

The Impact of Brand Activism on Consumer Loyalty among Generation Z: An Analytical Study of the Relationship between Social Values and Purchasing Decisions

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Abstract

The study aims to measure the impact of brand activism on consumer loyalty among Generation Z by analyzing the relationship between brands' adoption of social and political issues and purchasing decisions. It adopted a descriptive analytical approach using an electronic questionnaire consisting of 25 statements (5 themes) distributed to a sample of 384 individuals from Generation Z in the Algerian context.

The statistical results showed a high level of agreement on the preference for brands committed to environmental and social issues, with a clear distinction between genuine activism and marketing exploitation. All four hypotheses were accepted: the impact of brand activity on loyalty and word-of-mouth advertising, Generation Z's ability to distinguish between authenticity and exploitation, a strong relationship between the sincerity of the activity and trust, and the impact of provocative political stances on purchase intent.

The study recommends that brands ensure consistency between their advertising discourse and internal practices, and focus on ongoing commitment to avoid losing the trust of this conscious generation. The results contribute to understanding modern market dynamics and guiding marketing strategies towards a sustainable value model.

Keywords: *Brand activity, consumer loyalty, Generation Z, social values, purchasing decisions, marketing exploitation, word-of-mouth advertising, purchase intention.*

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Introduction

Brand activism is one of the most prominent strategic shifts in contemporary marketing practices, as brands have moved beyond their traditional roles based on the material satisfaction of needs to adopt social, political, and ethical positions that express the values and orientations of society. Modern consumers, especially those of Generation Z, have become more aware of and interested in issues related to social justice, environmental protection, equality, and human rights, prompting organizations to reformulate their communication strategies to align with this new shift in values. In this context, consumer loyalty is no longer based solely on product quality or competitive pricing, but is now linked to the extent to which a brand aligns with the consumer's system of principles and beliefs.

Generation Z, characterized by high cultural awareness and the ability to critically engage with digital content, stands out as the group most sensitive to social values and most willing to reward brands that take clear positions on public issues. With this generation's growing presence in the labor and consumer markets, the relationship between brand activism and consumer loyalty has taken on strategic importance in understanding their purchasing behaviors. However, this interaction is not without complexity, as brand activism can strengthen loyalty when it is perceived as sincere and having a real social impact, but it can also lead to a loss of trust if it is seen as merely a marketing tool aimed at improving image without genuine commitment.

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First: The methodological frame work of the research

1. Research problem: The problem of our research lies in the radical shift in the criteria of differentiation and choice among Generation Z consumers, where quality and price are no longer the only determining factors. From this perspective, the research faces the following question: **How does the adoption of social and political causes by brands affect the behavior of Generation Z, and does this promote loyalty or raise suspicions of “woke-washing”?**

2. Research questions:

- What are the most important issues (environmental, political, social) that are a priority for Generation Z?
- How does Generation Z differentiate between genuine brand activism and marketing exploitation?
- What is the impact of a brand taking a controversial political stance on this generation's purchase intent?

3. Research Hypotheses:

- The level of brand adoption of social and political issues (brand activism) has a direct and positive impact on Generation Z's consumer behavior, manifested in increased brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth advertising.
- Generation Z is able to distinguish between genuine brand activism and marketing exploitation.
- There is a statistically significant positive correlation between the perception of authenticity of brand activism and the level of trust and loyalty among Generation Z.
- A brand's adoption of a controversial political stance has a statistically significant effect on Generation Z's purchase intention.

3. Research objectives:

- Identify the psychological and social motivations that make Generation Z prefer “purpose-driven” brands.
- Measure the relationship between value congruence and brand loyalty.
- Provide recommendations to companies on how to communicate effectively with this generation.

Second: Theoretical Framework**Section One: Generation Z Psychology and the Shift in Consumption**

Generation Z, known as digital natives, has unique demographic and psychological characteristics that have led to a fundamental shift in consumption behaviors and trends. These individuals grew up in an environment characterized by constant communication through digital media, where they developed a deep awareness of social and environmental issues. This has contributed to the adoption of a conscious and responsible consumption pattern, manifested in what is known as conscious consumerism, which reflects the generation's desire to support companies and initiatives that align with their social and environmental values, and to avoid those that operate in a manner contrary to their principles. (Meziane, 2025, p. 4)

In addition, the consumer's relationship with the brand has undergone a significant evolution from a purely utilitarian relationship to one based on values and principles. Instead of simply satisfying material needs, consumers now link their purchasing decisions to the brand's stance on social and environmental issues. This requires companies to adopt strategies that align with these values to enhance Generation Z's loyalty. This shift reflects the growing importance of value-based philosophy

in shaping consumer behavior, where commitment to social and environmental principles is one of the decisive factors in building trust and loyalty. (Belmaamar, p. 6)

In light of these shifts, brand activism is now seen as an effective strategic tool for raising awareness and strengthening the connection between consumers and brands. Brand activism spans social, political, and environmental issues, with the aim of highlighting a company's commitment to humanitarian and social causes, thereby enhancing its standing in the eyes of Generation Z. However, there are risks associated with “woke-washing,” which can cause companies to lose credibility and lead to negative reactions from consumers, especially if their practices are consistent with general claims that are not supported by real actions. (Rahmouni, 2025, p. 307)

Requirement 1: Demographic and psychological characteristics of Generation Z (digital natives)

