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Brand Loyalty in Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the changing nature of brand loyalty of Generation Z, a group of digitally-immersed and socially-aware consumers. Since traditional factors fuelling loyalty are generally becoming ineffective, this research examines how personalization, digital engagement, influencer marketing, brand values, and negative digital experiences affect Gen Z's loyalty behaviors. Data was collected using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey from individuals aged 18-27 who consume online. The results showed little correlation between digital engagement and brand loyalty, and influencer marketing had mixed effects on purchasing behaviors. Most of the respondents reported abandoning brands because of a negative digital experience, but the correlation was not statistically significant. Although perceived sustainability of brands was included as a variable, the majority of this sample did not seem to consider sustainability as central to their loyalty. The study suggests that Gen Z appreciates digital interaction and ethical branding, but any loyalty building strategy needs to focus on more substantial issues reflecting emotional and experiential concerns and not just flashy forms of engagement and contact. This research extends the marketing literature by building on insights regarding how brands can alter loyalty strategies to fit Gen Z's expectations and practice.

Keywords: Generation Z, Brand Loyalty, Digital Engagement, Influencer Marketing, Brand Values, Sustainability, Consumer Behavior, Social Media.

Introduction

Understanding Brand Loyalty in the Context of Generation Z:

Brand loyalty has traditionally been recognized as one of the most valuable resources for firms across industries. It remains a vital source of sustainable profits and advantage over rivals. For decades, researchers and marketers alike have sought a better understanding of consumers' psychological, cultural, and technological influences, priorities, desires, and values as they manifest brand attachment. The rise of Generation Z as a larger consumer cohort has introduced new challenges and opportunities to the brand loyalty landscape, and understanding the forces that influence selection, loyalty, and potential brand abandonment by this generation is key for researchers and practitioners hoping to compete effectively in a changing global landscape.

Generation Z, commonly identified as those born between 1997 and 2012, has forged their identity in a world that has undergone never-before-seen levels of digital connectivity, technological advancement, and social change. Generation Z's early life was impacted by ever-present mobile technology, social media saturation, and information at their fingertips. Consequently, Generation Z's values and behaviors are quite distinct from those of prior generations. This means that before brands attempt to replicate loyalties that may have worked for Baby Boomers and might appeal to Millennials, they must first understand the serious nuances of Generation Z.

The Importance of Brand Loyalty:

At its heart, brand loyalty means a repeat purchase and preference for a brand, along with a level of word-of-mouth advocacy, and from a consumer's perspective, some resistance to switching. Notably, this brand loyalty can exist in cases where the competition is offering strong brand similarities that present a lower price. Loyalty is not just in terms of the transaction, but refers to the emotional connection and ongoing commitment to a brand where the consumer receives satisfaction that transcends the lure of competitor promotions or lower prices. For businesses, loyal customers are the gold standard. They exhibit benefits of more substantial lifetime value, they act as brand ambassadors, and contribute significantly to market share stability.

With the ever-increasing financial power of Generation Z globally, loyalty towards brands among this group has become crucial for those seeking long-term growth. It is estimated that Generation Z's buying power is already considerable both directly and indirectly, through controlling household spending. The stakes are huge for brands because loyalty among Generation Z consumers can potentially keep them coming for decades to come while creating a good brand reputation across wider networks.

Generation Z: Diverse, Digitally Savvy, and Socially Conscious:

To accurately gauge the impact of brand loyalty within Generation Z, it is essential to understand the unique characteristics of this generation. Generation Z consumers, unlike their predecessors, have never lived in a world without the internet, social networks, or on-demand content. Their communication, research, and entertainment are happening entirely in the digital world. This constant state of digital inclusion has formed a specific set of expectations toward brands, which include a request for authenticity, transparency, and engagement.

Also noteworthy is the social awareness and inclusivity focus of Generation Z. They are more commonly seen as a generation that prioritizes ethical consumption, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility. Consequently, brand loyalty among these customers tends to be tied to matching personal and societal values, rather than product quality or price sensitivity. Brands unable to show real commitment to such principles will increasingly struggle to win the loyalty of Generation Z customers.

