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The Effect of Pop-up Store Characteristics on Purchasing Behavior of MZ Generation Consumers*

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Abstract

Purpose: Pop-up stores have emerged in the retail industry in recent years, offering consumers a new shopping experience for a limited time and location, and are used for a variety of purposes, including driving purchase behavior. In particular, they have become an important marketing tool among Gen MZ consumers who are quick to acquire information and sensitive to trends. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of pop-up store characteristics on the purchasing behavior of MZ consumers. **Research design, data and methodology:** Based on a qualitative research approach, the study analyzed successful pop-up stores in Korea to closely examine how the limited operating period and experience-oriented marketing strategy of pop-up stores affect the perceptual attitudes and purchase decision process of Generation MZ. **Results:** The results of the case study revealed that selling limited edition items, maximizing customer experience factors, and differentiated concepts are the main factors that positively influence the purchase behavior of Gen MZ consumers. These factors contribute to the enhanced purchasing behavior of Gen MZ, making pop-up stores an effective marketing strategy. **Conclusions:** Pop-up stores are more than just a sales space, but an important communication channel that can strengthen the emotional connection with Gen MZ and effectively communicate brand values. This study provides useful insights for brands and companies to develop marketing strategies for MZ.

Keywords : Generation MZ, Pop-up Store, Purchase Behavior

JEL Classification Code : M30, M31, M39

1. Introduction

In recent years, pop-up stores have emerged as an innovative form of retail that operates in limited locations for a short period of time to provide consumers with a new shopping experience (Kim, 2023). These pop-up stores are operated for various purposes such as increasing brand

awareness, introducing new products to the market, and promoting customer loyalty through direct interaction with consumers (Sa, 2015). In particular, they are currently being utilized as a place to provide brand experiences with different emotions rather than simple sales, in line with the needs of consumers who are oriented toward value consumption such as emotions and experiences (Shin &

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Kim, 2023). As a result, pop-up stores are becoming an important marketing tool among MZ generation consumers who are quick to acquire information and sensitive to trends due to technological advancements and the spread of social media.

Generation MZ, which includes Millennials and Generation Z, shows distinct consumption patterns and values compared to previous generations (Yang et al., 2022). Beyond the functional value of a product, they are characterized by a desire for individuality and unique experiences during the purchase process (Pyun & Kim, 2021). In other words, MZers prefer to spend money on "experiences" rather than goods (Moon et al., 2023). This reflects MZ's desire for new and innovative shopping experiences that go beyond traditional shopping methods. In particular, the unique, limited-time shopping experiences offered by pop-up stores have the potential to significantly influence Gen MZ's purchase decisions. As a result, companies need to go beyond just selling products to engage with customers in ways that provide an enjoyable consumption experience and strengthen their connection to the brand.

Therefore, this study aims to explore in-depth the impact of pop-up store characteristics on the purchasing behavior of Gen MZ consumers. Specifically, by comparing various pop-up store cases, we will closely analyze how the key characteristics of limited operating period and experience-oriented marketing strategies affect the perceptions, attitudes, and purchase decision process of MZ consumers. By understanding how pop-up stores are perceived by consumers and how these perceptions influence their purchase decisions, we aim to provide practical strategies for how pop-up stores should approach Gen MZ.

The significance of this study is that it builds on previous research and case studies to demonstrate that pop-up stores have the potential to be more than just a temporary storefront, but a powerful communication channel between brands and consumers. As such, this study has important implications for marketing strategists as well as the retail industry. By creating marketing strategies that cater to the values and experiences that Gen MZers value, brands can build deeper relationships with this unique consumer group. Ultimately, this study will provide insights into how pop-up stores can change the buying behavior of Gen MZ and how this will impact the retail industry.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Generation MZ

Often referred to as "young people these days," Generation MZ is an umbrella term for Millennials and

Generation Z, born between the early 1980s and early 2000s (Kang & Kim, 2022), although there is some variation in how different research organizations define Generation MZ.

