

ENGAGEMENT OF GENERATION Z IN COMPANY-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS ON SOCIAL MEDIA – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLAND AND GREAT BRITAIN

UKLUČENOST GENERACIJE Z U ODNOSI IZMEĐU PODUZEĆA I POTROŠAČA NA DRUŠTVENIM MREŽAMA – KOMPARATIVNA ANALIZA POLJSKE I VELIKE BRITANIJE



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Abstract

Purpose – This article aims to identify the types of social media activities that Generation Z expects from companies.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Empirical research was conducted in 2023 among students in Poland and Great Britain using a structured survey based on the CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) method. Descriptive statistical tools were applied to analyse the collected data.

Findings and Implications – The study identified key social media activities expected by Generation Z and revealed correlations between these expectations and the respondents' gender and place of residence. The insights gained can help social media managers align their

Sažetak

Svrha – Cilj ovoga rada je identificirati vrste aktivnosti na društvenim mrežama koje pripadnici generacije Z očekuju od poduzeća.

Metodološki pristup – Empirijsko istraživanje provedeno je 2023. godine na studentima u Poljskoj i Velikoj Britaniji, korištenjem strukturiranog anketnog upitnika pomoću CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) metode. Za analizu prikupljenih podataka primijenjene su metode deskriptivne statistike.

Rezultati i implikacije – Istraživanje je identificiralo ključne aktivnosti na društvenim mrežama koje pripadnici generacije Z očekuju od poduzeća te ukazalo na povezanosti između tih očekivanja te spola i mjesta stanovanja ispitanika. Dobivena saznanja mogu pomoći

communication strategies with Generation Z's preferences, thereby enhancing customer engagement.

Limitations – The study's limitations stem from the nature of survey research, including the potential for superficial understanding of the topic and the risk of inaccurate responses. Moreover, the relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings.

Originality – This paper addresses professionals responsible for managing interactions with Generation Z on social media platforms. The findings expand the existing body of knowledge by highlighting how gender, place of residence, and nationality influence the online engagement of Generation Z.

Keywords – Generation Z, social media, customer engagement, company-customer relations, customer-centric marketing

menadžerima za društvene mreže da svoje komunikacijske strategije usklade s preferencijama generacije Z, čime se može unaprijediti uključenost potrošača.

Ograničenja – Ograničenja istraživanja proizlaze iz same prirode anketnog istraživanja, uključujući mogućnost površnog razumijevanja teme i rizik netočnih odgovora. Osim toga, relativno malen uzorak ograničava mogućnost generalizacije rezultata.

Doprinos – Ovaj rad namijenjen je stručnjacima koji su odgovorni za upravljanje interakcijom s generacijom Z na društvenim mrežama. Rezultati proširuju postojeće spoznaje isticanjem utjecaja spola, mjesta stanovanja i nacionalnosti na online angažman pripadnika generacije Z.

Ključne riječi – generacija Z, društvene mreže, uključenost potrošača, odnosi poduzeće–kupac, marketing usmjeren na potrošača

1. INTRODUCTION

Online consumer behaviour continues to be a subject of interest, particularly due to its complex socio-technical nature (Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, 2015), which includes generational differences in how the Internet is used. Among the most active users are members of Generation Z, a group of young consumers who form the focal point of this study. One of the basic forms of brand promotion on social media involves the creation of fan pages—accounts that users can engage with by clicking the “like” button, thereby signalling interest and a certain degree of emotional attachment to the brand (Błońska & Konieczek, 2015).

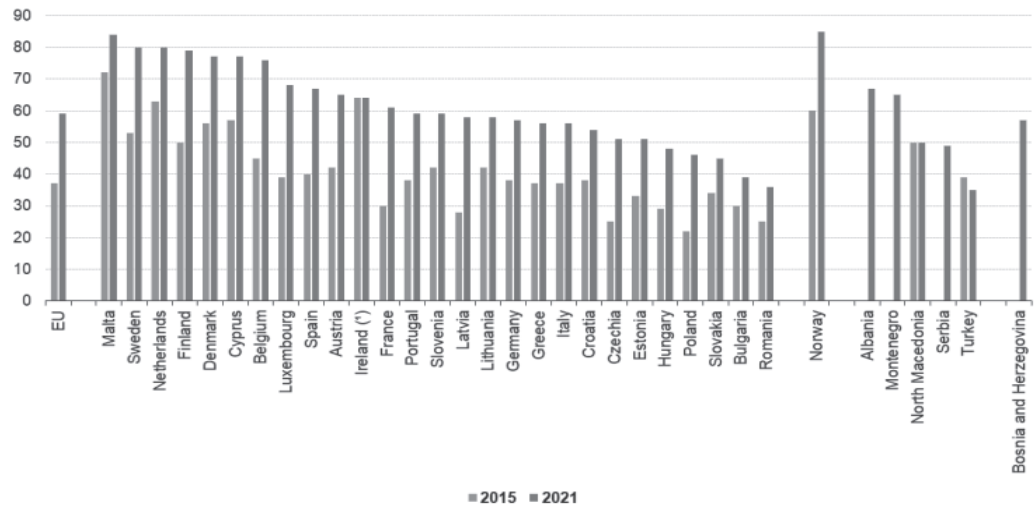
Companies typically aim to increase customer engagement to improve their chances of success. Customer engagement has both direct and indirect effects on organizational outcomes, including brand promotion, cost reductions, increased sales, and improved profitability. More-

over, engagement helps explain and predict consumer behaviour, such as experiences with a brand and the likelihood of repeat purchases (Grewal, Roggeveen, Sisodia & Nordfält, 2017). Cheung et al. (2021) confirm that customer engagement boosts brand repurchase intentions. Furthermore, engagement is considered the first step toward building trust and long-term brand loyalty.

Companies across Europe have adopted social media to varying degrees. By 2021, 59% of companies in the EU were using at least one type of social media, marking an increase of 22 percentage points compared to 2015. However, these figures vary significantly by country (see Fig. 1). In Poland, usage rose from 22% in 2015 to 46% in 2021. Since Great Britain left the European Union on 31 January 2020, the most recent available data for this country is from 2019, when 68% of British companies used social media, compared to just 35% in Poland at that time (Eurostat, 2023).

