

Influence of Social Media Usage on Generation Z's Choice in Selecting Restaurants in Kathmandu

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Abstract

This paper examines the influence of social media usage on Generation Z's choice in selecting a restaurant in the Kathmandu district. A hierarchical multiple regression model is used to examine the effect of the independent factors (perceived image, electronic word-of-mouth, sales promotion, and restaurant popularity) on the dependent variable (restaurant choice). The data is collected from Generation Z (Gen Z) residing in Kathmandu districts by adopting convenience sampling. The findings of this study suggest that the Gen Z residing in Kathmandu district tend to make restaurant choices based on their perceived image and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM), as indicated by the positive correlation and regression coefficients. On the other hand, despite showing a strong relationship in the correlation analysis, the regression coefficients of sales promotion and restaurant popularity do not seem to significantly impact consumers' restaurant choice decisions among Generation Z of Kathmandu.

INTRODUCTION

Customers explore different alternatives of eateries while deciding on a restaurant (Yariş & Aykol, 2021). They

seek information from both marketers' controlled and uncontrolled sources like personal, commercial, public, and experiential to alleviate their concerns (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016; Richards

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& Tiwari, 2014). Among the different available sources, experiential source through social media is becoming very popular, where customers evaluate the content regarding, information on food quality, price, ambiance, service, location, and reviews before choosing a restaurant (Chua et al., 2020). In a similar vein, marketers have also linked their services to support consumers' numerous purchasing methods (Kumar et al., 2020), such as social media marketing to announce special offers, interact with customers personally, track the elements that make them happy, attract media attention, and build brand recognition and promotion in the hospitality sector (Kütiük, 2016).

In the rapid growth of social media usage from 2.73 billion in 2017 to around 4.26 billion in 2021 (Statista, 2022), it is evident the use of social media for both customers and restaurant businesses to fulfil their respective needs. In addition, social media has made marketing more affordable and accessible, helping businesses and customers communicate more easily and instantaneously with one another (Yariş & Aykol, 2021). Further, social media is becoming an essential component of people's daily lives with approximately an average of 144 minutes daily spending time (Statista, 2022). In such a scenario, it is essential to know the effectiveness of the restaurant's social media marketing in attracting customers to visit. Previous studies showed strong positive relationships between social media marketing and the restaurant choice (Prasath & Yoganathen, 2018; Yariş & Aykol, 2021). These studies

dealt with identifying the possible impacting factors along with ascertaining the influencing ability of social media marketing on consumer buying decision-making, without specifying the particular segments of consumers.

However, Generation Z (GenZ), who are continuously linked with social media and are more prone to take decisions based on social media marketing information is not yet explored adequately in terms of its effectiveness. Therefore, this study primarily focuses on analysing the possible effect of different social media marketing components suggested by various scholars concerning Gen Z's decision on a restaurant choice. The major research question to address the research gap is: *To what extent does social media usage influence Generation Z's choice in selecting a restaurant in Kathmandu?*

Besides, the specific objectives to address the research questions are as follows:

- To examine the influence of perceived image through social media on Generation Z's Choice in Selecting a Restaurant in Kathmandu,
- To examine the influence of electronic word-of-mouth through social media on Generation Z's Choice in Selecting a Restaurant in Kathmandu,
- To examine the influence of sales promotion through social media on Generation Z's Choice in Selecting a Restaurant in Kathmandu, and



Figure 1. *Consumer Buying Process for Selecting a Restaurant*

- To examine the influence of restaurant popularity through social media on Generation Z's Choice in Selecting a Restaurant in Kathmandu.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Long before the actual purchase, the purchasing process begins and lasts. Because of this, marketers must concentrate on the complete purchasing process rather than just the choice to buy (Radujkovic, 2021). Hence, the theoretical premise of this study is based on consumer purchasing behaviour.