Born between 1980 and 1994, Generation M was introduced to computers and the internet in the early days of digital technology and is adept at using IT infrastructure and social media to express themselves. They value diversity, are fashion-conscious and brand-conscious. This leads to value-oriented consumption and polarized consumption patterns (Ryu & Kim, 2023). According to Neufeld (2021), there are an estimated 1.8 billion Gen M'ers worldwide, representing about 23% of the world's population.

Born between 1995 and 2004, Generation Z is a generation that grew up with digital technology and is adept at using smartphones and social media. They are digital natives who are independent and discerning consumers (Lee & Cho, 2022). Currently mostly in their mid-20s, they are generally tech-savvy and prefer to make informed consumption decisions. According to Wood (2018), there are approximately 2 billion Gen Zers worldwide, representing about 30% of the world's population.

As a result of their experience growing up in a digital environment, MZs have unique characteristics in the way they communicate information and their consumption patterns. They have a strong sense of narcissism and a consumption tendency that emphasizes personal satisfaction, needs, individuality, and values (Sa, 2022). They want products and services to reflect their identity beyond mere material value, and they value environmental protection, ethical consumption, and social responsibility (Choi et al., 2023).

In addition, MZs seek novelty and are attracted to brands that emphasize change and innovation. They are not bound by traditional consumption methods and value experiences, and have a high preference for pop-up stores, limited edition products, and customized services (Lee & Kim, 2021). Therefore, as consumers, MZs are not just buying products, but they also value the experience and value of the purchase process.

These characteristics of Gen MZ are becoming a major influence in the consumer market. Companies and brands are increasingly focusing on understanding their consumption patterns and values, and developing marketing strategies and products that reflect them. The rise of Generation MZ presents new challenges and opportunities for businesses, and innovative approaches to engaging with them are expected to drive future consumer trends.

2.2. Pop-up Store

Pop-up stores are so named because they are similar to pop-up windows on web pages that temporarily appear and disappear (Turner & Seock, 2022). As such, pop-up stores

are temporary stores that offer products or services at a specific location for a limited period of time (Kim et al., 2010). Typically operating for anywhere from one day to one to two months, pop-up stores provide brands with the opportunity to test new ideas and introduce new products within a rapidly changing market environment (Lee & Kim, 2021). They play an important role in attracting consumer attention and increasing brand awareness by providing a unique shopping experience that is different from traditional retail stores or online shopping (Ko & Park, 2023).

The earliest pop-up stores can be traced back to Christmas markets in Europe, and the modern pop-up store seems to have first appeared in Los Angeles in 1997 (Gray, 2012). In the 2000s, as part of experiential marketing, they evolved into a way to stimulate consumers' emotions and social behaviors, and have had a significant impact on the purchasing behavior of target customers, especially Generation MZ. In particular, its meaning has changed significantly since the 2020s, when COVID-19 began to spread globally (Zhao & Chung, 2023). According to BIG KINDS data, the interest in pop-up stores has gradually increased in line with the increased outdoor activities as the pandemic has entered the pandemic phase.

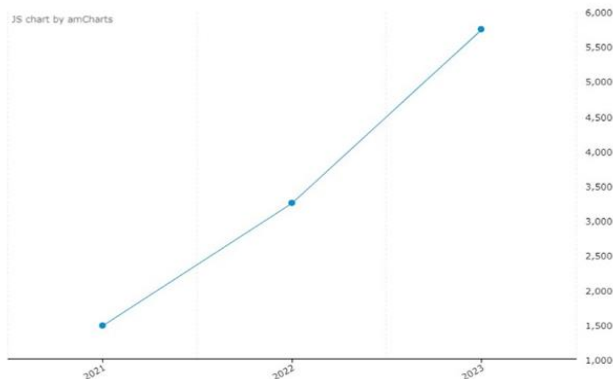


Figure 1: Pop-up Store keyword Search Volume Trend

Because pop-up stores are only open for a limited time, they create a unique "now or never" shopping experience among consumers, which is a powerful motivator to purchase (Choi & Yu, 2017). The advantages of pop-up stores include cost-effectiveness and viral marketing through social media (Yu & Choi, 2015). For these reasons, pop-up stores have become an integral part of modern retail and marketing strategies.

