

## Generation Z and digital marketing - the new rules of engagement

### Generacija Z i digitalni marketing - nova pravila angažovanja

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#### Abstract

*Generation Z is a remarkable and influential cohort of consumers who grew up immersed in digital technology, social media, and instant access to content. Their distinctive values, expectations, and media habits create both obstacles and opportunities for marketers seeking to connect adequately. This review paper examines the main characteristics of Gen Z in the digital world; explores how these characteristics shape their shopping habits, media interactions, and what they actually want from brands. Generation Z cherishes personalized experiences, but also truly values authenticity, transparency, and social and environmental responsibility. As digital natives, they move effortlessly between the physical and virtual worlds, and platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are key to discovering products and services and making decisions. The study is based on a qualitative, narrative literature review that integrates relevant professional sources and theoretical approaches from the field of digital marketing and consumer behavior. The results show that successfully engaging Gen Z requires a combination of personalization, authenticity and social responsiveness, while the digital ecosystem shapes and constrains their behavior. Through relevant case studies and marketing examples, this paper highlights the importance of brands adopting innovative, inclusive, and value-driven strategies to create meaningful connections with Gen Z consumers.*

**Keywords:** Generation Z, digital marketing, consumer behavior, social media

#### Sažetak

*Generacija Z je izuzetna i uticajna kohorta potrošača koji su odrasli uronjeni u digitalnu tehnologiju, društvene medije i trenutni pristup sadržaju. Njihove prepoznatljive vrednosti, očekivanja i medijske navike stvaraju i prepreke i mogućnosti za marketinške stručnjake koji žele da se adekvatno povežu. Ovaj pregledni rad detaljnije razmatra ključne karakteristike generacije Z u digitalnom svetu i ispituje kako ove karakteristike oblikuju njihove navike u kupovini, medijske interakcije i šta zapravo žele od brendova. Generacija Z neguje personalizovana iskustva, ali takođe istinski ceni autentičnost, transparentnost i društvenu i ekološku odgovornost. Kao digitalni domoroci, oni se bez napora kreću između fizičkog i virtuelnog sveta, a platforme poput TikTok-a, Instagram-a i YouTube-a su ključne za otkrivanje proizvoda i usluga i donošenje odluka. Rad je zasnovan na kvalitativnom, narativnom pregledu literature koja integriše relevantne stručne izvore i teorijske pristupe iz oblasti digitalnog marketinga i ponašanja potrošača. Rezultati pokazuju da uspešno angažovanje generacije Z zahteva kombinaciju personalizacije, autentičnosti i društvene odgovornosti, dok digitalni ekosistem oblikuje i ograničava njihovo ponašanje. Ovaj rad ističe, kroz relevantne studije slučaja i marketinške primere, koliko je ključno da brendovi usvoje inovativne, inkluzivne i vrednosno vođene strategije kako bi stvorili smislene veze sa potrošačima generacije Z.*

**Ključne reči:** generacija Z, digitalni marketing, ponašanje potrošača, društvene mreže

## 1. Introduction

The use of digital technologies to accomplish organizational marketing goals is known as digital marketing. The unique characteristics of Generation Z

(Gen Z, or Zoomers) and the ever-changing media landscape have made it more challenging to engage them with traditional marketing strategies. This target group prioritizes trust and quality, places a high value on environmental sustainability, and expresses and defends

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its rights (Beyaz, 2020). Furthermore, Gen Z customers tend to prefer and support companies that demonstrate a commitment to global social and environmental problems (Nguyen et al., 2022). Due to unstable economies, many crises, and ever-evolving marketplaces, Generation Z's purchasing patterns are uncertain. "Zoomers" seek to engage with businesses that share their beliefs and support them in expressing their authenticity, even in the face of these less-than-ideal market conditions (Tcholakova, 2025). They have had greater access to information than any previous generation at the same age because of cellphones and broadband internet at home or at school. Because they were raised in a rapidly changing world, Generation Z is also considered more flexible and open-minded. Nevertheless, concerns remain that they would fail to assume responsibility when engaging with older generations and experience social challenges in their working lives (Bencsik et al., 2016).