Shifting Paths to Purchase: The Role of Digital Touchpoints:

Digital touchpoints play a heavy role in purchase behaviors for Generation Z. Social media posts, online reviews, influencer recommendations, and digital advertisements all impact consumers during the purchase journey. Outside of how brands interact with consumers, these are typically non-linear journeys; the discovery of a brand, its consideration, and finally its purchase all happen at different points in time, often in fragmented multi-platform environments that expose the consumer to multiple options and competing messages.

The role of social media is especially notable. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become not only entertainment sources but also major places of engagement with and discovery of brands. Influencer marketing has changed the trust equation; Generation Z

consumers are more likely to consider the recommendations of social media personalities they perceive as authentic and relatable, as opposed to celebrity endorsements or brand messaging. The reliance on digital platforms has many implications for brand loyalty. First, brands need to keep communication with their audience consistent, engaging, and honest at multiple touchpoints. Second, negative experiences - poor customer service, public scandals, misleading products - can seem to travel at lightning speed within Generation Z's connected communities and have all but obliterated loyalty in a matter of hours.

The Evolution of Loyalty: From Rewards to Relationships:

Even if traditional loyalty programs can offer discounts, points, and exclusive offers, traditional loyalty programs are still in the picture; loyalty for Gen Z has shifted away from loyalty in the form of rewards. It increasingly reflects emotional and relational factors in their attachment to brands across categories. Gen Z appreciates brands that fulfill their promises but also have meaningful two-way dialogue, demonstrate empathy, and support issues, causes, and movements that they believe align with their worldview.

Experiential elements of brand engagement also hold more importance. A smooth and personalized experience for customers across online and offline channels can greatly impact their loyalty. Generation Z expects brands to anticipate their needs, offer personalized recommendations, and provide frictionless customer support. If expectations fail in these areas, customers may quickly leave for brands that better understand them and recognize the value of their patronage.

Challenges and Opportunities for Brands:

These changing expectations create challenges and opportunities for brands. The challenge is to face the changing and differing loyalties of Generation Z. Previous research indicates that Generation Z is much less likely to be hesitant when they switch brands. Generation Z has concerns with brands that do not demonstrate long-term commitments to their cause, show dissatisfaction with the brand, and brand alternatives appear to fit their values and lifestyle better. Authenticity and consistency are important to demonstrate long-term commitments; if a brand's message is done for marketing purposes only, the Gen Z audience will revert to someone who authentically demonstrates the work.

On the other hand, the opportunity for brands to represent an authentic and long-term connection to Generation Z can build a brand loyalty that allows Generation Z to become brand-loyal advocates in their peer-to-peer networks and on their social platforms. Generations Z brands that build community, engage in feedback, and take action in the real world can expect Generation Z to have lasting, loyal behaviours.

The Rationale for Studying Generation Z Brand Loyalty:

both academic and practical significance. From an academic standpoint, it provides a way to apply existing theories of consumer behavior in new contexts and determine if they hold in this new digital world and new value systems. From a practical standpoint, it gives marketers and brand managers a basis for actionable insights for how to build a product, how to communicate about it to Generation Z consumers, how to contribute to their worldview, and how to develop loyalty programs that resonate with this important cohort.

Given the economic and cultural importance of Generation Z, the research could seek to answer some important questions: What are the main drivers of brand loyalty for this group? How do technological fluency and social consciousness influence actual purchasing and its subsequent advocacy behaviors? Are traditional brand loyalty strategies still effective, or do models for developing loyalty need to be re-evaluated?

Research Objectives:

1. To identify the main factors that encourage brand loyalty among Generation Z.
2. To assess the influence of social media platforms and influencer marketing on Generation Z's brand loyalty.
3. To evaluate the importance of brand values, authenticity, and social responsibility in shaping loyalty among Generation Z.
4. To examine the effects of digital experiences and negative interactions on Generation Z's likelihood to switch brands

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. Song (2024);

Song's study highlights the central role of personalized experience marketing in promoting brand loyalty among Generation Z. The research shows that tailored marketing campaigns can deepen emotional connections, boost customer engagement, and enhance digital interaction. Brands that leverage personalized strategies are more likely to achieve long-term loyalty from Gen Z consumers, who favor brands providing unique and interactive digital experiences

Vergotine and Wanty (2022)

Vergotine and Wanty's study on Generation Z's brand loyalty in the South African fashion industry finds that Gen Z is particularly influenced by fashion influencers, online brand experiences, and digital engagement. The authors highlight that while authenticity and novelty attract attention, consistent product quality and interactive online presence are critical for building lasting loyalty.