FIGURE 1: Companies using social networks, 2015 and 2021 (% of enterprises)

Enterprises using social media, 2015 and 2021
(% of enterprises)



Note: Only countries with data for both years

Source: Eurostat https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Social_media_-_statistics_on_the_use_by_enterprises#Use_of_social_media_by_enterprises (22.11.2023)

In 2019, more than eight out of ten companies (86%) were using social media to build their brand image and sell their products. The most significant increases between 2013 and 2019 were observed in the use of social media for marketing (from 22% to 45% of companies) and employee recruitment (from 9% to 28%). By 2021, approximately 56% of EU companies were using social media to engage with customers by creating personal data profiles, sharing experiences, expressing opinions, exchanging information, and—most importantly—building communities of individuals with shared interests related to the companies' brands (Eurostat, 2023).

2. LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Customer engagement refers to the level of interaction and relationship between a current or potential customer and a company's activities, aimed at building trust and long-term loyalty to a product or service. According to Fairistha, Bernessa, Cen and Aryuni (2023), four main factors are involved in measuring customer engagement:

1. enthusiasm, which increases interest in the product,-
2. attention, referring to how much an individual concentrates on a particular brand or product,
3. interaction, including communication between customers and sellers outside the purchase process, and
4. identification, whereby the customer feels a sense of affiliation with a particular brand.

Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) adopt a behavioural approach, defining customer engagement as the intensity of an individual's participation and relationship with a company's product offerings and activities, whether initiated by the customer or the company.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter offer users virtually unlim-

ited opportunities to interact, express themselves, share content, and engage with brands (Cheung, Pires & Rosenberger, 2020). To anticipate and effectively manage the impact of this, it is essential to understand what motivates people to engage with brand-related content on social media (Muntinga, Moorman & Smit, 2011). These platforms also enable consumers to exchange ideas with like-minded individuals about specific products or brands, which is of interest to both consumers and companies (Vivek et al., 2012; Schivinski & Dąbrowski, 2015). Such interactions can increase enthusiasm and deepen engagement (Vivek et al., 2012; Leckie, Nyadzayo & Johnson, 2016), while also giving consumers a voice to provide feedback that helps companies improve the quality of their products and services (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Generation Z, also referred to as Digital Natives, the iGeneration, or the Next Generation (Barreiro & Bozutti, 2017), has no universally agreed-upon range of birth years in academic literature. Following several researchers, the authors define Generation Z as individuals born between 1995 and 2009 (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014; Priporas, Stylos & Fotiadis, 2017; Hampton & Keys, 2017; Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Kamenidou, Mamalis, Pavlidis & Bara, 2019). Members of this generation are typically competent, creative, and innovation-oriented. Their strong technological proficiency (Priporas et al., 2017), coupled with intensive daily use of digital devices (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2016), enables them to thrive in virtual environments and to effectively communicate with other generations through various social media platforms (Van den Bergh & Pallini, 2018). Earlier generations, particularly Generations X and Y, have been extensively studied and well-characterized in the literature, in contrast to Generation Z, which remains the least researched cohort globally (Siddiqui & Warraich, 2021).

The limited coverage of Generation Z in existing research motivated the authors to explore this group's engagement in company-customer relationships via social media. To justify the rel-

evance of this study and highlight existing research gaps, a bibliometric analysis of the Scopus database was conducted using VOSviewer software. VOSviewer is widely used for bibliometric and thematic cluster analysis (Shah, Lei, Ali, Doronin & Hussain, 2019; Llanos-Herrera & Merigo, 2019). It enables researchers to map networks of publications, authors, journals, institutions, and countries (van Eck & Waltman, 2010), and supports five types of bibliometric mapping: co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, citation, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation. In its keyword analysis, VOSviewer applies text mining techniques to titles, keywords, and abstracts, enabling the discovery of clusters of related items, each marked by a distinct colour. The larger the node, the greater its relevance in the network (Perianes-Rodriguez, Waltman & van Eck, 2016).

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using a targeted search in Scopus on 15 November 2023. The search string was "TITLE-ABS-KEY (("customer engagement") AND ("social media") AND ("generation Z" OR "gen Z" OR "gen Zers"))". This yielded only five documents, all published

between 2021 and 2023. The data were analysed in VOSviewer (version 1.6.18) using the following parameters:

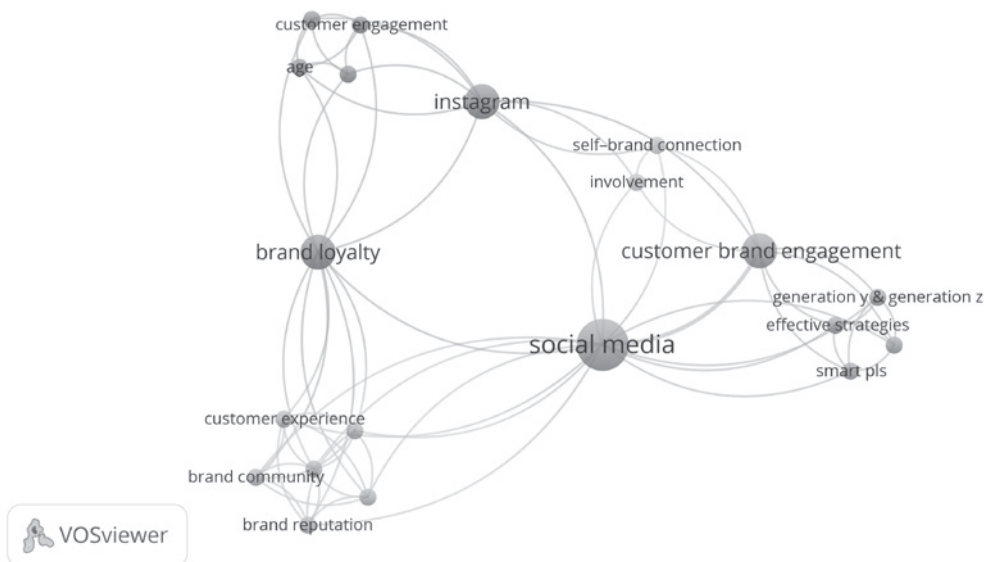
- type of analysis: "co-occurrence"
- counting method: "Full counting"
- unit of analysis: "All keywords"

Number of keywords to be selected: 20. The correlations and relationships between keywords observed are presented in Figure 2.