The buyer decision process consists of five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase decision (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016; Radujkovic, 2021). As such, it is imperative to discuss those specific steps in the formation of the final decision to comprehend the process of the consumer's choice of restaurant.

The buying process starts with the buyer recognizing a need, which could be hunger or a desire to try a product. Then, the buyer researches to gather information about the product from various sources such as personal, commercial, public, and experiential Fields (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). In a recent study by Radujkovic (2021)

carried out among the age group of 19 to 40 in Vienna, where most respondents were in the age category of 20 to 25 (80%), observed that customers usually rely on social media sites and online review platforms to find a place to dine on their preferences. Hence, during the stage of information search, social media platforms can play a significant role in influencing consumers' restaurant choices. After gathering information, consumers evaluate their options based on important selection criteria, such as food quality, price, ambiance, service, and location, and choose their preferred restaurant (Radujkovic, 2021), and eventually, the customers enjoy their dining experience.

The previous research findings suggested that the usage of social media platforms plays an influential role in consumers' decision-making processes (Prasath & Yoganathan, 2018; Yarış & Aykol, 2021). This necessitates a need for further exploration of this phenomenon which will investigate the extent to which social media platforms influence consumer behaviour in the restaurant industry.

As the perceived image is said to be directly associated with purchase intention, studies have revealed factors that affect how consumers perceive an image, and the concept of an image has been handled over time as a collection of

features that includes, goods, services, customers, physical facilities, comfort, and advertising (Lima et al., 2019). Companies have a good chance due to how consumers' perceptions of brands affect how they evaluate them because it raises both consumer inclination to buy and perceptions of quality. A restaurant may see a rise in sales as a result of using tactics to set itself apart from its rivals (Namin, 2017). Because it could influence consumers' purchasing intentions, companies must research and leverage the perceived image as a competitive advantage (Lima et al., 2019). Thus, social media has evolved into a tool for developing customer relationships and connecting with consumers to create a sense of brand identity (Enginkaya & Yilmaz, 2014). The company can leave an impression on the consumer's mind by being present on social media, which seems to be important in increasing brand awareness and perceived image among consumers (Jones et al., 2015). However, a company's perceived image also includes how it interacts with its internal and external public through corporate social responsibility, advertising, and publicity, in addition to the goods and services it offers to the market (Lima et al., 2019) in Brazil. We identified positive and significant relationships between the construct presence on social media and perceived image, purchase intention, and brand equity as well as an indirect effect of media on purchase intention, mediated by perceived image. Only the direct relationship between brand value and purchase intention and the indirect relationship between presence

on social media and purchase intention, mediated by brand equity, were not supported. For the restaurant under study, we concluded that it benefits from investing in social media as a promotion channel and maintaining its relationship and communication with its customers. Data analysis from 190 respondents was performed through structural equation modeling by means of PLS (partial least squares). Therefore, it is essential to establish a positive perceived image in social media given that these behaviours are often discussed there. In addition, the results of the research carried out by Lima, Mainardes, and Cavalcanti (2019), indicated that consumers are influenced by the activities of the restaurant on social media where a significant regression coefficient (0.65) indicated that presence on social media positively influenced the perceived image of a restaurant which is directly associated with purchase intention.

In the backdrop of the above observations, the current research hypothesized the relationship between perceived image on social media and restaurant choice of consumers as follows:

H₁: Perceived image on social media has a positive influence on the restaurant choice of consumers.