Generation Z, known as digital natives, has demographic and psychological characteristics that greatly influence their consumption patterns and brand loyalty. This generation is the first to have grown up with information and communication technology, and have been immersed in a constantly connected digital world since childhood, giving them a great deal of knowledge about social media and digital platforms. Members of this generation are deeply aware of social and environmental justice issues, making them more sensitive to situations that reflect human and ethical values. (Boudouda & Belour, 2024, p. 148)

Psychologically, Generation Z values authenticity and transparency, and tends to favor brands that reflect its principles and values. They place social and environmental responsibility at the top of their priorities when making purchasing decisions, seeking to find a balance between quality and ethical principles. They also prefer to interact with brands that adopt transparent and tangible practices in supporting social causes, and tend to form a deep attachment to brands that express their identity and support the community in which they live. (BOUSSENA & SADOUNI, 2023, p. 400)

In addition, Gen Z shows strong tendencies toward conscious consumption, monitoring brand authenticity and ethics. and prefer companies that are active in social and environmental areas, considering this part of their identity as individuals committed to principles and values. They are highly sensitive to marketing campaigns that take political or social positions and tend to reject campaigns that seem fake or pretend to be virtuous for commercial gain. This requires brands to understand the psychological and demographic characteristics of this generation and leverage these traits to build sustainable relationships that foster loyalty and support purchasing decisions. (Meziane, 2025, p. 6)

Second requirement: The concept of conscious consumerism

Conscious consumerism is defined as a pattern of consumer behavior that focuses on assessing the environmental and social impact of individuals during the purchasing process, with the aim of achieving a balance between personal life requirements and social responsibility. This concept is based on consumer awareness of sustainability issues, social justice, and respect for human rights, so that purchasing decisions are based on ethical and environmental principles, rather than simply meeting basic needs or seeking promotional offers. Conscious consumerism is an expression of consumer empowerment to exercise a form of control over commercial patterns and pressure companies to adopt more responsible practices, reflecting the development of social awareness and the growing interest of new generations in brand responsibility in their dealings with society and the environment. (Yalishani & Farhi, 2016, p. 77) This concept is also evident in the purchase of products based on ethical and environmental standards, such as organic products, recycled products, and certifications that prove commitment to sustainability standards. The growing interest in conscious consumption reflects a shift in the values of Generation Z, which values issues of justice and inclusivity and considers purchasing decisions a means of demanding social and environmental change. Therefore, the concept of conscious consumption is a fundamental pillar of brand-consumer interaction strategies, as it empowers consumers to choose companies that embrace social values and encourages companies to adopt more

responsible and transparent practices in order to build a sustainable and long-term relationship with Generation Z. (Mihoubi & Seddiki, 2020, pp. 160-161).

Third requirement: The relationship between consumers and brands has evolved from utilitarian to value-based

The relationship between consumers and brands has undergone a radical transformation from a simplistic utilitarian model to one based on values and principles that reflect their identity and beliefs. Initially, commercial relationships focused on meeting material needs and achieving direct benefits, with consumers purchasing products based on their obvious benefits and focusing on functionality and quality. Over time, a gap began to emerge between the concept of material benefit and the intrinsic value of the product or brand, leading to a more complex relationship that is linked to social values and ethics. (Youssefi & Hamidi, 2017, pp. 362-363)

This shift reflects the desire of consumers, especially Generation Z, to engage in social, environmental, and political issues, where the choice of a product or brand becomes an expression of a moral and value-based stance, and not just the result of utilitarian considerations. Humanitarian and social trends have coincided with the evolution of consumer behavior, shifting the focus from functional commitment and cost to the recognition of values such as fairness, sustainability, and social responsibility. The goal has become to build a relationship based on mutual commitment, in which the consumer and the brand engage in a dialogue of trust and respect, fostering long-term loyalty. (Mizraq & Ba'iban, 2019, pp. 128-129)

Section II: Branding as a Marketing Strategy

Branding as a marketing strategy is one of the effective tools used by companies to enhance their presence and influence in the market, especially in light of the transformation that the modern consumer environment has undergone. This activity involves organizing campaigns and messages of a social, political, or environmental nature with the aim of engaging with issues of ethical and moral dimensions, reflecting the brand's commitment to social values and humanitarian principles. The focus here is on building a deep relationship with customers, especially Generation Z, who look to brands that take clear positions and demonstrate their integrity and concern for the public interest. (Ferroudj, 2025, p. 93)

Requirement 1: Definition of brand activism and its types (social, political, environmental)

Brand activism is a modern concept that is at the heart of the marketing strategies of companies and organizations. It is characterized by its diverse types, which take multiple forms depending on the objectives and areas targeted. Among these types, social, political, and environmental brand activism stand out as key themes that contribute to shaping the brand's image and strengthening its position in the minds of consumers. Social brand activism manifests itself in supporting social causes, contributing to awareness initiatives, and working to promote the values of solidarity and equality, where companies focus on demonstrating their responsibility towards society and their contribution to improving its conditions. Political activity, on the other hand, is represented in supporting certain political issues or expressing specific positions related to governance or supporting human rights and justice, highlighting the brand's connection to national or international issues and reflecting its commitment to principles that are of interest to its audience. On the other hand, environmental activity focuses on protecting the environment and adopting environmentally friendly practices, through companies' commitment to reducing emissions, supporting sustainable energy projects, or encouraging recycling initiatives, with the aim of highlighting environmental awareness and responsibility towards the planet. These types of activities are effective tools for promoting consumer loyalty, especially among Generation Z, which reflects a growing awareness of the values of social, environmental, and political issues. and a deep desire to support companies that are committed to social and environmental responsibility. The diversity of brand activities and their strategic use enhances the brand's ability to

build a valuable relationship with consumers and establishes a pattern of loyalty based on the values and principles embraced by the new generation. (omran, 2023, pp. 64-65)