The resulting keyword network (Fig. 2) revealed four distinct clusters. The keyword "social media" emerged as the most dominant. Other prominent terms included "brand loyalty", "customer brand engagement", and "Instagram". These findings confirm the growing academic interest in this area. At the same time, the low number of publications clearly indicates a research gap and supports the need for further exploration that integrates the concepts of customer engagement, social media, and Generation Z.

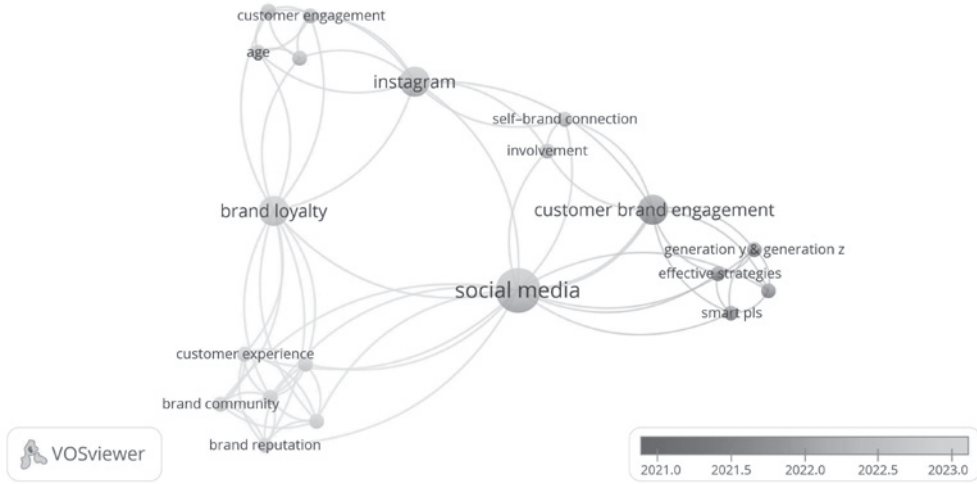
On the other hand, the keyword analysis shown in the next chart (Fig. 3) enables current trends and research information to be obtained.

FIGURE 2: Bibliometric analysis of abstracts – network visualization



Source: own study

FIGURE 3: Bibliometric analysis of abstracts – overlay visualization



Source: own study

The overlay visualisation (Fig. 3) provided further insight into current research trends. It showed that topics relating to Generation Z are relatively new but expanding. More recent publications included keywords such as “customer experience”, “brand community”, “brand reputation”, and “word-of-mouth”.

Based on this literature review and bibliometric analysis, the authors identified a clear need to expand current knowledge of Generation Z’s engagement in brand-related social media interactions. This study contributes to that goal by examining differences in engagement based on gender, residence, and nationality. The aim of this article was to identify the types of social media activities that Generation Z expects from companies. To address this objective, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Do Generation Z representatives search for a company’s social media account before using its services or purchasing a specific product?
2. Does the gender of a Generation Z representative influence their likelihood of searching for a company’s social media ac-

count before purchasing a specific product or service?

3. Does a Generation Z representative’s place of residence influence their likelihood of searching for a company’s social media account before purchasing a specific product or service?
4. Which benefits do Generation Z representatives consider most important when following a company on social media?
5. Does the gender of a Generation Z representative influence their evaluation of the benefits of following a company on social media?
6. Does a Generation Z representative’s place of residence influence their evaluation of the benefits of following a company on social media?

3. METHODOLOGY

This study of Generation Z’s attitudes toward brands on social media is part of a broader research project conducted by the authors in

2023, involving students in Poland and Great Britain. The study combined qualitative and quantitative approaches and used a survey as an indirect measurement method. The CATI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) technique was applied using a structured questionnaire developed based on a critical review of the literature (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman & Pihlström, 2012; Gregor & Kubiak, 2014; Hazam, 2022; van Tonder, 2016). Given the lack of consensus in the literature regarding the exact birth years of Generation Z, the authors adopted 1995 as the starting year, which is most frequently cited.

The study considered the tested sample as the independent variable, rather than the entire Generation Z population, due to challenges in precisely defining the generation's age range. Nevertheless, generational profiling serves as a useful heuristic, offering a descriptive framework widely used in both academic and popular discourse.

A pilot study was conducted in 2018 to refine the survey tool. In the main study, 322 students from Poland (166 women, 156 men) and 318 students from the UK (199 women, 119 men) participated. In Poland, the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) technique was used via the Webankieta.pl platform, while data collection in the UK was outsourced to a professional research firm. Both samples were selected using non-probability sampling. While this limits representativeness, statistical inference was applied to detect relationships within the sample. Descriptive statistics alone would not allow for this level of analysis.

Based on the research results, the authors calculated the number and frequency of respondents' responses to each question in the sur-

vey. The authors are aware that the sampling technique employed does not allow for the estimation of errors that may arise when generalizing the observed patterns in the sample to the entire population. To identify potential relationships within the studied groups, the authors utilized statistical inference, for which they adopted a certain level of significance, as descriptive statistics alone cannot provide such analysis. Statistical inference was conducted with a predetermined significance level set at $\alpha = 0.05$, and a p-value was calculated for each test. The authors compared the p-value with the level of statistical significance to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_0) in favour of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) ($p < \alpha$), or not ($p \geq \alpha$). All analyses were performed using Statistica software, version 13.3.

The authors acknowledge several limitations of survey-based research: superficial understanding of the studied phenomena and the potential for inaccurate responses. Additionally, the small sample size limits generalizability. However, prior studies show that when appropriate statistical tests are used, small samples can still yield meaningful insights (Yates, 1934; Nachar, 2008).