A plethora of research has revealed that E-WOM engages with customers, builds relationships with them, and influences them to buy a variety of products (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008; Helm, 2000; Leskovec et al., 2007; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In the hospitality and tourism services industries,

E-WOM is the most essential source of information that influences customer purchasing decisions. The remarks in online reviews could be negative or positive, depending on the customers' experiences with the products or services they purchased (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2019). Due to the lack of objective methods for evaluating services in the service sectors, such as restaurants and hotels, consumers frequently rely on subjective assessments from friends, family, and acquaintances (Chua et al., 2020). Consumers may ask for recommendations from an authoritative source because they might not be familiar with a restaurant before actually eating there (e.g., the meal quality, service, atmosphere, and price) (Chua et al., 2020). For instance, customers frequently ask friends for recommendations while looking for a quality restaurant for a special occasion. As a result, studies have found that E-WOM is the key information source that influences customer purchasing decisions in the hospitality and tourism service industries (Kumar et al., 2020). Furthermore, since the majority of the words in online reviews are shared on social networking platforms, E-WOM on social media has an impact on the decision-making and behaviour of hotel consumers (Kumar et al., 2020). In addition, the result of research carried out by Kumar, Konar, and Balasubramanian (2020) concluded that E-WOM has a positive effect on consumers' purchasing behaviour in the restaurant sector.

In light of the above findings, the present study proposed the following hypothesis to examine the relationship between

E-WOM on social media and the restaurant choice of consumers.

H₂: E-WOM on social media has a positive influence on the restaurant choice of consumers.

As restaurants have been using social media advertising to build a successful consumer connection and to inform consumers about the products and services offered, social media has been developed into a powerful tool for sharing the content of advertisements (Raji et al., 2019; Ramos et al., 2021). Among varied promotional messages, one of the most popular and efficient marketing messages shared on social media is sales promotion. It is defined as any marketing initiative the business presents in the social media (Khaleeli, 2020). According to Hilman Abdullah et al. (2017), social media sales promotion has a significant impact on consumers and can influence their decision to purchase. Several options for social media sales promotion are available, including coupons, offers, discount codes, and non-monetary promotions like gifts (Khaleeli, 2020). As for the restaurant industry, commonly used sales promotion tools consist of product samples, coupons, gifts, discounts, and much more. In restaurants, product samples are offered in the form of buy one get one free offer, coupons are used to offer consumers the meals they purchase which are especially targeted towards price-conscious consumers, gifts are offered as promotional items which may include glasses, t-shirts, caps, etc which includes the restaurant's name and logo,

and discounts are offered as price-off promotion which offers selected menu items in a lower price than the regular pricing until the promotional period (Abdelhamied, 2013). Furthermore, the results of the research carried out by Khaleeli (2020) concluded that social media sales promotion positively and significantly affected purchase intention.

With respect to the above observations, this paper examines the relationship between sales promotion on social media and the restaurant choice of customers through the following hypothesis:

H₃: Sales Promotion on social media has a positive influence on the restaurant choice of consumers.

By choosing what most consumers prefer, a consumer can use brand popularity as a decisional tool to reduce the cognitive effort when making a purchase decision (Chua et al., 2020; Goldstein et al., 2008). Brand popularity has been used as an advertising cue in marketing to encourage favourable consumer behaviour (Kim et al., 2020). A consumer's decision to purchase a certain brand that the majority of customers favour drives an individual to change their behaviour (Chua et al., 2020; Goldstein et al., 2008). This bolsters the idea that finding out what is right requires getting other people's approval and explains why buyers purposefully consult other buyers when deciding what to buy (Magnini et al., 2013). Consumers who are exposed to advertisements that use a popularity cue are more likely to have better-perceived quality, lower perceived

risk, and higher intention to buy the brand than consumers who are exposed to advertisements that do not use a popularity signal (Kim & Min, 2016). The number of comments made online by customers as well as their reviews of the restaurant's food quality, ambiance, and service are all positively correlated with the popularity of the restaurant (Ramos et al., 2021). The use of the Facebook "like" button is required to boost the social network's popularity, and it has a beneficial impact on consumers' desire to make a purchase (Arceo, 2018). Regarding the value of followers on social media, if a brand gains more Instagram followers over the course of a certain period, it will experience a corresponding increase in sales revenue (Fang, 2014). This is because Instagram followers of restaurants are more likely to choose those restaurants when dining out (Fang, 2014; Ramos et al., 2021). Furthermore, the results of the research carried out by Ramos et al., (2021), concluded that restaurant popularity on social networks positively influences restaurant choice.