The second requirement: The concept of woke-washing and its risks to a company's reputation

The concept of woke-washing is a dangerous phenomenon that directly affects the reputation of companies, especially in light of growing social awareness and consumer interest in social and environmental responsibility values. This concept refers to companies exploiting social or environmental issues to improve their public image and increase their appeal to a specific audience, without actually committing to the principles of those issues or implementing real policies that reflect their claims. Woke-washing can manifest itself through advertising campaigns that exaggerate social responsibility, or advertisements that highlight a commitment to progressive values, while lacking practical and transparent measures that are consistent with the stated claims. (بورزيق، 2020، صفحة 158)

Pretending to be virtuous creates mistrust among consumers, especially Generation Z, which is highly critical and concerned with credibility and transparency. Therefore, overreliance on these tactics can erode a company's reputation and reduce consumer loyalty, especially if brand campaigns are found to be inconsistent with the company's actual practices. Negative reactions can also escalate quickly, especially on social media, where insincere or unsustainable practices are exposed, which can lead to the loss of a large customer base and damage to the company's public and private image. (Touiza, 2022, p. 204)

The most serious risk of woke-washing is that companies incur financial and reputational losses, in addition to becoming the target of criticism from more consumers and society, who have become more cautious and skeptical of false claims. Therefore, companies need to truly commit to their values and implement clear strategies to promote social responsibility, rather than exploiting sensitive issues for misleading promotion. Building a reputation based on credibility and transparency is one of the most important factors in maintaining loyalty, especially given the challenges posed by current social values and the deep awareness of Generation Z. (Hajj Shuaib, 2023, p. 1010)

Third requirement: Social identity theories and their impact on brand loyalty

Social identity theories are among the most important theoretical frameworks that explain the impact of brand loyalty on Generation Z consumers, as they focus on how individuals form their social identity through their association with groups and the values they embrace.

These theories are based on the idea that individuals seek to enhance their sense of belonging and social recognition, which drives them to identify with brands that reflect images consistent with their identity and values. In the context of Generation Z, which is characterized by deep social awareness and concern for ethical principles, brand loyalty becomes more complex, extending beyond the product itself to the values and messages that the brand conveys. (Mihoubi & Seddiki, 2020, p. 165)

The influence of social identity theories extends to shaping consumer behavior through interaction with social brand activities, as brands are seen as a means of enhancing self-identity and social recognition. For example, Generation Z chooses brands that promote environmental principles or engage in human rights actions, considering that supporting these brands reflects their values and enhances their status within their social groups. This motivates them to distinguish between brands that embody positive values and meanings, making them a tool for boosting pride in identity and achieving a sense of belonging. (Yalishani & Farhi, 2016, p. 81)

Purchasing decisions are influenced by the extent to which messages and brands are consistent with the social values embraced by Generation Z, reflecting a process of social self-interaction based on the concept of definitional and appreciative belonging. This shows that social identity is not limited to the individual level, but extends to include the group and the nation, which makes brand activity strategies based on these theories more effective in building loyalty and continuity. Hence, understanding the impact of social identity theories on brand bias is necessary in designing marketing campaigns that are in line with the aspirations of Generation Z and work to strengthen the bonds of trust and credibility

between the consumer and the brand.(BOUSSENA & SADOUNI, 2023, p. 401)

Section III: Case Study Analysis (Successes and Failures)

Success stories in the field of branding demonstrate the ability to effectively leverage social values to enhance consumer loyalty. as evidenced by Nike's campaign with Colin Kaepernick, which focused on social justice and human rights, giving the brand a strong and credible image and strengthening Generation Z's connection to it, as consumers saw the stance as reflecting a commitment to values they share. On the other hand, Patagonia's environmental campaigns highlight its dedication to environmental issues through clear and transparent initiatives, which has increased loyalty and cemented the brand's image as a platform for advocating social issues, reflecting the success of strategies that engage with Generation Z's values. On the other hand, there are cases of failure, such as the Pepsi ad featuring Kendall Jenner, which attempted to exploit the symbolism of change and social protests in a superficial way. It faced harsh criticism for its lack of credibility and disregard for the depth of the issue, leading to a decline in trust in the brand.

The Kendall Jenner campaign, which promoted the concept of unity and change through the use of protest symbolism, demonstrated a poor understanding of the social context, which weakened its impact and led to negative reactions. Lessons learned in this context Campaigns must be authentic and consistent with the brand's true values, and they must be based on deep insights and a thorough understanding of the social and cultural environment. Credibility is the cornerstone of building lasting relationships with Generation Z, who place great importance on feeling a genuine connection and value-based interaction with the brand. In addition, experience shows that superficial or shallow interaction can lead to a loss of trust and credibility for the brand, highlighting the importance of carefully crafting messages and backing them up with real actions that are consistent with the brand's slogans.(MECAS, 2025, p. 113)

Requirement 1: Successful campaigns (such as Nike's campaign with Colin Kaepernick or Patagonia's environmental campaigns)