4. RESULTS

The results presented below are drawn from research conducted by the authors in Poland and Great Britain in early 2023. One stage of the research involved asking respondents—using an ordinal scale—whether they searched for a company's social media account before using its services or purchasing a specific product. The data collected in Poland and the UK are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: The numbers of responses to the question relating to searching for a company account on social media before purchasing a particular product or service by respondents in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Classes	Number	Cumulative number	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Poland				
Never	26	26	8.07	8.07%
Rarely (only in specific cases)	120	146	37.27	45.34%
Often	120	266	37.27	82.61%
Almost always	56	322	17.39	100.00%
Great Britain				
Never	16	16	5.03%	5.03%
Rarely (only in specific cases)	81	97	25.47%	30.50%
Often	141	238	44.34%	74.84%
Almost always	80	318	25.16%	100.00%

Source: own study

A comparison of the percentage distributions (Table 1) shows that respondents in both countries were highly likely to search for a company's social media account before making a purchase. The majority of respondents (70% in Great Britain and 55% in Poland) stated that they frequently or almost always did so.

The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to examine the relationship between two variables: searching for a company's social media account before purchasing any specific product or service and the respondent's gender. This test was used to analyse responses concerning differences between the groups, as it may be used for small

samples of participants (Table 2). It may also be used when the variables measured are ordinal, as in the Likert scale (Nachar, 2008). In both studies (in Poland and in Great Britain), respondents were divided into two groups (Men and Women). The authors could not conclude that the two groups being researched were distributed in the usual way as they included a relatively small number of participants. In this case, the authors could not refer to a parametric test of the average using Student's t-distribution, as there was no possibility to check whether both samples were distributed in the usual way (Fay & Proschan, 2010; Walters, 2021).

TABLE 2: Mann-Whitney U-test results concerning relationship between searching for company account on social media before purchasing a particular product or service and respondent gender in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Mann-Whitney U test (adjusted for continuity) the relationship between the search for social media accounts of a given company before purchasing its product/ service against the variable: gender	Sum of ranks Male	Sum of ranks Female	U	Z	p
results for the survey in Poland	28357.00	23646.00	9785.00	4.0136	0.00006
results for the survey in Great Britain	31143.50	19577.50	11243.50	-0.8013	0.42295

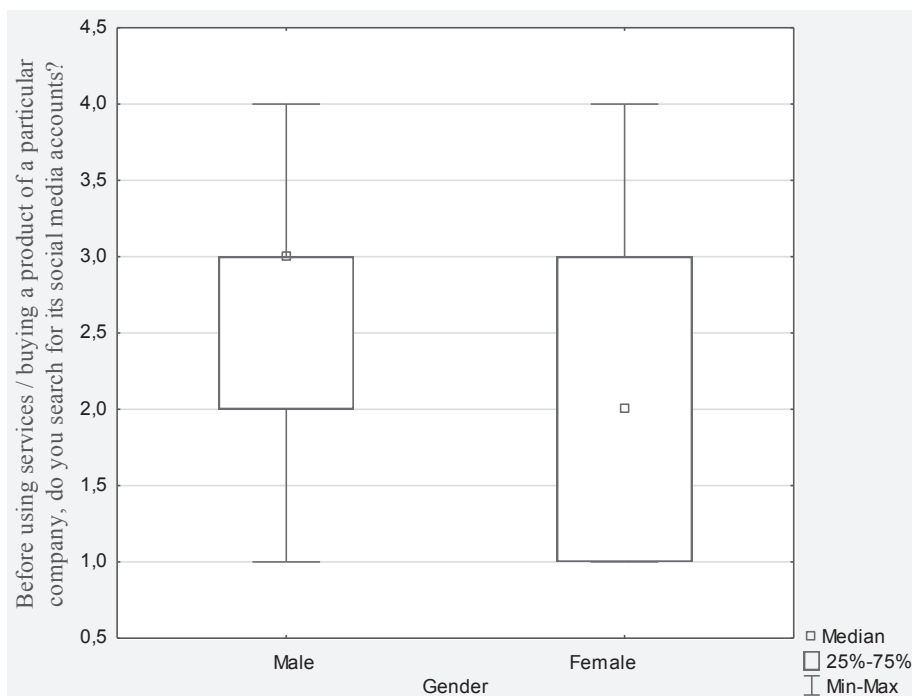
Source: own study

An analysis of data collected in Poland in 2023 led the authors to conclude that gender had a statistically significant effect on the variable under study ($p = 0.00006$). An interpretation of the data presented in Table 2 supports the conclusion that Generation Z women in Poland searched for company social media accounts significantly more often than their male counterparts before purchasing a particular product or service. In this research group, the median responses were: 3 (“rarely”) among men and 2 (“often”) among women (see Fig. 4).

The next stage of the analysis examined the relationship between two other variables: searching for a company’s social media account prior to purchase (variable X), and the respondent’s place of residence (variable Y). To assess the correlation between these two ordinal variables (Akoglu, 2018), the authors again applied a non-parametric test—Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (see Table 3).

To assess the correlation between the two qualitative features (Akoglu, 2018), the authors again

FIGURE 4: Relationship between frequency of searching for a company account on social media before purchasing a particular product or service and respondent gender in Poland in year 2023



where: 1. almost always; 2. often; 3. rarely (only in specific cases); 4. never

Source: own study

For the data collected in Great Britain, no statistically significant relationship was found between the two variables: searching for a company’s social media account prior to purchasing a specific product or service, and the respondent’s gender.

used a non-parametric test: Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (Table 3). The following hypotheses were tested:

- $H_0: \rho = 0$ (no correlation)

was verified against an alternative hypothesis: $\rho \neq$

- $H_1: \rho \neq 0$ (a significant correlation exists).

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the observed relationship between variables X and Y was due to random chance or reflected a meaningful association within the populations (countries) studied.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were not statistically significant. The analysis did not provide sufficient evidence to support the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the variables: searching for a company's social media account before purchasing a product or service and the respondent's place of residence in Poland in 2023. A similar result was observed for the coefficients calculated in

TABLE 3: Spearman's rank order correlation concerning relationship between searching for a company account on social media before purchasing a particular product or service and respondent residence in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Spearman rank order correlation of the variables: the search for social media accounts of a specific company before purchasing its product/service & place of residence	N of valid ones	Spearman's rank R	t(N-2)	p
results for the survey in Poland	322	-0.0890	-1.5993	0.1107
results for the survey in Great Britain	318	-0.1030	-1.8407	0.0666

Source: own study

TABLE 4: Average assessment, standard deviation and variation coefficient of benefits for respondents in Poland and Great Britain following companies on social media in 2023