For Gen Z, genuine communication and meaningful interaction are more important than attractive advertising. This generation is more likely to trust and be loyal to brands that are open and honest about their values and stories, and that have real discussions with their audience. To connect with Gen Z customers, digital marketing strategies must be genuine (Proulx, 2021). Therefore, marketers need to move beyond traditional strategies and adapt to digital-first habits and attitudes of Generation Z to engage this demographic effectively. Developing marketing strategies that successfully engage Zoomers requires an understanding of their attitudes, behaviors, and expectations. Organizations may successfully engage Gen Z and build meaningful, long-lasting relationships with this important cohort by implementing innovative tactics and utilizing online channels (Yahya & Mammadzada, 2024). To interact with Generation Z effectively, one must have a thorough awareness of their habits and changing cultural environment. Young customers are influential, purposeful, and well-informed. They look for companies that share their values and provide fulfilling experiences. By remaining flexible and sensitive to their requirements, brands can establish a connection with this dynamic and discerning generation (McDaid, 2025).

## 2. Research gap, theoretical framing and study objectives

In particular, the literature reveals a lack of a critical perspective that considers how the digital ecosystem both shapes and limits this generation's behavior. Therefore, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between technology, consumer culture, and modern marketing practices. From a theoretical perspective, this work can be viewed through the lens of Consumer Culture Theory, which emphasizes that consumption is not only an economic but also a symbolic and social process. Additionally, elements of Uses and Gratifications Theory help to understand why Generation Z actively chooses certain digital platforms, while technology acceptance models (TAM/UTAUT) explain their high adaptability to new digital tools. Such a theoretical framework enables a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Generation Z and digital marketing. These theories can be seen as

complementary analytical frameworks that together enable a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Gen Z and digital marketing. Consumer culture theory (CCT) explains the symbolic and identity dimension of consumption, emphasizing that consumers express their values and social identity through brands. At the same time, the Uses and Gratifications Theory provides insight into individual motives that guide the choice of digital platforms, including the need for information, entertainment, and social interaction. Technology acceptance models (TAM and UTAUT) complement these approaches by focusing on perceived usefulness and ease of use of digital tools. These theoretical frameworks enable the integration of macro (cultural), meso (media), and micro (individual) levels of analysis, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the Generation Z complex behavior in the digital environment.

This study aims to analyze the characteristics of Generation Z in the digital environment and present the modern digital marketing strategies that organizations use to engage this generation of consumers more successfully. This manuscript applies a qualitative, narrative approach to the literature review to systematically synthesize existing academic and professional knowledge on Generation Z and digital marketing. The goal of this methodological approach is to identify, compare, and integrate key theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and conceptual insights on Generation Z's behavior in digital environments, as well as the marketing strategies aimed at engaging them. The literature was selected based on relevance to the research topic, theoretical contribution, and topicality, with a particular focus on papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, academic books, and relevant industry reports. The selection process included sources addressing Generation Z characteristics, digital consumer behavior, engagement on social networks, and modern digital marketing strategies. The literature review was conducted by searching relevant academic databases, including Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, as well as selected professional sources and reports from reputable consulting firms. Keywords and their combinations were used in the search process: "Generation Z", "Gen Z", "digital marketing", "consumer behavior", "social media", "influencer marketing", and "personalization". Sources published from 2013 to 2025 were included in the analysis, with particular emphasis placed on recent works that show contemporary trends in the digital environment. Sources that were not thematically relevant, did not contain enough theoretical or empirical insights, or presented duplicate findings of already included studies were excluded from the analysis. The analysis is interpretive in character and is based on an integrative approach to synthesis, which permits the combination of findings from different theoretical traditions, including Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), Uses and Gratifications Theory, and technology acceptance models (TAM/UTAUT). Instead of empirically testing hypotheses, the paperwork aims to develop a conceptual understanding of the interrelationships between generational characteristics, the digital environment, and

marketing strategies. The study adopts a critical interpretive perspective that permits the identification of contradictions and emerging challenges in digital marketing, particularly those related to personalization, data privacy, algorithmic influence, and the dynamics of the attention economy. This methodological framework enables the development of a conceptual model that can serve as a basis for future empirical research.