3. Achmad & Jatmiko (2025)

Achmad and Jatmiko examined the impact of social media marketing on Generation Z's brand loyalty within the local fashion industry. Their research demonstrates that effective social media marketing fosters brand loyalty both directly and indirectly by enhancing brand experience, generating brand love, and building brand trust. The authors recommend brands use engaging content and interactive, community-based approaches to improve loyalty in the digital era

4. Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo (2007); Gummerus (2013)

This literature review focuses on the dimensions of brand value critical to Indian Gen Z consumers. The study identifies emotional value, social value, and functional value (quality) as significant influences on brand loyalty, with price playing a lesser role. Gen Z displays stronger loyalty to brands offering better emotional and social value, indicated by positive affective brand-customer relationships

5. Khusnul Khotimah

This research aims to explore the influence of sustainability marketing on brand loyalty among Generation Z. A key issue identified is the growing importance of sustainability in young consumers' decision-making, as they are often presented with a wide selection of brands claiming to be committed to sustainability. The challenge for brands in this context is how to encourage long-term loyalty from Generation Z by authentically incorporating sustainability values into a marketing strategy. To examine how sustainable marketing and sustainability in general are perceived and experienced by Generation Z, a qualitative study was undertaken using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The findings suggest that sustainably executed in a transparent and integrity-led manner enhances brand loyalty, which makes consumers more likely to purchase from and continue to support brands committed to social and environmental issues. Moreover, emotional connections and social influence significantly affect loyalty. With findings, the research offers valuable insights for practical application by companies so they can plan marketing strategies that foster and enhance relationships with Generation Z using sustainability principles.

Research Gap:

While previous research establishes the importance of a number of factors, such as individualized experiences, social media influences, authenticity, and sustainability, in creating brand loyalty among Generation Z, there are still gaps in previous studies. Most existing studies focus on singular components of loyalty development, meaning a study on social media marketing or a study of sustainability in isolation, without focusing on how all these components relate in real-world brand interactions for Generation Z. There is limited empirical evidence examining whether traditional loyalty strategies—like rewards programs—remain effective for this demographic or if long-term loyalty now relies more on emotional, social, and ethical dimensions. Furthermore, the evolving influence of digital experiences, combined with the challenges of maintaining authenticity and transparency in messaging, suggests that more holistic, quantitative research is needed to determine which drivers most strongly predict loyalty and which factors—such as negative online encounters—most quickly erode it. This leaves a critical need for comprehensive analysis that links digital engagement, influencer trust, brand values, and negative brand experiences to both the formation and loss of brand loyalty among Generation Z.

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Digital Engagement and Brand Loyalty:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant relationship between personalized digital engagement and brand loyalty among Generation Z.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant positive relationship between personalized digital engagement and brand loyalty among Generation Z.

Hypothesis 2: Influencer Marketing and Brand Loyalty:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** Exposure to authentic influencer marketing does not significantly affect brand loyalty among Generation Z.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** Authentic influencer marketing will greatly influence brand loyalty toward the brand by Generation Z.

Hypothesis 3: Brand Values/Sustainability and Brand Loyalty:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** The perception of a brand's sustainability efforts does not have a statistically significant for brand loyalty by Generation Z.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** The perception of a brand's sustainability efforts does have a statistically significant positive effect on brand loyalty among Generation Z.

Hypothesis 4: Negative Digital Experiences and Brand Switching:

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** The impact of negative digital experience on switching likelihood of Generation Z consumers is not significant.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** Negative digital experience has a significant impact on the switching likelihood of Generation Z consumers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The current study formulates a quantitative research design to identify the factors of brand loyalty in Generation Z by examining the influence of digital engagement, influencer marketing, brand values, and negative digital experiences. The research method is organized to maximize rigor, clarity, and reproducibility based on standards for academic research.

