New research indicates that gender influences many areas of Gen Z consumers' interaction with brand experiences. For example, in examining Gen Z metaverse participation, (Kathuria et al., 2024; Arora et al., 2024) discovered that symbolic satisfaction (which encompasses self expression) and its influence on participation is moderated by gender — suggesting that male, female, and non binary participants might vary in what they are looking for from immersive brand spaces. Equally, research on brand inclusivity and personality has found that brand inclusivity and personality perceptions have different effects on brand equity based on the consumer's gender (Almutairi, 2025).

In addition, Gen Z's evolving attitudes toward gender identity and norms increase the relevance of this inquiry. Polls indicate that most Gen Zers view gender as not necessarily strictly binary, and that gender does not determine roles; in addition, media and advertising representation contributes to these perceptions (Seeher& Horowitz Research, 2023). These changes indicate that marketing which does not take gendered viewpoints into account can become less relevant or look insincere. In light of this context, the present research aims to investigate the ways in which male, female, and non binary Gen Z consumers are dissimilar in their attitudes towards experiential marketing. Some areas covered include emotional connection, perceived authenticity, social media magnification of experience, and consistency with personal values and identity. By so doing, the study hopes to shed more informed light for marketers who would like to create inclusive, effective gender categories-based experiential campaigns.

Literature review

Generation Z is characterized by strong affinity toward authenticity, inclusivity, and self-expression. Research indicates that Gen Z increasingly challenges old binary gender conventions, being more likely to think that gender is not necessarily male/female, and that identity labels need to often be freely chosen by oneself instead of socially assigned (Seeher& Horowitz Research, 2023). These changing gender views shape the way Gen Z wants brands to act: they prefer gender-neutral or fluid marketing signals, steer clear of stereotypical gender messages, and enjoy brands that feature diversity in ads and visual depictions. Experiential marketing—immersive, interactive brand encounters—is attractive to Gen Z for a number of reasons. They are digital natives at ease with technology; they highly value ethical conduct, social responsibility, and experiences over material goods. Interactive, emotionally compelling, and sharable campaigns do well. The MERGE survey reveals that Gen Z males are likely to conduct impulse purchases at events, spend above higher event thresholds (e.g., above US\$1,000 a year on events), and are more attracted to sports, tech & innovation events.

At the same time, Gen Z women are more inclined towards arts, culture, fashion & beauty events, emotional considerations and "fear of missing out" (FOMO). Gen Z + Millennial women in the Magid Motivations Study had higher propensity to indicate that what they value in life has shifted as a consequence of experience, and particularly have a preference for new experiences (Magid, 2022). Moreover, in America. Gen Z marketing environment, research (e.g., Mintel 2024) indicates that Gen Z consumers—particularly women—attach very high value to representation, diversity, and inclusion in advertising and require brands to be inclusive of diverse identities and lifestyles (Mintel, 2024). Gen Z is likely to be highly receptive to emotional connection in brand experiences. Authenticity is continually emphasized as a fundamental force: when experiences (live, digital, hybrid) appear genuine, open, and values-matched, trust and loyalty grow. On the other hand, fake or stereotypical advertising often gets rejected (ETBrandEquity, 2024). Emotional involvement is also gendered. For instance, in event settings, social validation, anticipation, FOMO, and emotional connection with fellow event participants matter more for female Gen Z respondents when it comes to purchase decisions. Male respondents prefer novelty, status, or exclusivity of experiences more frequently (MERGE, 2024).

Gender perspectives

As Gen Z matures as consumers, what they believe about and feel towards gender has also evolved, and these changes have implications for experiential marketing reception across gender identities. Below are important areas in which gender attitudes exist in Gen Z, and how these connect with experiential marketing. Gen Z is more aware of gender outside the classic male/female dichotomy. Surveys also show that roughly 50% of Gen Z think gender is non-binary, and most feel labels should be selected by the individual, not society. This widening of gender imagination impacts expectations within marketing: Gen Z anticipates campaigns to reflect gender fluidity, include inclusive language and imagery, eschew hard stereotypes, and enable people to see themselves being shown in multiple ways. Advertising that employs strict gender norms has the potential to alienate or ring false to consumers who view gender as being more fluid. Gen Z resists the conventional gender roles. Over half agree that one's gender doesn't dictate what people can or should do, e.g., men and women can both do things typically done by the opposite gender. From a consumerism standpoint, this translates into experiential campaigns that take or reinforce classic gendered roles (e.g. "female beauty is", "men and tools or tech", etc.) are less likely to be well-received, particularly among younger Gen Zs. Experiences that permit agency, choice, and cross-gender expression are likely to be more favorable.