### 3. Characteristics of Generation Z in the digital environment

Generation Z is the term used to describe children and young people born after 1995, who are typically referred to as the “virtual generation”, “Zoomers”, or “Gen Z”. This group includes students at all educational levels who are progressively making their way into the workforce (Barnová & Krásna, 2018). In general, members of Generation Z, who range in age from 14 to 31, make up between 15%- 25% of the world's population, according to numerous studies (Desjardins, 2019). This generation is highly accustomed to new technologies, having grown up with them. Many young individuals, particularly in economically developed nations, acquire extensive technological experience before entering university (Lai & Hong, 2015). This generation has seen a great deal of uncertainty, wars, and change, as well as economic hardships, the COVID-19 epidemic, and social justice movements. Physical inactivity, increasing internet usage, and declining birth and fertility rates are major concerns for this demographic (Hernandez-de-Menendez et al., 2020). Due to the abundance of information available to them, Gen Z makes more analytical and practical decisions than members of earlier generations. Total of 65% of Gen Z said they especially value being in control and knowing what is happening around them. This self-learning generation is also more at ease learning online than in conventional educational settings (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Experts point out that Generation Z is capable of functioning in both the real and virtual worlds. They perceive two worlds as complementary to each other; thus, they can move between them with ease (Żarczyńska-Dobiesz & Chomętowska, 2014).

A new trend known as “social search” has emerged in recent years as Gen Z has shifted its focus from search engines like Google to TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat (Koetsier, 2024). Gen Z consumers prefer the new social media platform TikTok for their product research and use it as a search engine. They also use social media as their primary platform for product research, but they are less likely to use Facebook, which has been one of the most popular social media platforms for years (Liu et al., 2023). The buying decision-making process of Gen Z consumers is heavily influenced by influencers, user-generated content, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on social media platforms. Additionally, creating and fostering perceived trust among today's Gen Z consumers depends heavily on authenticity (Vojvodić, 2019). Nonetheless, the Mofet Institute stated that this generation's digital literacy and technological aptitude are not uniform. Many individuals have excellent access to the Internet, but still lack the skills necessary to evaluate online information

critically. This generation continues the Generation Y trend of being less intellectually reliant on teachers and is excellent at multitasking. In contrast, Generation X is distinguished by a stronger need for focus and difficulty in performing multiple tasks simultaneously. They also rely on professors and books as primary sources of knowledge (McCrindle, 2018).

Based on the literature, it can be concluded that Generation Z represents a specific group of consumers whose habits, values, and communication models are largely shaped by the digital environment. Authors such as Francis and Hoefel (2018) highlight the analytical and informed nature of this generation, while Hernandez-de-Menendez et al. (2020) point to the negative consequences of excessive use of technology and social networks. Similarly, Koetsier (2024) emphasizes the shift in information-seeking behavior through the “social search” phenomenon, while Liu et al. (2023) underline the growing importance of social networks in the process of making consumer decisions. The aforementioned views show that Generation Z is not only technologically advanced but also that its behavior requires new approaches to understanding consumer culture and digital communication. Although Generation Z is often seen as a homogeneous group of digital natives, it is important to emphasize that significant differences exist within the cohort regarding digital literacy, socio-economic status, and cultural context.

These differences affect how individuals within the same generation use digital platforms, how they interpret marketing messages, and the extent to which they trust them. For example, while some individuals show strong critical evaluation skills, others remain more susceptible to the influence of algorithmic recommendations and influencer marketing. Also, Generation Z is characterized by marked behavior paradoxes.