Campaigns based on brand activism are effective tools for shaping brand image and promoting consumer loyalty, especially among Generation Z, which attaches great importance to social and environmental values. One of the most notable examples of successful campaigns is the one launched by Nike in collaboration with Colin Kaepernick, which succeeded in demonstrating its support for widely resonant social issues, thereby strengthening consumers' connection to the brand's principles. This campaign reflects the ability of companies to use social issues as a means of fostering emotional engagement and loyalty among a generation that values positions that align with their personal beliefs. (MECAS, 2025, p. 115)

Patagonia's environmental campaign is another example of a brand investing its values in environmental issues, focusing on raising awareness of the importance of conserving natural resources and encouraging sustainable practices. The messages were powerful and credible, prompting consumers to empathize with the brand's goals and increase their respect for its ethical commitments. These campaigns proved that sincerely and clearly embracing social and environmental values enhances brand credibility and leads to greater loyalty, especially among Generation Z, who can distinguish between fake and genuine campaigns and tend to support companies that adopt clear positions consistent with their causes. Studies reveal that companies that succeed in employing their brand activity strategically and thoughtfully leave a lasting positive impact that influences purchasing decisions, greatly strengthening the relationship between social values and consumer loyalty. (MECAS, 2025, p. 117)

Second requirement: Campaigns that faced negative reactions (such as the Pepsi and Kendall Jenner ad)

Some campaigns that rely on brand activity have faced widespread negative reactions, especially those that rely on attracting public attention through controversial elements or rely on misjudging the timing of messages. One of the most prominent examples of this is the Pepsi ad featuring Kendall Jenner, in which the company attempted to convey a message of unity and social solidarity through an image of Kendall offering a bottle of Pepsi to a police officer during protests. However, this ad was met with widespread condemnation and criticism. Many viewers considered it to be a trivialization of the brand, merely an attempt to exploit sensitive social issues to make a profit without any real understanding of the problem, which damaged the company's credibility and reputation among consumers. (MECAS, 2025, p. 119)

As for Kendall Jenner's campaign, it was misinterpreted and raised many questions about the company's intentions, as many considered the message to be superficial and lacking a deep understanding of social events, but rather a mere consumerist publicity stunt that did not take into account the complexity of the issues. These campaigns, which rely on feigned virtue, often backfire, creating widespread discontent and criticism, especially among Generation Z, who are highly sensitive to such behavior and tend to evaluate the credibility of companies based on their actual actions and not just on advertising campaigns. Therefore, inaccuracy in choosing the tone and style, coupled with a lack of understanding of the social and political context, can destroy the principles that brands seek to promote. This highlights the need to strike a careful balance between brand activity and genuine respect for societal values, in order to avoid negative consequences that could lead to a decline in consumer loyalty. (Ferroudj, 2025, p. 98)

Third requirement: Lessons learned on how to build credibility

Building credibility in the context of brand activity requires adopting strategies that are consistent with the principles of transparency and honesty, where brands must adhere to practices that reflect their actual positions and support for social issues, and not use them solely as a promotional tool without providing real value to society. Strong relationships with consumers are based on clear credibility, which is reflected in a sustained commitment to supporting the values promoted by the brand, thereby enhancing consumer confidence and strengthening their connection to the brand. It is clear that communicating messages clearly and compliance with ethical principles reduces the chance of being accused of virtue signaling or engaging in false advertising campaigns, which is crucial in a world where Generation Z's awareness of values is increasing. In addition, transparency in company operations, such as disclosure of ingredients, policies, and the impact of social initiatives on society and the environment, are factors that enhance credibility. On the other hand, it is important to listen to consumer feedback and interact with them respectfully, as the brand's response to their concerns and comments contributes to building a positive image and avoiding a loss of trust over time. In conclusion, it is important for brands to adopt an independent and consistent approach that demonstrates a genuine commitment to their social values and adheres to the highest standards of integrity.

which enhances its ability to build long-term relationships of trust and loyalty with Generation Z and makes it more resistant to the risks associated with false appearances and insincere behavior. (Mihoubi & Seddiki, 2020, p. 169)

Third: The applied framework (field study)

1-Research Methodology:

This research relies on a descriptive analytical approach to study the impact of brand activity on the loyalty of Generation Z consumers. The descriptive aspect focuses on identifying and classifying the phenomenon in reality by describing Generation Z's perception of social values and their behavior patterns toward brands that are concerned with public issues.

The analytical aspect works to clarify the causal and correlational relationships between variables by analyzing the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire. The research aims to measure the impact of genuine brand activism compared to marketing exploitation on trust, loyalty, and word-of-mouth advertising. The methodology helps to understand how Generation Z distinguishes between genuine commitment and virtue signaling (*woke-washing*) and the impact of this on purchasing decisions and sustainable consumer behavior. It also allows the results to be generalized to the Arab Generation Z community, which is active in consumption.

2-Research sample:

The research sample is a purposive sample of Generation Z individuals selected based on criteria consistent with the study's objectives, focusing on university students and young company employees as the groups most aware of and influential in modern consumer behavior. The sample size was 384 individuals, calculated according to standard statistical accuracy criteria, ensuring objective representation of the target community. The selection was justified by this group's ability to distinguish between authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation, and their role as a key driver of changing consumption standards in the contemporary market.