Benefits of following a brand on social media	Poland			Great Britain		
	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
Possibility to stay up to date with what is new	3.9627	1.0224	25.80	3.6038	1.1621	32.25
Opportunity to ask additional questions	3.2205	1.1805	36.66	3.5063	1.1310	32.26
Chance to win prizes in competitions	2.6335	1.3520	51.34	3.4969	1.1748	33.60
Meeting new people gathered around the brand	2.8571	1.3154	46.04	3.0535	1.2459	40.80
Possibility of resolving problems more quickly	3.5745	1.1421	31.95	3.6792	1.0909	29.65
Using interesting games, applications related to the brand	3.2360	1.3090	40.45	3.2893	1.1959	36.36
Opportunity to receive a discount coupon	3.5466	1.2553	35.39	3.8239	1.1457	29.96
Possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand)	2.7857	1.2607	45.26	3.4088	1.1739	34.44

Source: own study

the British sample in 2023, where Spearman’s rank correlation coefficients were also not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

The next stage of the research focused on identifying which benefits of following companies on social media were considered important by Generation Z representatives in both countries. Respondents were presented with a list of potential benefits (with the option to add others not listed in the question) and were asked to rate each one on a scale from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important). As the measurement level of the variables was based on an interval scale (Harpe, 2015), it was possible to calculate the mean rating for each benefit, as well as the standard deviation and coefficient of variation (see Table 4).

An analysis of average values allowed the most important benefits of following companies on social media to be identified. Respondents in both countries selected the same top three benefits, although ranked in a slightly different order. Respondents in Great Britain ranked the following as most important:

1. The opportunity to receive a discount coupon.
2. The possibility to stay up to date with what is new.
3. The possibility of resolving problems more quickly.

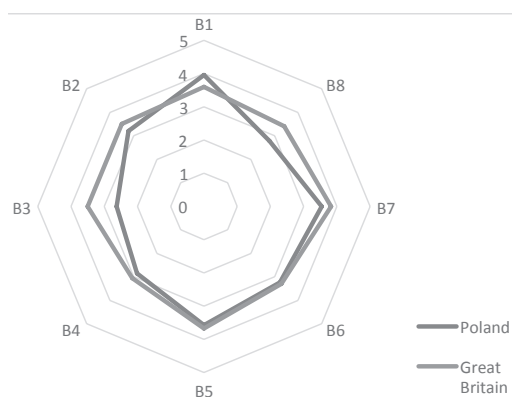
In contrast, respondents in Poland indicated:

1. The possibility to stay up to date with what is new.
2. The possibility of resolving problems more quickly.
3. The opportunity to receive a discount coupon.

A comparison of average values (Fig. 5) also supports the conclusion that respondents in Great Britain gave higher ratings to the previously mentioned benefits—except for staying up to date with what is new —than respondents in

Poland. The dispersion of results was also similar in both countries. This is confirmed by the analysis of the coefficient of variation. The values of the variation coefficient were comparable across both respondent groups, indicating that, on average, the assessment of each benefit related to following companies on social media varied within a similar rang.

FIGURE 5: Average benefit assessments of respondents in Poland and Great Britain following companies on social media in 2023



B1 – Possibility to stay up to date with what is new, B2 – Opportunity to ask additional questions, B3 – Chance to win prizes in competitions, B4 – Meeting new people gathered around the brand, B5 – Possibility of resolving problems more quickly, B6 – Using interesting games, applications related to the brand, B7 – Opportunity to receive a discount coupon, B8 – Possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand)

Source: own study

The variation coefficient also suggests that the differences in the dispersion of responses between the two countries were small, indicating a moderate level of variability overall. The only exception was low variability in the benefit related to “keeping up to date with what is new,” as reported by respondents in Poland in 2023. A high coefficient of variation indicates greater variability and suggests a more heterogeneous population. Conversely, a low coefficient indicates lower variability and a more homogeneous group. Additional benefits of following

companies on social media, as reported by respondents in Poland, included:

- sharing what is currently going on, keeping up-to-date,
- purchase options available,
- the opportunity to influence the company and product quality,
- a wide choice of available products when purchasing,
- the opportunity to meet people,
- the opportunity to learn more about the brand or product,
- the option of viewing product or service ranges in detail,
- the opportunity to express ones opinion,
- the opportunity to receive feedback,
- quick contact to ask for information not immediately given,
- receiving information on the needed product.

Whereas respondents in Great Britain indicated the following additional benefits:

- discovering new content,
- the opportunity to purchase from a random company,
- sales information,
- new product videos,
- hearing people's different opinions,
- fairness,
- fast fashion,
- exclusive info,
- communication,
- brand quality,
- the opportunity to participate in activities organized by the company,
- the influence of social media stars,
- quality,
- receiving advertisements,

- receiving deals when they're advertised if I need something from that brand,
- chance of receiving gifts,
- discussing brands movements with friends,
- finding products worth money,
- discount codes and sales,
- keeping up to date on new information quickly.

The next step of the analysis was to examine whether there was a relationship between individual perceived benefits of following companies on social media and the respondent's gender. For this purpose, non-parametric tests were used for comparing two independent groups. These tests help verify the hypothesis that the two samples come from different populations (statistical communities). The data were first ranked in ascending order, from the minimum to the maximum value. Since the variables were ordinal and not normally distributed, the Mann–Whitney U test was applied (see Tables 5 and 6) (Nachar, 2008; Walters, 2021). For ordinal data, the null hypothesis (H_0) assumes that the distribution of the two groups does not differ significantly.

Using the adopted significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the Z-statistics from the Mann–Whitney U test (with continuity correction) and exact U-values indicate that there are statistically significant differences between male and female Generation Z respondents in Poland for the following variables:

- the possibility to stay up to date with what is new and respondent gender,
- the opportunity to ask additional questions and respondent gender,
- the opportunity to receive a discount coupon,
- the possibility of influencing the brand and respondent gender in Poland.

Differences in benefit assessment can be described using medians, quartiles, and minimum and maximum values, as illustrated in the box-and-whisker plots (Figs. 6, 7, 8, and 9).