Spinning around the above review of relevant literature, this research posits the following hypothesis to examine the relationship between restaurant popularity on social media and the restaurant choice of consumers.

H₄: Restaurant Popularity on social media has a positive influence on the restaurant choice of consumers.

Conceptual Framework

The review of extant literature along different dimensions of social media

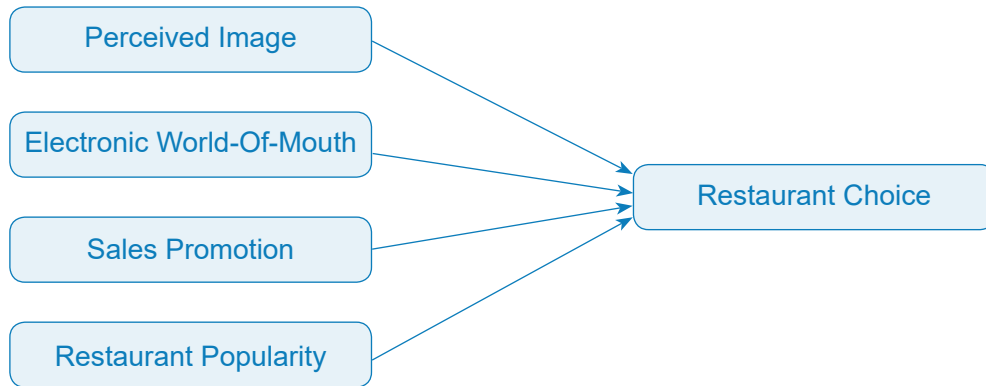


Figure 2. *Conceptual Framework*

influence on the choice of restaurant, the identified variables are presented in the following conceptual framework. The framework offers a theoretical explanation of the variables that affect customers' restaurant choice. The framework seeks to explain how consumers' decision-making process is influenced by perceived image, electronic word-of-mouth, sales promotion, and restaurant popularity while choosing a restaurant.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study follows the retrospective methodology, to identify the influence of social media on a restaurant choice. In the process, a cross-sectional research strategy was implemented where 150 youths representing Generation Z, residing in the Kathmandu district were taken for gathering the required data. The convenience sampling technique was used, however, to avoid selective bias, population representation was stringently considered in terms of common characteristics of the population

while selecting the sample. Besides, Hanaysha (2016) also supported the use of convenience sampling in similar studies. Apart from that, to avoid response bias, respondents were priorly informed in detail about the gravity of the research through email and phone calls and only after their consent, the questionnaire was filled in.

Sample

The final usable response rate was 56% that count to 85 out of 150 and the sample adequacy requirement was fairly justified by considering the works of Roscoe (1975) and Sekaran (2003) who claimed the sample requirement is adequate if the sample size is equal or more than 10 times the number of studied variables. Table 1 presents respondents' profiles in terms of gender, age, address, education, occupation, and income. All 85 respondents are from Kathmandu District.

The demographic profile of the 85 respondents portrayed that most of the respondents were male within the age range of 18-25 years which represents

Table 1.
Respondents' profile

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	60	70.6
	Female	25	29.4
Age	18 - 25	85	100
Educational Degree	High School or below	5	5.9
	Bachelors	75	88.2
	Masters	5	5.9
Occupation	Student	43	50.6
	Employed	31	36.5
	Self Employed	6	7.1
	Other	5	5.9
Monthly Income	10,000 and below	27	31.8
	10,000 - 20,000	23	27.1
	20,000 - 40,000	23	27.1
	40,000 - 70,000	6	7.1
	70,000 and above	6	7.1

Note. Data from the researchers' collection and calculations, 2023

the Generation Z population with more than half of them as students. The profile revealed that the highest education of most of the respondents was bachelor level. With a sizeable number of employed respondents, the data also reveals that most of the respondents have a monthly income which could be a relevant influencer for analysing the buying behaviour of Generation Z.