In particular, pop-up stores are more than just a place to sell products, they enable direct interaction between brands and consumers, providing an opportunity to get real-time feedback and reactions from consumers (Sa, 2015). This can provide important information for the improvement of product development and brand strategy. Furthermore, these stores are excellent for word-of-mouth marketing via social

media, which is especially useful for brands targeting Gen MZ.

These characteristics of pop-up stores have a direct impact on the buying behavior of target audiences like Gen MZ. They seek new and unique experiences and value stories and experiences in their purchasing process. Pop-up stores can serve as an ideal platform to fulfill these needs and are an effective way to communicate a brand's values and philosophy to consumers. In conclusion, pop-up stores are an important factor in influencing the buying behavior of modern consumers, especially Generation MZ, and should be an integral part of your marketing strategy.

2.3. Purchase Behavior

Buying behavior refers to the process by which a consumer recognizes a necessary product, gathers information about it, evaluates and selects a product, and finally purchases it, due to motivations such as the influence of social and cultural environment and personal desires (Kim & Nam, 2010). This process is influenced by various internal and external factors, and consumer's personal characteristics, social environment, and economic situation play an important role in purchasing behavior. It includes not only the actual act of purchasing a product or service, but also the psychological decision mechanisms during the process (Hong, 2022). It refers to the final consumer purchase situation, which includes the actual purchase behavior, not the pre-purchase stage such as purchase intention or verbal intention, and is defined by the consumer's subjective decision (Chen et al., 2022). A study by Li & Moon (2021) found that the higher the perceived shopping value of pop-up stores among young consumers, the more likely they are to make a purchase.

In particular, Gen MZ has grown up in a digital environment, and their buying behavior is quite different from previous generations. MZers are experience-driven, and they don't just want to buy a product, they want to experience it as an important part of their consumption. Pop-up stores are one of the best ways to sell to Gen MZ, and by offering a unique shopping experience for a limited time, they can have a significant impact on their buying behavior. This is because the unique experiences, limited-edition products, and socially relevant campaigns that pop-up stores offer are well aligned with the values of Gen MZ.

3. Research Methods and Materials

Based on a qualitative research approach, this study aims to analyze the impact of pop-up store characteristics on the purchasing behavior of Generation MZ consumers. The study focuses on pop-up stores that have been successfully

operated in Korea in the past year, targeting the MZ generation born between the early 1980s and early 2000s.

Specifically, through a literature review, we will comprehensively review existing research and literature on pop-up stores to gain a broad understanding of their definition, history, development, and various strategies in the modern era. Based on this, we will develop a basic understanding and hypothesis on how pop-up stores can influence consumer buying behavior.

Next, we will analyze the characteristics of pop-up stores such as space design, marketing strategies, and customer engagement methods by selecting successful pop-up stores in Korea. In particular, we focus on cases that reflect the interests and consumption patterns of Generation MZ.

The results of the case analysis provide an in-depth analysis of the specific impact of pop-up store characteristics on the purchasing behavior of Generation MZ, including a comparison and validation process with existing theories. This provides a practical understanding of the impact of pop-up store strategies on Gen MZ consumer purchasing behavior.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Jeju Beer



Figure 2: Jeju Wheat Market-Bar Pop-up Store

To commemorate the sixth anniversary of Jeju Wheat Ale, Jeju Beer launched the Jeju Wheat Market-Bar pop-up store in Gwangjang Market, Jongno-gu, Seoul, with a half-off offer. The pop-up store was a space where visitors could experience Jeju Beer's products first-hand, combining the colorful atmosphere of a traditional Korean market with modern beer culture to provide visitors with a new flavor harmony and brand experience. According to Nam (2023), this promotional strategy was highly successful in influencing the purchasing behavior of Generation MZ consumers, achieving sales of approximately 1.2 million cans within a short period of time.