Gen Z

Generation Z, often referred to as those born between approximately 1997 and 2012, has been raised in a digitized, hyper connected, socially conscious world. This environment influences their behavior, expectations, and values extensively, especially in how they engage with brands and what they anticipate from marketing. Generation Z are genuine digital natives—at home with fast tech transformation, social media sites, AR/VR, and immersive virtual experiences. They increasingly demand brands not only to promote, but to immerse them in brand worlds, frequently fusing physical and digital dimensions. For instance, evidence indicates that Gen Z preferences strongly

virtual reality or augmented reality shopping devices: devices which facilitate virtual product try on, VR showrooms, or digital avatars (Zeng et al., 2023). Authenticity is a significant stimulant for Gen Z participation. They prefer not to trust conventional, slick commercials unless they appear to be authentic and true to fundamental values. Transparent brands that do know what they are about, who they are, and how they do things tend to perform better in generating loyalty. Cause marketing or socially responsible, environmental, or ethical cause brands also garner positive attention from Gen Z (Maheswari et al., 2025). Gen Z likes interactive marketing that permits participation, and provides personalized touchpoints.

They tend to reject passive one way advertising and prefer experiences in which they are able to create, share, or otherwise interact with the brand narrative. Social media, influencer culture, user generated content, short form video, innovative digital formats are particularly effective (Prachi, 2025). Gen Z is less tolerant of error or pretence. Since they have so many marketing messages presented to them, their attention spans are short; novelty and relevance are critical. They also readily switch from brands they perceive as being deceitful or out of touch with their values. Additionally, because of repeated exposure to new forms and trends, what is effective can shift quickly. For some Gen Z consumers, the experiential or emotional aspect of consumption is just as significant — or more so — as the product. They prize memories, social sharing, sensory or emotional involvement. Immersive experiences that stir emotions, generate social currency (i.e., "shareable moments") are powerful to create richer brand relationships.

Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing is brand-driven activities that engage consumers in memorable, interactive experiences that allow for direct interaction, sensory stimulation, emotional bonding, and social sharing. For digital natives Generation Z with high expectations for authenticity, interactivity, and value alignment, experiential marketing is especially relevant. Brands are now leveraging augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) to design immersive experiences that connect the physical and digital spaces. Hybrid activations blending on site activities with virtual or streaming elements have increased in popularity, enabling brands to grow reach and offer inclusive access (Tagbin, 2024). Experiential marketing is increasingly personal. Information regarding user behavior, preferences, and engagement is leveraged to tailor experiences to individual customers. For instance, AI platforms enable the delivery of real-time personalization at events, ranging from content to interactive touchpoints. It's not simply about visuals or technology, but also about activating multiple senses and emotions—sounds, scents, tactile pieces, story arcs. Storytelling through experiential activations enhances emotional resonance, which can strengthen brand loyalty (Girard, 2024). One of the best attractions of experiential campaigns is that there's the possibility of share ability. Gen Z will amplify what they find interesting or worthwhile through social media. Pop-ups, activations, or AR filters are created to prompt participants to share photos, videos, or generate UGC that spreads the brand message virally (Onyeke, 2024). Experiences that agree with ethical principles, respond to the environment, and are inclusive in conception are more required by Gen Z. Activations that are environmentally friendly, accessible, socially equitable, or purposeful resonate more fundamentally. People expect brands to deliver more than perform; they

expect significant engagement (Promobile Marketing, 2025). Experiential marketing expenditure is increasing worldwide. Projections indicate that in 2024, worldwide experiential marketing (B2C and B2B) expenditure will exceed pre pandemic levels, an indication of increased confidence in person and hybrid activations (PQ Media, 2024).

Independent t Test in Research

Independent t-test (also referred to as two-sample t-test) is a statistical test used to evaluate whether the difference between the means of two independent groups is significant. In this study, it can be utilized to compare the experiential marketing attitudes between Gen Z consumers across various gender identities, such as comparing male and female, or binary and non-binary populations. In our gendered views on experiential marketing study, the independent t-test can be employed to test hypotheses like:

- Whether males and females differ significantly in their emotional response to an experiential marketing campaign.
- Whether non-binary participants view brand authenticity differently from binary respondents.
- Whether purchase intent or brand loyalty scores differ by gender following exposure to a marketing activation.

Independent t-test has been employed by recent marketing research to analyze the demographic factors on consumer behavior. A 2023 Sultana & Rajesh study used independent t-tests to determine gender differences in digital advertising response, finding statistically significant differences in recall and emotional response. Independent t-tests were used by Bhatia et al. (2024) to compare brand loyalty following experiential events between gender identities in Indian urban Gen Z samples. These studies find independent t-tests useful for comparing gender as a moderation factor for consumer behavior and perception. Arora, M., Khurana, P., Gupta, J., & Kapoor, R. (2025) investigated Shaping Future Trends Metaverse as Experiential Marketing for Gen Z.