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design is implemented, allowing for the collection of data from a large sample of Generation Z during a single period of time. This design is suitable for finding associations and trends between variables that relate to brand loyalty.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population consists of Generation Z individuals (born 1996–2013). Participants are purposely sampled from students and young professionals who engage digitally and are currently exposed to online branded content. The study obtained a minimum sample of 113 respondents, which was considered sufficient to provide adequate power for statistical testing of correlation and regressions.

Data Collection

Data is collected via a self-administered online questionnaire, distributed through social media platforms (such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and email). The questionnaire consists of closed-ended questions measured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree") to capture attitudes toward key constructs.

Data Analysis

The collected data has been analysed using statistical techniques appropriate for each research hypothesis. For the relationships between personalized digital engagement, influencer marketing exposure, perceived authenticity of brand sustainability, and brand loyalty, Pearson or Spearman correlation tests will be used depending on whether the data are continuous and normally distributed or ordinal and non-normally distributed, respectively; multiple linear regression may also be employed to assess the unique influence of each factor on brand loyalty when controlling for other variables. To examine the effect of negative digital experiences on

the likelihood of brand switching, the Chi-square test of independence will be utilized if both variables are categorical, while logistic regression will be applied if brand switching is measured as a binary outcome; where applicable, group differences may be assessed with the Mann-Whitney U test or independent-samples t-test. All statistical analyses will be conducted using software such as SPSS or Excel, with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Limitations of the Study:

Sampling Method: The study utilizes purposive and convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader Generation Z population.

Self-Reported Data: Data are collected through self-administered questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability bias, as participants might not always provide completely accurate or honest answers.

Cross-Sectional Design: The research is cross-sectional in nature, meaning it captures information at one point in time and does not allow for the assessment of changes in brand loyalty over time or the determination of causal relationships.

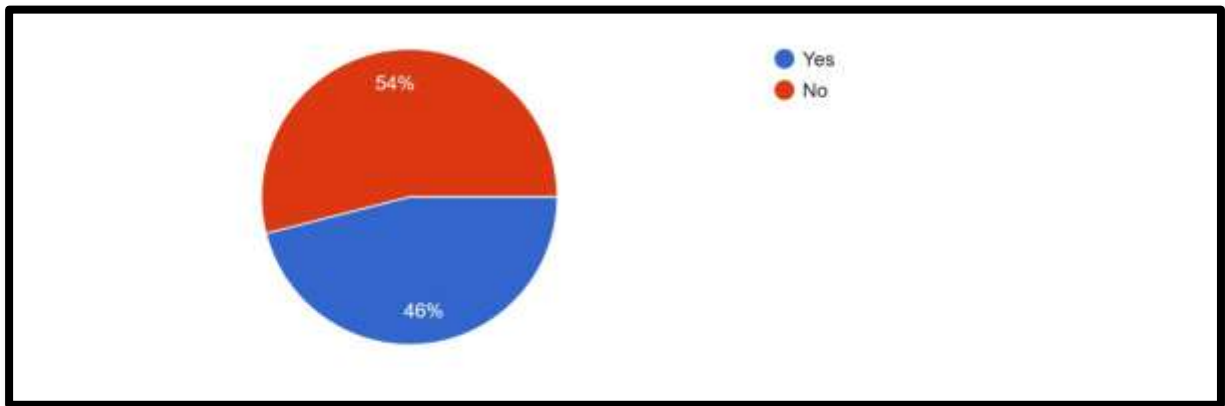
Scope of Variables: The study examines a selected set of variables impacting brand loyalty and may not address all possible influences, such as cultural or economic factors that could play a significant role.

Online Survey Distribution: The exclusive use of online distribution channels may exclude Generation Z individuals without reliable internet access, potentially affecting the representativeness and diversity of the sample.