These behavioral contradictions should not be seen only as individual consumer inconsistencies but as a reflection of the deeper structural conditions of the digital environment. They indicate that the modern digital ecosystem simultaneously promotes content personalization, intensive user data tracking, and algorithm-driven information distribution. In this way, the behavior of Generation Z is shaped not only by individual preferences but also by the way digital platforms are designed and function. Although they emphasize the importance of authenticity and transparency, their consumer behavior is largely shaped by trends and social proof. Similarly, while expressing concerns about data privacy, they are also willing to share it in exchange for personalized experiences. These contradictory patterns indicate that this is not a stable set of preferences but rather a dynamic, contextually determined behavior. On a theoretical level, it can be concluded that Generation Z is redefining the traditional model of consumer decision-making because the purchase process is no longer linear, but network-structured and driven by interactions on digital platforms, social networks, and user-generated content.

#### 4. Digital marketing strategies targeted at Generation Z

Digital marketing is a term that refers to a collection of methods and approaches used online to influence consumers to buy different goods and services (Avery et al., 2014). Online platforms like search engines like Google, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and others, as well as websites, emails, and mobile apps, are all places where digital marketing occurs. Currently, digital marketing provides organizations with unmatched reach, targeting, flexibility, and the ability to measure marketing spending compared with more conventional marketing channels like radio or television (Krsmanović, 2026; Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2016). To better understand this generation and its digitization, it is important to note that Generation Z was born in the 1990s and grew up in the 2000s, during the most significant shifts of the century, and that they live in a world with the internet, smartphones, laptops, open networks, and digital media should be noted (Singh & Dangmei, 2016). Generation Z's natural ability to adapt to and succeed in today's digital environment has made online shopping an essential component of their purchasing experiences. Almost 20% of global expenditure is predicted to come from this generational cohort in 2030, and it is hard to imagine a world in which internet shopping does not play a significant role. Due to their continual access to the internet, proficiency with social media, and availability of mobile devices, Generation Z has developed distinct online buying habits over time (Watty, 2025). According to projections, Gen Z will be the largest and wealthiest generation in history. When government transfers, inflation, and taxes are taken into consideration, the average household income of a 25-year-old Gen Z consumer in the US is \$40,000, which is 50% more than the average income of a baby boomer at the same age. By 2029, Gen Z spending is expected to surpass that of Baby Boomers worldwide, as it is growing twice as fast as that of preceding generations at the same age. This generation will provide an extra \$8.9 trillion to the world economy by 2035 (Coggin et al., 2025).

The following characteristics define Gen Z customers: interest in new technologies and innovations, a desire for seamless usability and user-friendliness in digital innovations, a preference for safety and self-security in digital interactions, and a need to escape reality, when necessary, to pursue happy, fulfilling, and immersive experiences. Authenticity and transparency are qualities that Gen Z consumers look for and want in brands. Unlike earlier generations, they prioritize life's worthwhile experiences over accumulating material belongings. Their innate ability to form genuine and significant connections translates to digital communication due to their profound qualities (Wood, 2013). Personalizing the buying experience is essential for attracting and retaining Generation Z customers, and giving them more opportunities to purchase online can help them develop their tastes and make better decisions (Elrayah & Jamil, 2023). Personalized brand experiences from brands that appeal to Gen Z customers are valued and preferred; this generation is also concerned about privacy issues, such as

how and where brands use personal information. According to research, Gen Z consumers value personalization more than any possible privacy concerns. As a result, Gen Z's desire for brand transparency regarding data policies and procedures is essential for establishing genuine and meaningful connections with Gen Z customers (McKee et al., 2024). One of the key systemic challenges in digital marketing aimed at Generation Z relates to the inherent trade-off between personalization and privacy protection. On the one hand, personalization is a central element of modern marketing strategies, as it enables more relevant, contextually adapted, and user-oriented content, which increases engagement and the likelihood of conversion. In contrary, the intensive collection and processing of data necessary for personalization raises issues of supervision, transparency, and ethical use of information, which can undermine consumer trust. This conflict is particularly noticeable among Generation Z, which at the same time shows a high willingness to share personal data in exchange for an optimized user experience, but also a strong awareness of digital privacy. As a result, brands find themselves in a paradoxical situation in which the success of personalization depends on the perception of ethical and transparent data usage.