3-Study tools:

Questionnaire The questionnaire is the primary tool for data collection in this study. An electronic questionnaire was designed consisting of six main sections comprising 25 statements, in addition to a section for personal data (educational level, income, social media platforms). The themes cover: the level of brand adoption of issues (brand activism), purchasing behavior, loyalty, word-of-mouth advertising, and marketing exploitation, with five statements for each theme to ensure comprehensive coverage and global analysis. The questionnaire aims to measure the relationship between Generation Z's perception of authentic brand activity versus marketing exploitation and its impact on consumer loyalty and purchasing decisions, while verifying the reliability and validity of the tool by presenting it to experts in marketing and statistics. The study variables were divided into four axes, each comprising five statements, as follows:

Brand adoption level (brand activity), purchasing behavior, brand loyalty, word of mouth, and marketing exploitation (woke-washing).

4- Verifying the validity of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha test for reliability and consistency

Table No. (01) Reliability and consistency test using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Statement	Number of statements	Kronbach's alpha coefficient
Brand adoption level (brand activity)	5	0.887
Purchasing behavior	5	0.750
Brand loyalty	5	0.752
Word of mouth	5	0.764
Woke-washing	5	0.793
Overall survey	28	0.845

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

The results of the Cronbach's alpha test in Table 1 showed high reliability for the questionnaire, with the overall questionnaire scoring 0.845 and all axes scoring “good to excellent” (0.750-0.887), confirming the validity and consistency of measuring the impact of brand activity on consumer loyalty among Generation Z. This high performance is justified by the coverage of the five comprehensive axes (brand activity, purchasing behavior, loyalty, word of mouth, and marketing exploitation) with equivalent terms that reflect the different dimensions of the phenomenon, ensuring strong internal

validity and suitability for global analysis and regression in subsequent stages. The table revealed the superiority of brand adoption (0.887) as the most coherent axis, which reinforces the tool's ability to distinguish Generation Z between authentic activity and marketing exploitation with statistical accuracy.

5- Data analysis and hypothesis testing

1.5 Analysis of the psychometric characteristics of the study sample

Table 2: Psychometric data of the study sample

Statement		Repetition	Ratio
Gender	Male	278	%72.4
	Female	106	%27.6
Age	18-20 years	112	%29.2
	21-23 years	145	%37.8
	24-26 years	89	%23.2
	27-29 years	38	% 9.9
Education	Average	74	%19.3
	Secondary	61	%15.9
	University	190	%49.5
	Postgraduate	59	%15.4
Monthly income	Less than 20,000 DZD	197	%51.3
	From 20,000 to 50,000 DZD	142	%37.0
	More than 50,000 DZD	45	%11.7
Most used platforms	WhatsApp	100	%26.0
	LinkedIn	29	% 7.6
	Twitter	56	%14.6
	Facebook	109	%28.4
	Snapchat	29	% 7.6
	TikTok	19	% 4.9
	Instagram	42	%10.9
Total		384	% 100

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

The analysis of the psychometric characteristics of the study sample in Table 2 shows a balanced composition that reflects the reality of Generation Z consumers, with the 21-23 age group dominating (37.8%), followed by 18-20 (29.2%), confirming that the sample focuses on the most consumer-active and socially aware group. The predominance of males (72.4%) reflects the dynamics of the Algerian market, while the university level (49.5%) justifies the sample's ability to distinguish between authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation. The majority of low income (<20,000 DZD = 51.3%) explains the sensitivity of purchasing decisions towards social values as an alternative to material factors, and the multiple use of communication platforms (Facebook 28.4%, WhatsApp 26%) reinforces the validity of digital channels for distributing the questionnaire and reaching this target group.

2.5 Statistical description of study variables

Table 3: Analysis of agreement on the level of brand adoption (brand activity)

Statement	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Ranking
1 Brands that support environmental causes have my special appreciation	3,92	0,96	0,78	1

2	I prefer brands that take clear stances on social justice issues	3,86	0,93	0,77	2
3	I am interested when a brand supports minority rights and equality	3,55	1,03	0,71	5
4	Brands that speak out on political issues attract my attention more	3,76	0,99	0,75	3
5	I appreciate brands that show a consistent commitment to social values	3,70	1,03	0,74	4
Total		3.76	0.04	0.75	

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Table 3 shows a descriptive statistical analysis of the degree of agreement with the data on the axis “level of brand adoption (brand activity)” using a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree), with an overall arithmetic mean of 3.76 (moderate positive agreement) and an approximate standard deviation of 0.99, reflecting low dispersion and high consistency in responses. Relative importance was calculated as (mean/5), with a perfect correlation ($r=1.0$) between it and the mean, confirming a logical order: highest importance for supporting environmental issues (3.92, 0.78), followed by social justice (3.86, 0.77), while the lowest was minority rights (3.55, 0.71) with the highest dispersion ($SD=1.03$) indicating a diversity of opinions.

An average >3.5 means partial to complete agreement, supporting the hypothesis that consumers prefer socially active brands, especially environmental ones, but with a caveat against “woke washing” if the commitment is superficial.

In a marketing context, this brand activity enhances loyalty and attention, but a focus on ongoing commitment (statement 5, 3.70) is necessary to avoid a loss of trust, especially with an average importance of 0.75 reflecting a moderate effect on purchasing behavior.

Table No. (04) Analysis of the degree of agreement on the axis of purchasing behavior

Statement		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Ranking
1	I tend to buy products from brands that support causes I believe in	3,76	1,13	0,75	1
2	I consider a brand's social stance before making a purchase decision	3,74	1,10	0,75	2
3	I pay a higher price for brands that are committed to social values	3,64	1,08	0,73	3
4	I change my purchasing habits based on a brand's stance on public issues	3,32	1,10	0,66	4
5	I prefer to buy products from brands that demonstrate genuine social commitment	3,26	1,10	0,65	5
Total		3.54	0.01	0.70	

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Table 4 shows a descriptive statistical analysis of the degree of agreement with the data on the “purchasing behavior” axis, where the overall arithmetic mean was 3.54 (moderate positive agreement) and an approximate standard deviation of 1.10, reflecting a coefficient of variation (CV) of 31.1%, which indicates moderate dispersion and relatively good consistency compared to the previous axis.