Questionnaire: The primary data was collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part comprised 6 questions to extract general information about the respondent. Part two consisted of 8 questions to extract the frequency of use of social media platforms by

the respondents in order to select a restaurant. Part three consisted of 5 items to measure Restaurant Choice; 5 items to measure Perceived Image; 4 items to measure Electronic Word of Mouth; 5 items to measure Sales Promotion and 4 items to measure Restaurant Popularity. Each item was on a 5-point Likert scale to measure respondents' attitudes towards the influence of social media usage on restaurant choice making. The draft questionnaire was consulted with a panel of academicians and researchers before finally being distributed among the respondents.

The scale Restaurant Choice extracted and adopted from (Chua et al., 2020; Hanaysha, 2016; Pattanachai, 2015) is designed to examine the use of

social media platforms by consumers to determine their restaurant choice. The scale on the Perceived Image (Pattanachai, 2015; Sriwongrat, 2008) is designed to examine the impact of a restaurant's perceived image on consumers' restaurant choices when that perception relates to the restaurant's social media presence. Electronic Word-of-Mouth is sourced from (Mohamed et al., 2015; Popy & Bappy, 2022). This scale is designed to examine the impact of E-WOM on consumers' restaurant choices where word-of-mouth is spread by family/friends, food bloggers, reviews, and recommendation posts on social media. The scale Sales Promotion (Raji et al., 2019) is designed to examine the impact of sales promotion carried out by restaurants on their social media to influence consumers' restaurant choices. This scale includes sales promotion factors for the restaurants such as promotion events, posts about a variety of menus, discount offers, coupons, and sample and gift offers on social media. Restaurant Popularity (Hanaysha, 2016) was adopted from the variable of brand leadership which is in the research carried out by Hanaysha (2016). This scale was

then modified to meet the objectives of this study to examine the impact of a restaurant's popularity on consumers' choices. Here, the restaurant's popularity is determined by the number of likes and followers, positive impressions, and growth in terms of popularity and reputation on social media.

Reliability Analysis

The internal item consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha reliability test whose results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was observed to be 0.933 supporting the inter-item reliability of the questionnaire. Individual Cronbach's alpha has also been observed to be greater than 0.70 which further established the scale reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Analysis and Discussions

Table 3 presents the results of descriptive statistics of the variables under study. The average score of the responses for all the factors is observed to lie between 3.100 and 3.700.

Table 2
Reliability Test

Factors	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Restaurant Choice	5	0.700
Perceived Image	5	0.853
E-WOM	4	0.702
Sales Promotion	5	0.777
Restaurant Popularity	4	0.832

Note. Data from the researchers' calculations, 2023

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

The table presents the descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) of restaurant choice and related social media variables of a restaurant which are perceived image, E-WOM, Sales Promotion and Restaurant Popularity.

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Restaurant Choice	1.4	5	3.202	0.669	-0.137	0.258
Perceived Image	1	5	3.167	0.865	-0.375	0.331
E-WOM	2	5	3.650	0.625	0.038	0.005
Sales Promotion	1	5	3.122	0.709	-0.038	1.321
Restaurant Popularity	1	5	3.158	0.868	0.044	-0.052

Note. Calculated from researchers' survey, 2023.

In addition, the negative skewness value in the variable's restaurant choice, perceived image, and sales promotion indicated that greater number of responses lie in the higher scale of the 5-point Likert scale whereas the positive skewness in the variables E-WOM and restaurant indicate that greater number of responses in the lower scale of 5-point scale for these variables.

Correlation

Pearson's correlation coefficients in Table 4 shows that Perceived Image, E-WOM, Sales Promotion and Restaurant Popularity all have significant positive correlation with Restaurant Choice. Perceived Image is observed to have the strongest correlation (0.760) with Restaurant Choice followed by E-WOM (0.664), Restaurant Popularity (0.634) and Sales Promotion (0.580). The Table also reveals strong relationship between Perceived Image and Restaurant Popularity.