TABLE 5: Mann-Whitney U-test results concerning relationship between assessment of benefits of following a company on social media relative to respondent gender in Poland in 2023

Variables	Sum of ranks Male	Sum of ranks Female	U	Z	p
possibility to stay up to date with what is new & gender	22516.0	29487.0	10270.0	-3.3885	0.0007
opportunity to ask additional questions & gender	22617.5	29385.5	10371.5	-3.1933	0.0014
chance to win prizes in competitions & gender	23727.5	28275.5	11481.5	-1.8020	0.0715
meeting new people gathered around the brand & gender	24996.0	27007.0	12750.0	-0.2422	0.8086
possibility of resolving problems more quickly & gender	25120.5	26882.5	12874.5	-0.0908	0.9277
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & gender	25452.0	26551.0	12690.0	0.3164	0.7517
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & gender	22813.0	29190.0	10567.0	-2.9422	0.0033
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & gender	23029.5	28973.5	10783.5	-2.6638	0.0077

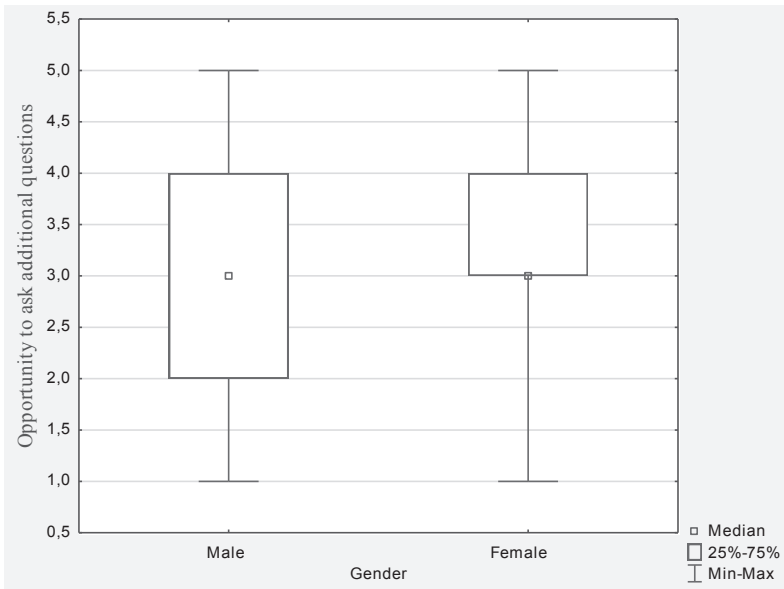
Source: own study

FIGURE 6: Relationship between possibility to stay up to date with what is new on social media and respondent gender in Poland in 2023



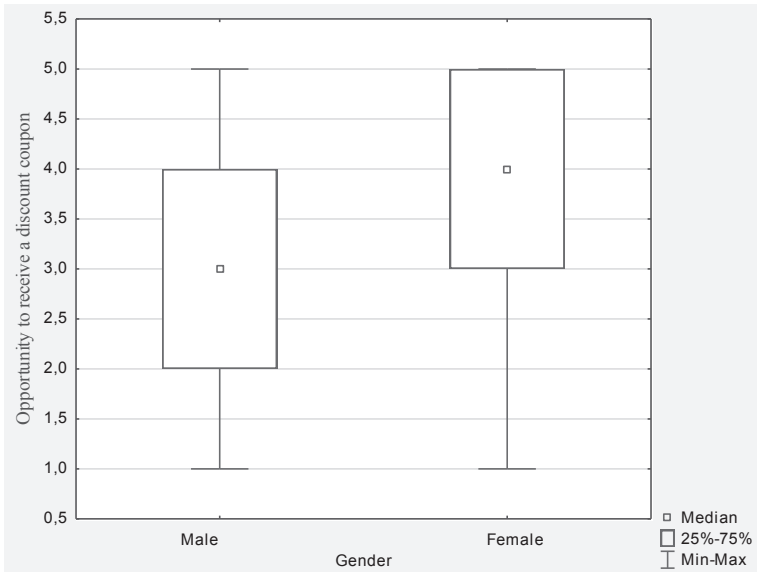
Source: own study

FIGURE 7: Relationship between opportunity to ask additional questions on social media and



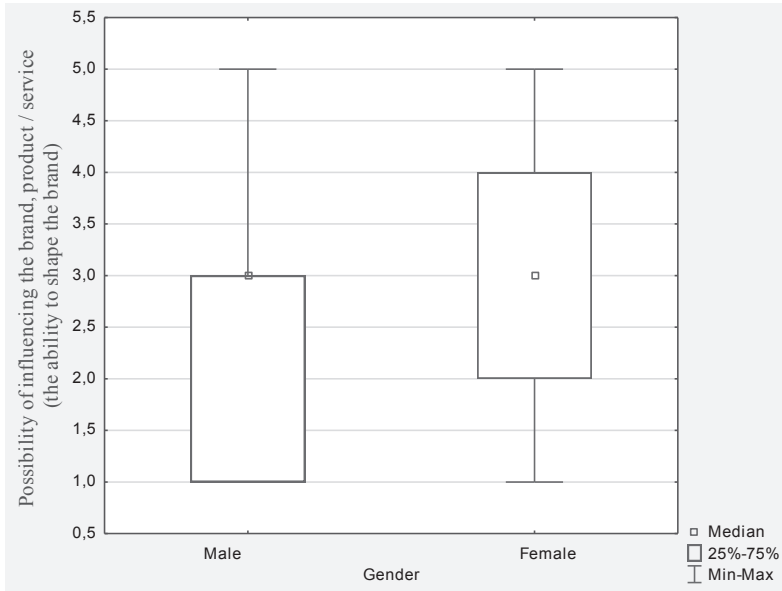
Source: own study

FIGURE 8: Relationship between opportunity to receive a discount coupon and respondent gender in Poland in 2023



Source: own study

FIGURE. 9. Relationship between possibility of influencing on brand (possibility of brand forming) and respondent gender in Poland in 2023



Source: own study

To summarise, among all the variables analysed, only four statistically significant correlations were identified (see Table 5). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that no relationship exists

between the remaining benefits of following companies on social media and the respondent’s gender in Poland.