Relative importance was calculated as (mean/5), with a near-perfect correlation ($r=0.999$) confirming the ranking: highest for the tendency to purchase products from brands that support personal causes (3.76, 0.75), followed by social attitude considerations (3.74, 0.75), while the lowest was genuine commitment (3.26, 0.65) with stable dispersion ($SD\approx 1.10$) reflecting variation in readiness to change.

An average >3.0 indicates a positive tendency toward “social purchasing behavior,” supported by a

preference for value support over willingness to pay more or change habits (statement 4: 3.32), which links to the concept of “mindfulness washing” where consumers question genuine commitment. The table confirms the impact of brand activity on purchasing (higher average in statements 1-3), but a decline in genuine commitment warns of the risk of losing trust; authentic strategies are recommended to raise the average above 3.7.

Table No. (05) Analysis of the degree of agreement on brand loyalty

Statement		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Ranking
1	I remain loyal to brands that consistently support social causes	3,45	1,09	0,69	4
2	I will continue to buy products from this brand even if the price increases	3,36	1,02	0,67	5
3	I refuse to switch to a competing brand if it lacks social commitment	3,76	1,01	0,75	1
4	I feel an emotional connection to brands that share my social values	3,63	1,05	0,73	3
5	I defend socially committed brands against criticism from others	3,66	1,14	0,73	2
Total		3.57	0.05	0.71	

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Table 5 shows a descriptive statistical analysis of the degree of agreement with the “brand loyalty” axis data, where the overall arithmetic mean was 3.57 (moderate positive agreement) and an approximate standard deviation of 1.06, reflecting a coefficient of variation (CV) of 29.76%, which indicates moderate dispersion and good consistency, similar to the previous axes.

Relative importance was calculated as (mean/5), with a near-perfect correlation ($r=0.997$) confirming the ranking: highest for rejecting non-committed competitors (3.76, 0.75), followed by defending the brand (3.66, 0.73) and emotional attachment (3.63, 0.73), while the lowest was continuing despite the high price (3.36, 0.67) with the least dispersion ($SD=1.02$).

The mean ≈ 3.5 indicates a positive trend toward value loyalty, supported by rejecting competitors (statement 3), linking social activity to emotional loyalty, but with a caveat of “mindfulness washing” that may reduce persistence.

The table highlights the power of social commitment in building behavioral and emotional loyalty, but the low willingness to pay more (Statement 2) alerts us to price sensitivity; authentic strategies to enhance defensibility are recommended (Statement 5).

Table 6 Analysis of agreement on the Word of Mouth axis

Statement		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Ranking
1	I recommend brands that are committed to social issues to my friends and family	3,59	1,14	0,72	1
2	I share social media content from brands	3,51	2,92	0,7	2
3	I speak positively about brands that support the values I believe in	3,29	1,11	0,66	5
4	Brands' posts about social issues motivate me to engage	3,38	0,97	0,68	4
5	I encourage others to support brands that are socially activ	3,40	1,08	0,68	3

Total	3.43	0.82	0.68	
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Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Table 6 shows a descriptive statistical analysis of the degree of agreement with the data on the “word-of-mouth advertising” axis, where the overall arithmetic mean was 3.43 (neutral to positive agreement) and the approximate standard deviation was 1.62 (median 1.11), raising the coefficient of variation $CV=47.25\%$ due to the exceptional $SD=2.92$ value in statement 2 (possibly an input error or bimodal distribution), indicating higher dispersion compared to the previous axes.

Relative importance was calculated as $(\text{mean}/5)$, with a near-perfect correlation ($r=0.996$) confirming the ranking: highest for personal recommendation (3.59, 0.72), followed by content sharing (3.51, 0.70), while lowest for positive talk (3.29, 0.66) with stable dispersion ($SD\approx 1.1$).

The mean <3.5 indicates weaker advocacy compared to loyalty (3.57), supported by traditional word-of-mouth over digital, linking social activity to dissemination but cautioning against “mindfulness washing” that reduces interaction.

The table confirms the role of commitment in promoting WOM, especially personal (statement 1), but the weakness of positive talk (statement 3) indicates a need for authentic content.

Table No. (07) Analysis of the extent of agreement on the axis of marketing exploitation (Woke-washing)

Statement		Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative importance	Ranking
1	The brand promotes social issues only during sales seasons	3,53	0,99	0,71	5
2	I feel that the brand exploits issues to increase sales without genuine commitment	3,60	0,92	0,72	4
3	The brand's social campaigns seem temporary and stop after the ad ends	3,68	0,92	0,74	3
4	The brand's practices contradict its claimed social values	3,95	0,98	0,79	2
5	The brand talks about issues to improve its image without actually changing	3,92	1,07	0,79	1
Total		3.74	0.06	0.74	

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Table 7 shows a descriptive statistical analysis of the degree of agreement with the data on the “marketing exploitation” axis, where the overall arithmetic mean was 3.74 (high agreement) and an approximate standard deviation of 0.98, reflecting a coefficient of variation (CV) of 26.17%, which indicates low dispersion and high consistency, higher than the previous axes.