Remarkably, 41% of Generation Z consumers make impulsive purchases, followed by 34% of Millennials and 32% of Generation X customers (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Compared to earlier generations, Gen Z is more inclined to shop and retrieve information using voice-activated devices. To keep up with this growing trend, brands should consider developing voice-commerce strategies and optimizing their content for voice search. This entails incorporating voice technology into the shopping experience and ensuring that goods and services are simple to find using voice queries (Mari, 2019). When it comes to visual learning, Generation Z has demonstrated improved cognitive capacities. As a result of their brains being more accustomed to complex visual imagery, the area responsible for visual processing becomes more developed, improving the effectiveness of visual learning techniques (Rothman, 2016). This information should be considered when preparing advertising content aimed at this target market. To make a lasting impression on young consumers, companies may use their visual identity to remain relevant, engaging, and in line with young people's ideals. Charli XCX, for instance, created an internet phenomenon with her 2024 Brat album. The Kamala Harris election campaign prominently embraced the so-called "brat summer," which was associated with Brat, particularly its vivid green album cover, and it evolved into a celebration of upbeat attitudes and carefree living. Remarkably, Charli XCX selected the recognizable visual signature and developed the creative brief herself (McDaid, 2025).

Another characteristic of Generation Z is their willingness to participate in and influence the purchasing process. They prefer companies that share their beliefs and communicate with them in both directions on social media (Das et al., 2023). Interactive communication through social networks can strengthen consumer loyalty by

enabling brands to develop more direct and continuous relationships with their audiences (Trajković et al., 2023). To develop a consistent brand experience, businesses need to build a presence across multiple internet channels and integrate their marketing initiatives seamlessly (Krsmanović, 2026). Furthermore, building confidence and loyalty among Gen Z customers requires openness and genuineness. Long-term relationships are more likely to be formed with brands that communicate honestly and openly while also reflecting the values and interests of this group (Ameen & Anand, 2020). Of course, companies that understand this target group well will respond more adequately to their needs and desires. Companies such as VEJA have very open and honest business methods. They frequently post content on social media to inform followers about the materials they use and the individuals who manufacture their shoes. This marketing strategy is a great example of how to reach Gen Z consumers. Additionally, companies like Fenty Beauty maintain inclusivity by offering a broad selection of products suitable for individuals with different skin tones and facial features. To demonstrate that their products are accessible to all, the brand also makes a point of including genuine people of all genders and ethnicities in their social media posts. According to the aforementioned Snapchat study, 63% of Gen Z users cite promoting inclusive and healthy work environments as a major factor in their purchasing decisions (Zote, 2024).

Particularly among Gen Z and Gen Alpha (born 2012-2024), TikTok is a dominant trend. Products that consumers discover and purchase through TikTok are showcased in the “TikTok Made Me Buy It” trend; these products often feature viral reviews, unboxings, and demos. This trend drives massive sales of technology, home necessities, and cosmetics. BookTok, also known as BookTube on YouTube, is a very well-liked TikTok craze. The publishing industry has been somewhat disrupted by book-focused content creators, who have significantly influenced reading habits. This also shows a return to reading conventional books and a move away from screen time (McDaid, 2025). For this generation, businesses should be aware of three implications: consumption as an expression of personal identity, consumption as an ethical issue, and consumption as access rather than possession. This generational shift, when combined with technological advancements, is altering the consumer landscape, influencing every segment of the demographic pyramid, extending beyond Gen Z to all socioeconomic groups (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Digital marketing strategies aimed at Generation Z can be viewed through several key categories: content-based strategies, influencer marketing, algorithm-driven marketing, and experience-oriented strategies. Each of these categories has a specific mechanism of action on consumer behavior, with the common denominator being a high level of interactivity and personalization. It is especially important to understand the psychological mechanisms behind these strategies. For example, short-form video content on platforms such as TikTok works through the mechanisms of quick gratification and