This case highlights the importance of the experience that pop-up stores provide to MZ consumers, especially with the abundance of events and engaging content aimed at MZ consumers, giving them the opportunity to form a deeper emotional connection with the brand. For example, events such as "Wheat draws" and "Wheat photo zones" that can be participated in when purchasing products provide consumers with unforgettable memories (Lim, 2023), which can lead to brand loyalty. In addition, reflecting the 'Halme-nial' trend, which symbolizes the union of grandmothers and millennials, the introduction of the 'market-kase' menu, which includes medicinal herbs, bed bug rice cakes, and various types of skewers, is also believed to have had a significant impact on the purchasing behavior of Generation MZ (Song, 2023).

This study suggests that the characteristics of pop-up stores, such as limited time operation, experiential marketing, and opportunities for consumer engagement, can positively influence the purchasing behavior of Gen MZ. This has important implications for the development of future marketing strategies using pop-up stores. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to understanding the impact of marketing strategies through pop-up stores on the purchasing behavior of MZ consumers.

4.2. Oreo



Figure 3: Oreo Pop-up Store

To celebrate 'Oreo Day', Dongsuh Foods operated an Oreo pop-up store in Seongsu-dong, Seongdong-gu, Seoul for one month from May 22, 2023. The pop-up store was organized to commemorate the 111th anniversary of Oreo's launch and provided consumers with a new brand experience by offering various experiential contents based on the concept of Oreo's birthday party (Kim, 2023).

The pop-up consisted of four main areas: the Welcome Zone, Connect Zone, Play Zone, and Gift Zone. In the Welcome Zone, visitors could experience their first interaction with the brand through a large Oreo photo zone and a message wall celebrating Oreo's 111th birthday; in the Connect Zone, interactive activities were provided for

visitors of all ages through various games such as Oreo Jenga, Oreo Mini Golf, and Oreo Bounce; and in the Play Zone, visitors could decorate Oreo cookies and enjoy various interactive contents such as make-your-own Oreo and a large LED ball pool (Jeong, 2023). The gift zone showcased various flavors of Oreo and goods made with Oreo, which attracted the attention of MZ consumers (Oh, 2023).

This case demonstrates that pop-up stores can serve as an important marketing tool to drive brand awareness and consumer engagement. The Oreo Pop-Up Store positively influenced the purchasing behavior of a wide range of consumers, including Generation MZ, by strengthening emotional connections with consumers and engaging them through a variety of experiential content and concepts, especially around anniversaries. As such, this case is an important example of how providing brand experiences through pop-up stores can contribute to increasing consumer engagement and brand loyalty, providing valuable implications for future marketing strategy development in this area.

4.3. Kanu



Figure 4: Kanu House pop-up store

The 'Kanu House' pop-up store, hosted by Dongsuh Food's coffee brand 'Kanu', was operated in Seongsu-dong, Seoul from March 25 to May 21, 2023, and was very popular among Generation MZ consumers. During the operation period, the store attracted 61,597 visitors (Park, 2023), demonstrating the characteristics of a pop-up store that meets the needs of Generation MZ consumers.

To convey the values and vision of the Kanu brand, Kanu House created various experiential spaces. In particular, each floor was decorated with the Kanurium, office, home, espresso bar, and rooftop, where the history and product lineup of Kanu can be seen at a glance, to provide visitors with a differentiated brand experience (Kim, 2023). In addition, by providing an opportunity to select and experience one of the eight capsules of the new capsule coffee 'Kanu Barista', the brand maximized consumer

interaction and positively influenced brand awareness and purchase behavior through direct experience with the product.