TABLE 6: Mann-Whitney U-test results concerning relationship between benefit assessment of company observing on social media in relation to respondent gender in Great Britain in 2023

Variables	Sum of ranks Female	Sum of ranks Male	U	Z	p
possibility to stay up to date with what is new & gender	32945.5	17457.5	10436.50	1.7111	0.0871
opportunity to ask additional questions & gender	32368.0	18035.0	11014.00	0.9554	0.3394
chance to win prizes in competitions & gender	32886.0	17517.0	10496.00	1.6298	0.1031
meeting new people gathered around the brand & gender	30677.5	19725.5	10777.50	-1.2520	0.2106
possibility of resolving problems more quickly & gender	32112.5	18290.5	11269.50	0.6211	0.5345
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & gender	31189.0	18897.0	11488.00	-0.2537	0.7998
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & gender	33388.5	17014.5	9993.50	2.3108	0.0208
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & gender	32124.0	18279.0	11258.00	0.6318	0.5275

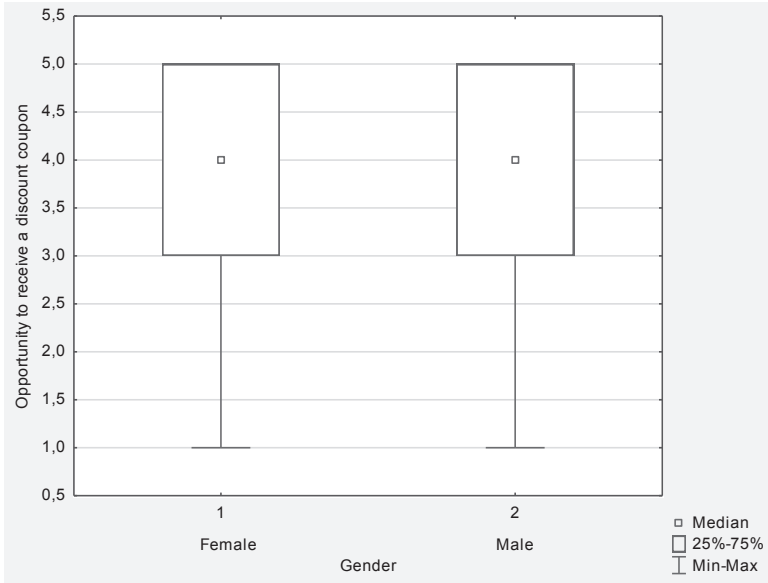
Source: own study

Using the adopted significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the Z-statistics from the Mann–Whitney U test (with continuity correction) and exact U-values indicate statistically significant differences between female and male Generation Z respondents in Great Britain. These differences are reflected in the fact that women rated the opportunity to obtain discount coupons on social media significantly higher than men. These results can be described using the median, quartiles, and minimum and maximum values, as shown in the box-and-whisker plot (Fig. 10).

($p > 0.05$). For the remaining benefits assessed, the distribution types of the analysed groups do not differ significantly. Therefore, no statistically significant relationship was found between the individual benefits of following companies on social media and the respondent's gender.

The next stage of the statistical analysis involved verifying whether a relationship exists between two variables: the perceived benefits of following companies on social media (variable X) and the respondent's place of residence (variable Y). To assess the correlation between these two or-

FIGURE 10: Relationship between opportunity to receive a discount coupon on social media and respondent gender in Great Britain in 2023



Source: own study

The Mann–Whitney U test results for data collected in Great Britain (Table 6) do not provide sufficient grounds to reject the null hypothesis

dinal variables (Akoglu, 2018), the authors again applied a non-parametric test—Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Tables 7 and 8).

TABLE 7: Spearman’s rank order correlation; relationship between benefits of following a company on social media and the respondent’s place of residence in Poland in 2023

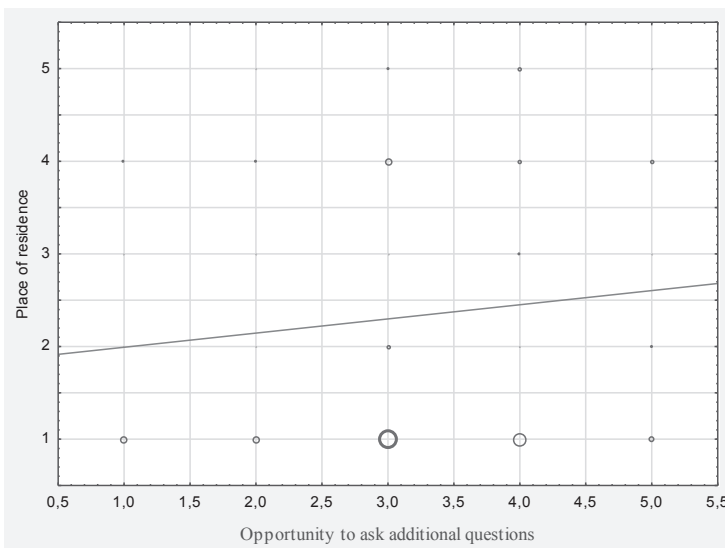
Variables	N of valid ones	Spearman’s rank R	t(N-2)	P
possibility to stay up to date with what is new & place of residence	322	0.08233	1.4778	0.1404
opportunity to ask additional questions & place of residence	322	0.1209	2.1778	0.0302
chance to win prizes in competitions & place of residence	322	0.0724	1.2991	0.1949
meeting new people gathered around the brand & place of residence	322	0.0855	1.5359	0.1256
possibility of resolving problems more quickly & place of residence	322	0.1036	1.8631	0.0634
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & place of residence	322	0.1000	1.7986	0.0730
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & place of residence	322	0.0686	1.2202	0.2233
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & place of residence	322	0.0987	1.7733	0.0771

Source: own study

The data analysis (Table 7) shows that in Poland, there was one statistically significant correlation between two variables in 2023: the opportunity to ask additional questions and the respon-

dent’s place of residence ($p < 0.05$). A detailed interpretation of this correlation is presented in the scatter plot (Fig. 11).