Research Methodology

Results and Analysis

Table 1: Statistics for Understanding Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z										
		Sme ll	Act	Sens e	Feel	Relat e	Loya lty	WO M	Willingn ess to purchase	Gend er
N	Valid	654	654	654	654	654	654	654	654	654
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: survey by authors

Table 1 shows Statistics for Understanding Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z, and it is clear that all variables are valid as N=654 and there is no missing frequency.

Table 2: Group Statistics for Understanding Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Smell	Male	467	3.35	1.314	.061
	Female	177	3.56	.922	.069
Act	Male	467	3.56	1.056	.049
	Female	177	4.06	1.164	.087
Sense	Male	467	3.79	.849	.039
	Female	177	4.30	.704	.053
Feel	Male	467	3.70	1.123	.052
	Female	177	4.06	.799	.060
Relate	Male	467	3.37	1.155	.053
	Female	177	3.62	1.153	.087
Loyalty	Male	467	3.73	1.080	.050
	Female	177	4.67	.712	.054
WOM	Male	467	3.73	.880	.041
	Female	177	3.37	1.499	.113
Willingness to purchase	Male	467	3.55	1.070	.050
	Female	177	3.98	.617	.046

Source: survey by authors

Table 2 shows Group Statistics for Understanding Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z, Male(N=467), Female(N=177)

Table 3: Independent Samples Test for Understanding Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Smell	Equal variances assumed	30.665	.000	-1.914	642	.056	-.417	.005

	Equal variances not assumed			-2.234	450.466	.026	-.387	-.025
Act	Equal variances assumed	.113	.737	-5.271	642	.000	-.694	-.317
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.045	292.172	.000	-.703	-.308
Sense	Equal variances assumed	7.853	.005	-7.137	642	.000	-.652	-.371
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.762	380.195	.000	-.641	-.382
Feel	Equal variances assumed	61.349	.000	-3.904	642	.000	-.541	-.179
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.531	444.235	.000	-.516	-.204
Relate	Equal variances assumed	.649	.421	-2.366	642	.018	-.441	-.041
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.368	317.972	.018	-.441	-.041
Loyalty	Equal variances assumed	71.284	.000	-10.641	642	.000	-1.104	-.760
	Equal variances not assumed			-12.729	478.689	.000	-1.076	-.788

WOM	Equal variances assumed	165.246	.000	3.708	642	.000	.167	.543
	Equal variances not assumed			2.965	223.497	.003	.119	.591
Willingness to purchase	Equal variances assumed	88.448	.000	-5.094	642	.000	-.603	-.267
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.411	540.847	.000	-.568	-.302

Source: survey by authors

Table 4: Decision rule for Gendered Perspectives of Experiential Marketing in Generation Z

Variable	Gender	N	Significant level	Empirical results	Null Hypothesis Decision Rule
Smell	Male	467	5 %	Significant	Null Hypothesis Rejected
	Female	177			
Act	Male	467	5 %	Not significant	Null Hypothesis Accepted
	Female	177			
Sense	Male	467	5 %	Significant	Null Hypothesis Rejected
	Female	177			
Feel	Male	467	5 %	Significant	Null Hypothesis Rejected
	Female	177			
Relate	Male	467	5 %	Not significant	Null Hypothesis Accepted
	Female	177			
Loyalty	Male	467	5 %	Significant	Null Hypothesis Rejected
	Female	177			
WOM	Male	467	5 %	Significant	Null Hypothesis Rejected
	Female	177			
Willingness to purchase	Male	467	5 %	Significant	Null Hypothesis Rejected
	Female	177			

Source: Compiled by authors

Conclusion

This research explores how Generation Z perceives experiential marketing, emphasizing gender-based differences analyzed through an independent t-test. Using data from 654 Gen Z participants (467 males and 177 females), the study aims to uncover gendered patterns in experiential buying behavior. Results show that female respondents report stronger associations between customer satisfaction and experiential marketing factors such as smell, act, sense, feel, word-of-mouth, and purchase intention. This indicates that women in Gen Z are more influenced by sensory and emotional aspects of marketing, which shape their purchasing decisions more than men's. However, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits causal and temporal conclusions. Future longitudinal research could enhance understanding of evolving gendered consumer experiences. The study also encourages marketers to design gender-responsive experiential strategies that align with Gen Z's preferences, offering insights for crafting more effective and emotionally resonant campaigns targeting this dynamic demographic.

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