sustained attentional stimulation, which increases the likelihood of impulse buying. Influencer marketing relies on the development of one-way relationships between users and influencers, thereby reducing the critical distance to advertising messages. Also, user-generated content (UGC) acts as a powerful form of social proof, increasing brand trust. In the modern digital environment, the concept of platform capitalism- where algorithms of social networks not only distribute content but also actively shape consumer preferences- is gaining more and more importance. In this sense, digital marketing is no longer just a communication tool, but part of a wider ecosystem of managing user attention and behavior. Such patterns of behavior indicate that the mentioned tensions occur at the structural level of the digital ecosystem, the logic of platforms, algorithmic personalization, and business models based on the economy of attention simultaneously shape and limit consumer behavior. In simpler term, the digital environment not only enables certain forms of consumption and interaction but actively influences their direction, intensity, and manner of manifestation in everyday practice.

## 5. Critical aspects and challenges of digital marketing directed at generation Z

The conceptual model was developed based on the synthesized literature and illustrates the interrelationship between Generation Z characteristics, digital marketing strategies, contextual moderating factors, and behavioral outcomes in the digital environment, as shown in Figure 1.

The proposed conceptual model integrates key characteristics of Generation Z, dominant digital marketing strategies, and relevant mediating and moderating factors, alongside the expected behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. The model shows how Gen Z characteristics influence the effectiveness of different marketing approaches, while contextual factors such as cultural environment, digital literacy, and perceived privacy risk moderate these relationships. The outcomes include engagement, trust, loyalty, and impulse buying behavior, which contribute to the adaptation and improvement of marketing strategies.