Figure 5: Kanu on the Table pop-up store

Then, in December of the same year, Dongsuh Food launched the 'Kanu on the Table' pop-up store. Under the slogan 'The world's smallest cafe', the space conveyed the characteristics of Kanu products and the brand story through various experience spaces such as miniature and giant tables. DIY sample package creation and taste tasting opportunities provided visitors with the opportunity to select and experience Kanu products that reflected their preferences (Shin, 2024). Visitors were able to connect emotionally with the brand through various photo zones, video content, and special merchandise. 'Kanu on the Table' has become an important marketing strategy that goes beyond product sales to strengthen brand-consumer communication and positively influence the purchasing behavior of Generation MZ. In particular, the visitors interviewed said that the fun experience and gifts at the pop-up store significantly increased their familiarity with Kanu, and the fact that they learned that Kanu has capsule products made them consider purchasing a coffee machine (An & Shin, 2024).

The high level of engagement and positive response from MZ visitors clearly demonstrates the impact of pop-up stores on the purchasing behavior of MZ consumers. The 'Kanu' pop-up store has become an important marketing strategy that positively influences the purchasing behavior of Gen MZ by strengthening communication between the brand and consumers and providing an opportunity for consumers to experience the brand and connect emotionally. This case is an important example for understanding the impact of pop-up stores on the purchasing behavior of Gen MZ consumers, and it clearly demonstrates how pop-up stores can go beyond just selling products and contribute to brand awareness, consumer engagement, and building sustainable relationships with Gen MZ.

5. Conclusions

This study analyzes the impact of the use of pop-up stores, one of the most prominent phenomena in the retail industry, on the purchasing behavior of MZ consumers. Pop-up stores are characterized by a limited period of time, and this limitation motivates consumers to purchase products. In addition, pop-up stores are not just a place to sell products, but also an important marketing tool to strengthen the emotional connection between brands and consumers and actively engage consumers. In particular, after analyzing successful pop-up stores, we found that selling limited edition items and merchandise, presenting differentiated concepts, and maximizing customer experience factors are the three main factors that positively change the purchasing behavior of Gen MZ consumers. These factors play an important role in attracting the attention of Gen MZ and creating a positive perception of the brand.

Furthermore, pop-up stores provide a flexible platform for brands to experiment with different marketing strategies, such as piloting new products or running specific campaigns. This gives brands the opportunity to quickly gauge the reactions of specific target groups, such as Gen MZ, and incorporate their feedback into product development and marketing strategies. This dynamic and interactive nature of pop-ups provides consumers with a unique experience that traditional retail spaces cannot offer, which contributes to building brand loyalty and long-term customer relationships.

In conclusion, we can see that pop-up stores are not just a temporary store, but a powerful communication channel that can create deep relationships with MZ consumers and effectively communicate brand values. Pop-up stores allow consumers to interact directly with brands, experience products, and experience brand stories. This study provides in-depth insights into the importance of pop-up stores in modern marketing strategies and how to maximize their effectiveness, especially in marketing to Gen MZ.

The implications of this study are as follows First, we found that pop-up stores have a positive impact on Gen MZ's purchase behavior. This suggests that limited-time operations and experience-oriented marketing strategies attract the attention of Gen MZ and play an important role in their purchase decisions. Second, pop-up stores can be a useful marketing tool for brands to explore new markets or pilot new products. Based on these implications, marketing strategists and brand managers can utilize pop-up stores to develop differentiated marketing strategies for Gen MZ.

In conclusion, the approach of this study aims to provide a comprehensive view of the role of pop-up stores in contemporary consumer culture and how they contribute to the purchasing behavior of Gen MZ consumers. This is an important academic contribution to understanding how the characteristics and strategies of pop-up stores contribute to

the changing purchasing behavior of Generation MZ, and will deepen the debate on consumer behavior and marketing strategies.

Based on these findings, future research should explore how the pop-up store strategy can be applied in different industries and contexts, and how it affects different generations of consumers. It will also be important to analyze the long-term impact of pop-up stores on brand image, perception, and customer loyalty. This will further establish the role of pop-up stores as a strategic tool that can contribute to the long-term growth and development of a brand, rather than just a short-term, intensive marketing effort.

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