Relative importance was calculated as $(\text{mean}/5)$, with a near-perfect correlation ($r=0.998$) confirming the ranking: highest for violating practical practices of claimed values (3.95, 0.79) and improving image without change (3.92, 0.79), while lowest for seasonal promotion (3.53, 0.71) with stable dispersion ($SD\approx 0.9-1.0$).

An average >3.7 indicates a strong perception of “woke-washing” as false exploitation, which threatens trust compared to the previous axis (3.43), and correlates with other axes where skepticism reduces loyalty and publicity.

The table warns of the risks of easily detectable superficial exploitation (data 4-5), which explains the weak continuity in loyalty.

3.5 Testing the validity of hypotheses and discussing the results

- First hypothesis

The level of brand adoption of social and political issues (brand activism) has a direct and positive impact on the consumer behavior of Generation Z, which is reflected in increased brand loyalty and enhanced positive word-of-mouth advertising.

To test the validity of this hypothesis, appropriate statistical methods were used, namely correlation as a first step to discover the strength and type of relationship between the brand (brand activism) in increasing brand loyalty and promoting positive word of mouth, then regression as a second step to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 8: Results of multiple linear regression analysis for the first hypothesis

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Results of analyzing the relationship between brand adoption of social and political issues (brand activism) on increasing brand loyalty and promoting positive word-of-mouth advertising						
(Sign activity)	Pearson correlation coefficient R				0.418	
	sig				0.000	
Results of multiple regression analysis to measure the impact of brand endorsement of social and political issues (brand activism) on increasing brand loyalty and promoting positive word-of-mouth advertising						
The coefficient of determination (R^2)		0.174		Standard error of the estimate 0.78713		
value (F)		Significance 0.0040.233				
variable	B	SE	beta β	T value	Significance T	
Brand loyalty	0.876	0.292		3.003	0.003	
(brand activity)	0.252	0.075	0.178	3.371	0.001	
Word-of-mouth advertising	0.431	0.431	0.303	5.723	0.000	

The first hypothesis asserts that the level of brand adoption of social and political issues (brand activism) has a direct and positive impact on Generation Z's consumer behavior. To test this hypothesis, we used appropriate statistical methods and began with a correlation analysis to determine the strength of the relationship between brand activism and increased brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. The results showed that Pearson's coefficient was 0.418, indicating a moderately strong positive relationship between the variables, i.e., increased brand activism is associated with increased loyalty and advocacy. The probability value was 0.000, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant at the $\alpha < 0.01$ level. Next, we used multiple linear regression to measure the effect of brand activity on the dependent variables. The results showed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.174, meaning that 17.4% of the variation in loyalty and advocacy can be explained by brand activity, confirming a significant contribution despite the presence of other factors. The F value was approximately 40.233 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming the statistical significance of the model. Regarding the effect of brand activity on brand loyalty, the regression coefficient was $B=0.252$, $\beta=0.178$, and $T=3.371$ with a probability of 0.001, indicating a small-medium positive and statistically significant effect. As for word-of-mouth advertising, $B=0.431$, $\beta=0.303$, and $T=5.723$ with a probability of 0.000, indicating a medium and strong effect. The results confirm that brand activity has a positive and direct effect on Generation Z behavior, fully supporting the hypothesis.

- Second hypothesis

Generation Z is characterized by its ability to distinguish between authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation

Table 9: Results of simple linear regression analysis for the second hypothesis

Results of the analysis of the relationship between authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation						
(Sign activity)	Pearson correlation coefficient R				0.474	
	sig				0.000	
Results of simple regression analysis to measure the impact of authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation						
The coefficient of determination (R^2)		0.224		Standard error of the estimate 0.53466		
value (F)		Significance 0.00110.558				
variable	B	SE	beta β	T value	Significance T	
Constant	1.973	0.171		11.571	0.000	

Dependent	0.471	0.045	0.474	10.515	0.000
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Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

The second hypothesis asserts that Generation Z is characterized by an ability to distinguish between authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation. To test this hypothesis, we used appropriate statistical methods and began by analyzing the correlation to determine the strength of the relationship between authentic brand activity and marketing exploitation. The results showed that Pearson's coefficient was 0.474, indicating a moderately positive relationship between the two variables, i.e., increased authentic perception is associated with increased detection of exploitation. The probability value was 0.000, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant at $\alpha < 0.01$. Next, we used simple linear regression to measure the effect of intrinsic brand activity on the perception of marketing exploitation. The results showed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.224, meaning that 22.4% of the variation in exploitation is explained by intrinsic activity, confirming a significant contribution to discrimination. The F value was approximately 110.558 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming the statistical significance of the model. For the independent variable (authentic brand activity), the regression coefficient was $B=0.471$, $\beta=0.474$, and $T=10.515$ with a probability of 0.000, indicating a moderate positive effect and a statistical significance of less than 0.05. Ultimately, the results confirm that Generation Z effectively distinguishes between authenticity and exploitation, which fully supports the hypothesis.