As such, the correlation results reveal that restaurant choice of consumers increases with the increase in the perceived image, E-WOM, sales promotion, and restaurant popularity of a restaurant.

Regression

To investigate the effects of the independent factors (perceived image, E-WOM, sales promotion, and restaurant popularity) on the dependent variable (restaurant choice), hierarchical multiple regression was employed. The use of hierarchical multiple regression allows to check how well the predicted outcomes of the model are estimated due to the effect of gradually introducing variables in the model. Four models are tested and to avoid multicollinearity problem, Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) of the independent variables in each model are checked and it is observed in Table 5 that all the VIF values are less than 10, suggesting that multicollinearity is not an issue in these models.

Table 4
Correlation Coefficients of the Variables

Table presents Pearson's correlation coefficients of Restaurant choice with Perceived image, E-WOM, Sales promotion and Restaurant popularity based on the responses of 85 respondents representing Generation Z (GenZ) of Kathmandu district.

Variables	Restaurant Choice	Perceived Image	E-WOM	Sales Promotion	Restaurant Popularity
Restaurant Choice	1	0.760** (0.000)	0.664** (0.000)	0.580** (0.000)	0.634** (0.000)
Perceived Image		1	0.629** (0.000)	0.614** (0.000)	0.753** (0.000)
E-WOM			1	0.558** (0.000)	0.620** (0.000)
Sales Promotion				1	0.695** (0.000)
Restaurant Popularity					1

** Significance at 1% level of significance (two-tailed)

Note. Figures in parenthesis indicate p-values

Note. Calculated from researchers' survey, 2023

Table 5
Variance Inflation Factor test for Multicollinearity

Variables	VIF in Model 1	VIF in Model 2	VIF in Model 3	VIF in Model 4
Perceived Image	1.000	1.656	1.985	2.604
E-WOM		1.656	1.797	1.862
Sales Promotion			1.741	2.073
Restaurant Popularity				2.989

Note. Calculated from researchers' survey, 2023.

As presented in Table 6, adjusted R-square results from the first step showed that perceived image explained about 57% of the variance in the restaurant choice of consumers, whereas, through second step to the fourth step, the independent variables explained about 63% of the variance in the dependent variable. The regression results in Table

6 reveal interesting coefficients of the variables under study. Perceived image and E-WOM are observed to have a significant positive influence on the restaurant choice of consumers in all the models. The standardized regression coefficients indicate that Perceived image is more influential than E-WOM in terms of consumers' decision-making

Table 6
Regression Analysis of the Variables

*The table presents the results of hierarchical regression analysis for variables such as perceived image, E-WOM, sales promotion, and restaurant popularity to analyse the impact of these variables on the restaurant choice of consumers. The table also shows the value of the F-statistic, and R-square of each model. The reported values are intercepts and slope coefficients of the independent variables with t-statistics in parenthesis. *, **, and *** show coefficients are significant at 0.10, 0.05, and 0.01 levels of significance. Figures in italics are standardized regression coefficients.*

Model	Intercept	Perceived Image	E-WOM	Sales Promotion	Restaurant Popularity	R ²	F	Sig.
1	1.34*** (7.397)	0.588*** (10.651)				0.572	113.446	0.000
2	0.612** (2.310)	0.438*** (6.593)	0.329*** (3.579)			0.626	71.197	0.023
3	0.531** (1.949)	0.403*** (5.551)	0.297*** (3.109)	0.099 (1.196)		0.628	48.190	0.055
4	0.529** (1.919)	0.406*** (4.857)	0.299*** (3.059)	0.102 (1.122)	-0.007 (-0.082)	0.623	35.701	0.059
		0.525	0.279	0.108	-0.010			

Note. Calculated from researchers' survey, 2023.

on a restaurant choice. It is observed that Sales promotion although bears a positive relationship with restaurant choice, the coefficients are not significant. Interestingly, it is observed that Restaurant popularity is negatively associated with restaurant choice, but the relationship is not significant.