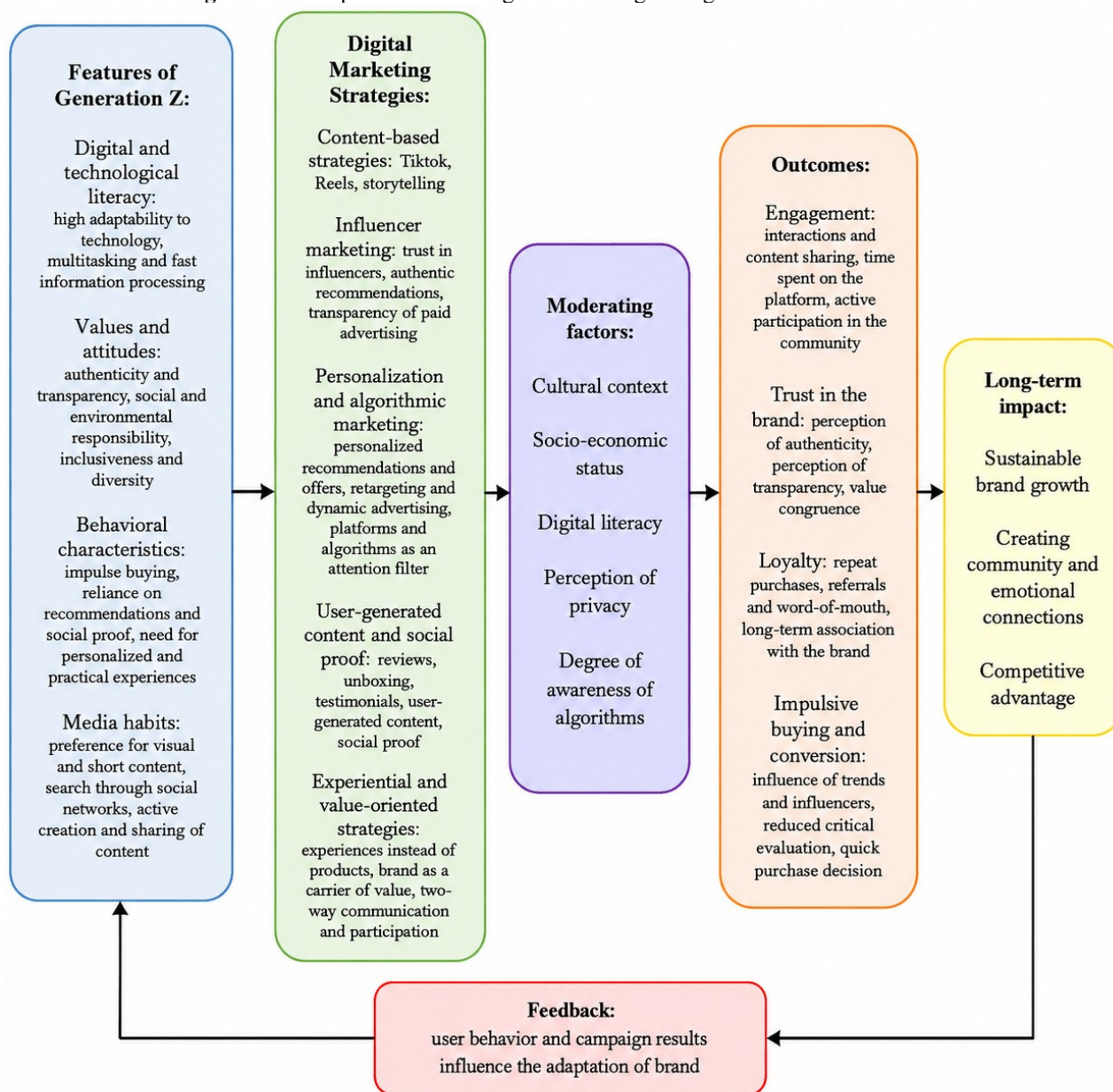
Although digital marketing allows brands to communicate more directly and personally with Generation Z customers, it is necessary to highlight certain negative aspects of these strategies. Excessive personalization of content and collection of user data increasingly raise issues of privacy and ethical use of personal information. In addition, constant exposure to digital content can lead to digital fatigue and information overload, which reduces consumer attention and trust. Influencer marketing is also a significant challenge because insufficiently transparent paid advertising can create a sense of manipulation and undermine the authenticity that Generation Z values. At the same time, excessive use of social networks can encourage addiction to digital platforms and influence the formation of consumer habits based on trends and impulsive decisions. For this reason, companies should

strike a balance between digital marketing effectiveness and ethical responsibility to consumers.

Within the modern digital environment, the concept of the attention economy becomes crucial for understanding digital marketing strategies aimed at Generation Z. In terms of information overload, user attention becomes a limited, highly competitive resource that platforms and brands strive to attract and retain. Algorithmic systems on social networks further intensify this dynamic. They select and prioritize content based on the predicted engagement probability, thereby shaping patterns of information

consumption. In this context, digital marketing cannot be viewed solely as a communication practice, but rather as part of a wider attention management system, in which users' cognitive capacity is monetized through engagement metrics. For Generation Z, which is continuously exposed to short, visually intensive, and emotionally stimulating content, this model leads to fragmentation of attention while increasing sensitivity to fast, visually attractive, and interactive marketing messages.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of digital marketing strategies aimed at Generation Z



Source: Authors' conceptualization based on the reviewed literature

The presented marketing strategies indicate that traditional forms of promotion are no longer sufficient to successfully engage Generation Z. Authors such as Wood (2013) and Elrayah & Jamil (2023) emphasize the importance of personalization and interactivity, while McKee et al. (2024) point to a paradox between the desire for a personalized experience and data privacy concerns. Also, Das et al. (2023) and Ameen & Anand (2020) emphasize the importance of two-way communication, transparency, and the alignment of brand values with customers' values. Based on the analyzed literature, it can be concluded that successful marketing strategies aimed at Generation Z must combine technological innovation, authenticity, ethics, and social responsibility.