- Hypothesis 3

• **There is a statistically significant positive correlation between the perception of brand authenticity and the level of trust and loyalty among Generation Z**

Table 10: Relationship between brand authenticity and trust and loyalty among Generation Z

Brand activity	Trust Loyalty to Generation Z		
,822**	1	Pearson Correlation	Trust Loyalty to Generation Z
,000		Sig. (2-tailed)	
384	384	N	
1	,822**	Pearson Correlation	Brand activity
	,000	Sig. (2-tailed)	
384	384	N	

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

The third hypothesis confirms the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation between the perception of the authenticity of advertising and the level of trust and loyalty among Generation Z. To test this hypothesis, we used appropriate statistical methods, starting with Pearson's correlation analysis, as shown in Table 10. The results showed that the Pearson coefficient was 0.822**, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the two variables, i.e., an increase in the perceived authenticity of the activity is associated with an increase in the trust and loyalty of Generation Z. The probability value was (Sig. 2-tailed) was 0.000, indicating that the relationship is highly statistically significant at $\alpha < 0.01$ with a sample size of $N=384$. Furthermore, the large correlation coefficient ($r > 0.8$ according to Cohen) supports a strong interpretation of the relationship, explaining about 67.6% of the common variance ($r^2 \approx 0.676$), which confirms the importance of authenticity in building trust and loyalty. The reciprocal results in the correlation matrix also show complete consistency, with reciprocal significance at $p=0.000$. Ultimately, the results confirm the existence of a strong, statistically significant positive correlation between the perception of brand honesty and trust and loyalty among Generation Z, fully supporting the hypothesis.

- Fourth hypothesis

• **A brand's adoption of a controversial political stance has a statistically significant effect on Generation Z's purchase intention.**

Table 11: Results of the simple linear regression analysis for the fourth hypothesis

Source: Outputs from SPSS v26

Results of the analysis of the relationship between brand and purchase intention among Generation Z						
The trademark of a controversial political stance	Pearson correlation coefficient R				0.621	
	sig				0.000	
Results of simple regression analysis to measure brand impact and purchase intention among Generation						
The coefficient of determination (R^2) 0.385 Standard error of the estimate 0.56052						
value (F) Significance 0.00239.280						
variable	B	SE	beta β	T value	Significance T	
Constant	0.818	0.179		4.575	0.000	
Dependent	0.726	0.047	0.621	15.469	0.000	

The fourth hypothesis asserts that a brand's adoption of a controversial political stance leads to a statistically significant effect on Generation Z's purchase intention. To test this hypothesis, we used appropriate statistical methods and began by analyzing the correlation to determine the strength of the relationship between the brand's adoption of a political stance and purchase intention. The results showed that Pearson's coefficient was 0.621, indicating a strong positive relationship between the two variables, i.e., increased adoption of the political stance is associated with increased purchase intention. The probability value was 0.000, indicating that the relationship is highly statistically significant at $\alpha < 0.01$. Next, we used simple linear regression to measure the effect of brand adoption on purchase intention. The results showed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) reached 0.385, meaning that 38.5% of the change in purchase intention is explained by political stance, confirming a significant and notable contribution. The F value was 239.280 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming the statistical significance of the model. For the independent variable (brand of provocative political stance), the regression coefficient was $B=0.726$, $\beta=0.621$, and $T=15.469$ with a probability of 0.000, indicating a strong positive effect that is statistically significant at less than 0.05. Ultimately, the results confirm that adopting a provocative political stance has a strong positive effect on Generation Z's purchase intention, fully supporting the hypothesis.

4.5 General results of the study:

The study conclusively confirms the validity of all four hypotheses, showing complete agreement between theory and practical application in the context of Generation Z.

The first hypothesis proved that the level of brand adoption of social and political issues (brand activism) has a direct and positive impact on Generation Z's consumer behavior, manifested in increased brand loyalty and enhanced positive word-of-mouth advertising.

The second hypothesis revealed Generation Z's distinctive ability to accurately distinguish between genuine brand activism and marketing exploitation, reflecting a mature and highly analytical value awareness.

The third hypothesis proved the existence of a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the perception of brand authenticity and the levels of trust and loyalty among this generation.

The fourth hypothesis confirmed that a brand's adoption of a controversial political stance has a direct and significant impact on Generation Z's purchase intention.

The results highlight this generation's preference for environmental and social issues over political ones, with a particular focus on consistent and authentic commitment.

Statistical analysis shows high consistency across all five axes (brand activism, purchasing behavior, loyalty, word-of-mouth advertising, and marketing exploitation).

The results indicate that authenticity is the decisive factor in building sustainable relationships with Generation Z, while “woke washing” poses a real threat to trust.

This generation is a driving force for changing traditional marketing standards towards a value model focused on social responsibility and transparency.

The study emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between discourse and practice as a prerequisite for the success of brand activity strategies in the contemporary market.

Fourth: Conclusion and recommendations

The study showed a direct and significant impact of brands adopting controversial political positions on Generation Z's purchase intent, with this stance being a more decisive factor in purchasing decisions than environmental and social issues in some contexts. Generation Z prefers brands that show courage in expressing clear positions, but this effect is conditional on perceived authenticity, as it turns into immediate rejection when marketing intentions are questioned.

Recommendations for brands

Complete consistency between public advertising and internal company practices in the workplace is recommended, as Generation Z quickly detects any contradiction between external discourse and organizational behavior (fair wages, diversity, inclusive work environment). Apply internal commitment first: Before announcing social/political issues, they must be implemented within the company (training, HR policies, sustainability).

Document transparency: Publish documented annual reports on tangible achievements, not just slogans. Test the target market: Conduct focus groups with Generation Z before adopting controversial political positions to gauge reactions.

Build defensibility: Develop rapid response mechanisms to “woke-washing” criticism through practical evidence. Long-term focus: Move from seasonal campaigns to ongoing commitment programs that link financial performance to responsibility.

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