DISCUSSION

The correlation coefficients and regression coefficients indicate that higher the perceived image and E-WOM stronger

the consumers make restaurant choice decisions based on these factors. The regression coefficients of sales promotion and restaurant popularity however reveal no significant influence on restaurant choice, although strong relationship was observed in correlation analysis.

The strong impact of perceived image on customer restaurant choice is consistent with the findings of Lima et al. (2019) who discovered that social media platform positively impacts the perceived image of a restaurant, which

in turn influences consumer restaurant choice. The results further reveal that the consumer's restaurant decision was strongly influenced by the E-WOM of a restaurant on social media. This finding is in line with the results of [Kohli and Khandai \(2019\)](#) and [Kumar et al. \(2020\)](#) who concluded that positive E-WOM has a strong influence on the restaurant choice of consumers.

It is observed in this study that sales promotion is not a significant predictor of consumer restaurant choice. However, the research findings by [Khaleeli \(2020\)](#) concluded that social media sales promotion positively and significantly affected purchase intention which contradicts the research finding of this study. Restaurant popularity was also not a significant predictor of consumer restaurant choice. This finding contrasts with the results of research carried out by [Ramos et al. \(2021\)](#), who revealed that restaurant popularity on social networks positively influences restaurant choice.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Understanding the decision-making process of customers regarding choosing the restaurant is significant for the survival and growth of a restaurant business. The study incorporated the most common restaurant selection factors used in past studies to identify the impact of such factors using social media platforms on consumers' restaurant choices. This paper examines the role of factors such as perceived image, E-WOM, sales promotion and restaurant popularity on the decision-

making behaviour of customers regarding restaurant choice particularly among the generation Z group of Kathmandu. Data was collected using structured questionnaire from 84 usable responses measuring each factor with multiple items in a 5-point Likert scale. The research employed descriptive, correlation and regression analysis methods to identify the relevant factors. The study found that perceived image on social media and electronic word of mouth are significant factors influencing customers' restaurant choice decision among generation Z group of youths in Kathmandu. Although important factors in different empirical studies, sales promotion and restaurant popularity in social media are observed to have no significant influence on restaurant choice decision in context of generation Z in Kathmandu.

The result of this study extends useful recommendations for restaurant owners. Based on the findings, it is recommended to restaurants operating inside Kathmandu valley adopt social media platforms as one of their marketing strategies to influence consumers' restaurant choices. Specifically, variables such as perceived image and E-WOM should be enhanced using social media platforms as it strongly influences consumer restaurant choice. The perceived image could be enhanced by creating a fashionable and trendy image, a reputation for quality, visually appealing food plating, a better lifestyle for consumers, and visually appealing interior decor on social media. Likewise, positive E-WOM can also be created through positive recommendations from family/friends and food bloggers, in addition to

positive reviews and recommendation posts on social media sites. Furthermore, although this study didn't show the influence of sales promotion and restaurant popularity on restaurant choice prior study has shown a strong positive association between them. Hence, sales promotion and restaurant popularity should not be completely ignored as these two variables can also influence consumer restaurant choice.

The findings were based on only primary data gathered from Generation Z inside Kathmandu, which may not fully represent the general population of restaurant

consumers. Hence, generalizability is limited, and the findings may not apply to other cities in Nepal or other countries. This study only considered a few variables of social media marketing. Future research could include more factors, use alternative analysis methods, and employ other approaches such as longitudinal studies, focus groups, and interviews to understand the relationship between social media marketing factors and consumer restaurant choice. Furthermore, because the study was limited to Kathmandu valley, future studies may investigate by expanding the study to other Nepalese cities.

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Conflict of interest

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