One of the key challenges of digital marketing aimed at Generation Z relates to the ethical implications of collecting and using personal data. The line between personalization and invasion of privacy is becoming increasingly blurred, raising questions about the long-term sustainability of such marketing practices. Within the concept of "surveillance capitalism", user data becomes a basic resource for creating highly personalized, but potentially manipulative marketing strategies. A special challenge is the paradox between the desire for authenticity and the real impact of algorithmically optimized content. Although users insist on honesty and transparency, their behavior is often driven by content that is selected and amplified by platforms. This tension points to the complexity of the modern digital environment and the limitations of traditional marketing models.

## 5. Conclusion

Generation Z is significantly transforming the modern landscape of consumer behavior, challenging traditional marketing approaches and necessitating the redefinition of communication strategies and brand engagement. As authentic digital natives, members of this generation emphasize the importance of authenticity, transparency, and strong social responsibility of the brands they interact with. They move fluidly between physical and digital environments, actively participate in creating brand narratives, and expect experiences that reflect their values, identity, and lifestyle. The transformative impact of platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube has led to a significant shift in content consumption patterns, as well as the way products and services are discovered and purchasing decisions are made. To successfully reach and retain Generation Z, brands should develop digital marketing strategies that respect the identity, values, and cultural specificities of this generation. This means using influencer marketing, encouraging user-generated content (UGC), and monitoring social media-driven search trends, while consistently adhering to ethical principles and socially responsible business.

Building meaningful, long-term relationships with Generation Z cannot be reduced to simple presence in the digital space. Instead, they require a clearly defined purpose, relevance, and consistency in the values that brands communicate. Organizations that strive to align their actions with this generation value system will not

only benefit from their growing economic potential but also achieve long-term loyalty in a market environment that increasingly favors authenticity and social responsibility. Companies that aim to connect with Generation Z should pay special attention to transparency and honesty in communication, particularly in social and environmental responsibilities, which are key factors in shaping brand perception. Examples such as Fenty Beauty show that inclusivity and diversity in marketing strategies significantly enhance consumer engagement and trust. Also, the effective use of social networks such as TikTok and Instagram, along with the creation of personalized and attractive content, is an important prerequisite for success.

The analysis of the literature shows that social networks, influencer marketing, and user-generated content play a crucial role in shaping attitudes and influencing purchase decisions among Generation Z. Simultaneously, numerous challenges are identified, including data privacy issues, digital fatigue, and potential manipulation of consumers through algorithmically adapted content. Therefore, companies must develop marketing strategies that, in addition to commercial efficiency, also include ethical responsibility towards users. The scientific contribution of this work is reflected in the systematization of modern theoretical and empirical knowledge of Generation Z behavior in the digital environment, as well as in the identification of key marketing approaches that enable more effective engagement of this generation of consumers. Based on the analysis, this study contributes to a better understanding of the complex interaction between Generation Z characteristics and modern digital marketing strategies by identifying key behavioral patterns, paradoxes, and mechanisms of influence. Based on this, a conceptual model was developed that connects the characteristics of Generation Z (digital literacy, need for authenticity, visual orientation), digital strategies (influencer marketing, personalization, algorithmic content distribution), and outcomes (engagement, trust, loyalty, and impulse buying). Future research should examine differences in Gen Z behavior across cultural and economic contexts, and analyze the long-term effects of personalized digital marketing on building consumer trust and loyalty. It is especially important to explore further how users' awareness of algorithmic mechanisms affects their brand perception and trust in digital platforms.

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