FIGURE 11: Relationship between opportunity to ask additional questions on social media and respondent residence in Poland in 2023



Source: own study

In the remaining cases, the statistical analysis did not provide sufficient grounds to reject the null hypothesis. No statistically significant correlations were found between the variables under consideration ($p > 0.05$). In Poland, the respondent's place of residence was not meaningfully associated with any of the perceived benefits of following companies on social media.

cant associations were found between place of residence and any of the perceived benefits of following companies on social media.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to identify the types of social media activities that Generation Z ex-

TABLE 8: Spearman's rank order correlation concerning relationship between benefits of following a company on social media and respondent residence in Great Britain 2023

Variables	N of valid ones	Spearman's rank R	t(N-2)	P
possibility to stay up to date with what is new & place of residence	318	0.0944	1.6835	0.0933
opportunity to ask additional questions & place of residence	318	0.1003	1.7892	0.0745
chance to win prizes in competitions & place of residence	318	0.0046	0.0821	0.9346
meeting new people gathered around the brand & place of residence	318	0.0827	1.4737	0.1416
possibility of resolving problems more quickly & place of residence	318	0.0657	1.1693	0.2432
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & place of residence	318	-0.0080	-0.1409	0.8880
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & place of residence	318	0.0084	0.1488	0.8818
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & place of residence	318	0.0696	1.2374	0.2169

Source: own study

In Great Britain, no statistically significant correlations were found between any of the variables ($p > 0.05$). Specifically, there was no significant association between respondents' place of residence and any of the perceived benefits of following companies on social media among Generation Z participants in 2023.

To summarise, the correlation coefficients (Tables 6 and 7) calculated from data collected among Generation Z representatives in Poland and Great Britain were close to zero and not statistically significant. Except for one correlation identified in the Polish sample, no signifi-

pects from companies. A review of the literature on the topic indicates that the number of relevant publications is insufficient to draw robust conclusions. Moreover, there is a lack of studies examining the influence of gender and place of residence on Generation Z representatives when searching for brand accounts on social media prior to using a service or purchasing a product, as well as on their assessment of the benefits of following companies on these platforms. The results of the study are summarised in Table 9.

TABLE 9: Summary of responses to survey questions

Research question	Response - Poland	Response – Great Britain
Q1. Do Generation Z representatives search for a company's social media account before using its services or purchasing a specific product?	<p>Yes, they do.</p> <p>Most representatives of Generation Z representatives, before using any service/ or purchasing a particular any product from a particular specific company, often or almost always are searching for a company account on social media.</p>	
Q2. Does the gender of a Generation Z representative influence their likelihood of searching for a company's social media account before purchasing a specific product or service? If so, in what way?	<p>Yes, it does.</p> <p>Female representatives of Generation Z in Poland were significantly more frequent in searching for company accounts on social media before purchasing a particular product or service than men.</p>	<p>No, it does not.</p> <p>No significant correlation was found between searching for a company account on social media before purchasing a particular product or service and respondent gender.</p>
Q3. Does a Generation Z representative's place of residence influence their likelihood of searching for a company's social media account before purchasing a specific product or service? If so, in what way?	<p>No, it does not.</p> <p>The analysis did not provide adequate evidence of significant correlations between searching for a company account on social media before purchasing a particular product or service and respondent residence in Poland or Great Britain.</p>	
Q4. Which benefits do Generation Z representatives consider most important when following a company on social media?	<p>1. possibility to stay up to date with what is new,</p> <p>2. possibility of resolving problems more quickly,</p> <p>3. possibility to receive a discount coupon.</p>	<p>1. opportunity to receive a discount coupon,</p> <p>2. possibility to stay up to date with what is new,</p> <p>3. possibility of resolving problems more quickly.</p>
Q5. Does the gender of a Generation Z representative influence their evaluation of the benefits of following a company on social media? If so, in what way?	<p>Yes, it does.</p> <p>There are differences between women and men. Women four benefits higher marks than men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – possibility to stay up to date with what is new, – opportunity to ask additional questions, – opportunity to receive a discount coupon, – possibility to influence a brand. 	<p>Yes, it does.</p> <p>There are significant differences between women and men. Women gave one benefit higher marks than men:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – opportunity to receive a discount coupon on social media.
Q6. Does a Generation Z representative's place of residence influence their evaluation of the benefits of following a company on social media? If so, in what way?	<p>Yes, it does.</p> <p>There was one significant correlation: residents of towns with more than 50 000 of inhabitants assess opportunity to ask additional questions as being very important.</p>	<p>No, it does not.</p>

Source: own study

The insights gained from this research should be utilised by content managers of companies whose target audience includes representatives of Generation Z. This knowledge can guide the creation of content and activities on corporate social media accounts that Generation Z perceives as valuable—encouraging them to interact with the brand and engage in relationship-building.

The results of this study help fill the gap in the literature identified by the authors. They clearly demonstrate that, in both Poland and Great Britain, most Generation Z respondents often or almost always search for a company's social media account before using a service or purchasing a product, in order to obtain additional information. This finding suggests that companies have access to a high-potential tool for strengthening customer relationships. Companies aiming to engage Generation Z in brand-customer relationships should offer the types of services and benefits that this generation values most—particularly staying up to date with what is new, faster problem resolution, and the opportunity to receive discount coupons. Additionally, companies operating in Poland should note that women search for company accounts on social media more frequently than men. Therefore, content aimed at this demographic should reflect their expectations—especially when promoting products or services targeted at women. Female representatives of Generation Z in Poland are more likely than their male counterparts to want to shape brand identity, receive discount coupons, ask additional questions, and stay informed about new developments. Moreover, individuals living

in Polish cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants expressed a stronger desire to ask additional questions, which companies can use as a lever to increase Generation Z's involvement in relationship-building. Companies operating in Great Britain that wish to engage Generation Z—particularly women—in building brand relationships should ensure that discount coupons are among the benefits offered.

The authors acknowledge several limitations of the study. The most significant stem from the nature of survey-based research, which tends to capture only a superficial understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, there is the possibility that respondents may have provided inaccurate or socially desirable answers. The relatively small sample size also limits the representativeness of the findings. Although small sample methodologies are often questioned—particularly due to their limited generalisability—they can still provide valuable insights if appropriate statistical methods are applied (Nachar, 2008).

Future research should partially build upon the tool developed by the authors and be conducted on a larger sample to improve population validity. To address the risk of superficial understanding, quantitative research should be complemented with qualitative approaches. Furthermore, replicating the study in other countries would help determine whether Generation Z respondents—regardless of nationality or geographic location—expect the same types of brand activity on social media. Such knowledge would enable companies to tailor their strategies to better align with the expectations of this generation and foster deeper brand engagement.

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