RESULT:

1. Do you follow any brands on social media?

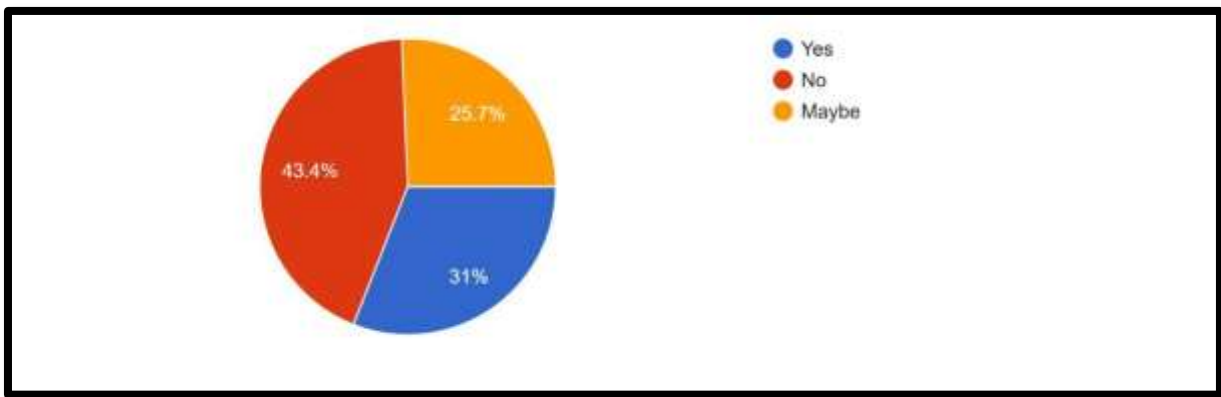
RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	52	46%
No	61	54%

**Interpretation**

The survey results reveal that a slight majority of respondents (54%) do not follow any brands on social media, while 46% do engage with brands through these platforms. This indicates that although a significant portion of Generation Z consumers actively connects with brands via social media, there remains a noteworthy segment that either chooses not to or is indifferent to brand presence online. For marketers, this suggests that while social media can be an effective tool for brand engagement and loyalty-building within this demographic, relying solely on these platforms may overlook over half of potential customers. Diverse digital and non-digital strategies may therefore be necessary to reach the broader Generation Z audience.

2. Do you prefer personalized content and product recommendations?

RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	35	31%
No	49	43.4%
Maybe	29	25.7%

**Interpretation**

The data shows that a majority of respondents (43.4%) do not prefer personalized content and product recommendations, while 31% express a preference and 25.7% remain undecided. This distribution suggests that personalized marketing strategies may not universally appeal to Generation Z, as nearly half of this group is resistant to tailored content. The sizeable "maybe" group further indicates mixed attitudes toward personalization, highlighting the need for brands to carefully assess when and how to use personalized recommendations. Adopting flexible and opt-in personalization approaches may be more effective in engaging Generation Z consumers, given the diverse perspectives within this demographic.

Hypothesis 1: Digital Engagement and Brand Loyalty

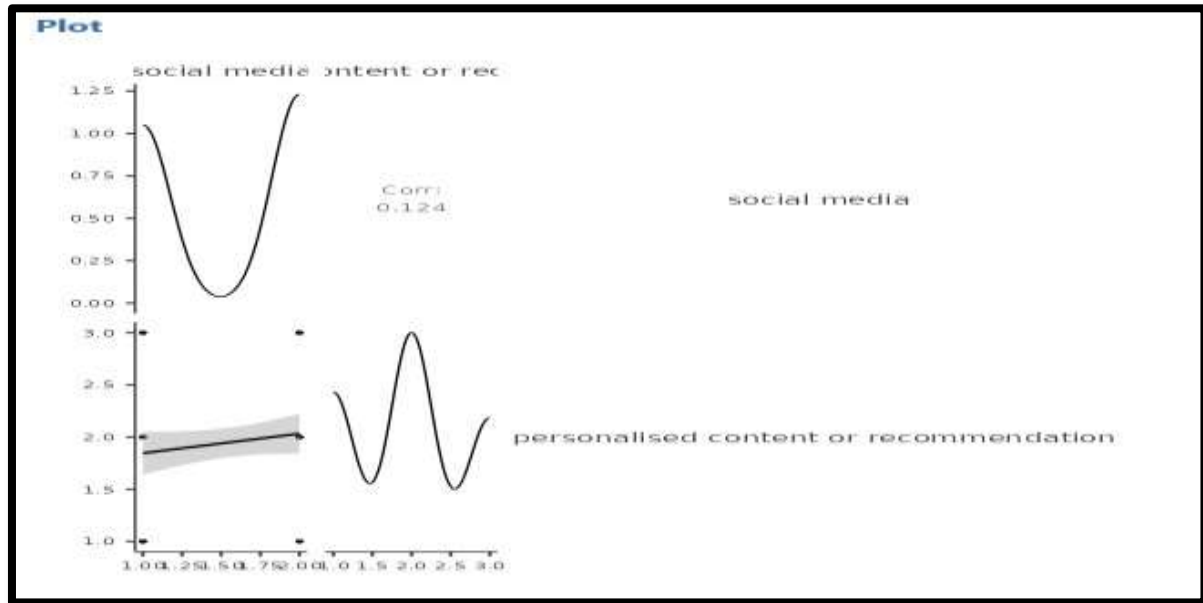
- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant relationship between personalized digital engagement and brand loyalty among Generation Z.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There is a significant positive relationship between personalized digital engagement and brand loyalty among Generation Z.

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		social media	personalised content or recommendation
social media	Pearson's r	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
	Spearman's rho	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
personalised content or recommendation	Pearson's r	0.124	—
	df	111	—
	p-value	0.191	—
	Spearman's rho	0.128	—
	df	111	—
	p-value	0.178	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

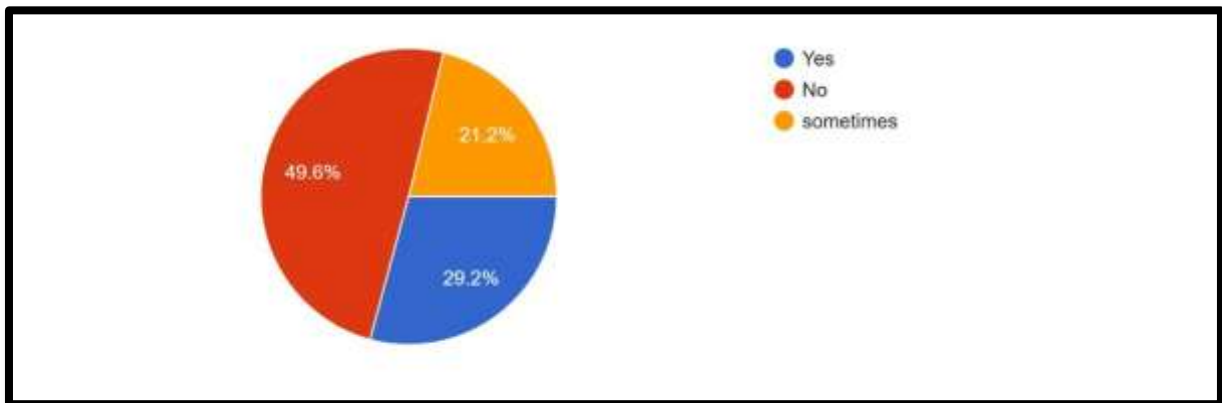


Interpretation

The correlation analysis shows a weak positive but non-significant relationship between following brands on social media and preference for personalized content or recommendations, as indicated by p-values greater than 0.05 for both Pearson's and Spearman's correlations. As a result, the null hypothesis—which states there is no significant relationship between personalized digital engagement and brand loyalty among Generation Z—is accepted in this study. This finding suggests that, for this sample, following brands on social media is not meaningfully associated with a preference for personalized content or recommendations.

3. Do you trust recommendations from influencers more than advertisements?

RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	33	29.2%
No	56	49.6%
Sometimes	24	21.2%



Interpretation

The survey findings indicate that less than a third of respondents (29.2%) trust recommendations from influencers more than advertisements, while nearly half (49.6%) express greater trust in advertisements. Additionally, 21.2% of participants sometimes trust influencer recommendations over ads, suggesting a moderate degree of openness but not a consistent preference. These results imply that, for most individuals in this sample, influencers are not seen as more credible than traditional advertising. Brands targeting this audience may

need to balance influencer strategies with conventional advertising, recognizing that influencer-driven messaging alone may not be sufficient to build trust or sway consumer decisions.

Hypothesis 2: Influencer Marketing and Brand Loyalty

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** Exposure to authentic influencer marketing does not significantly affect brand loyalty among Generation Z.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** Exposure to authentic influencer marketing significantly increases brand loyalty among Generation Z.

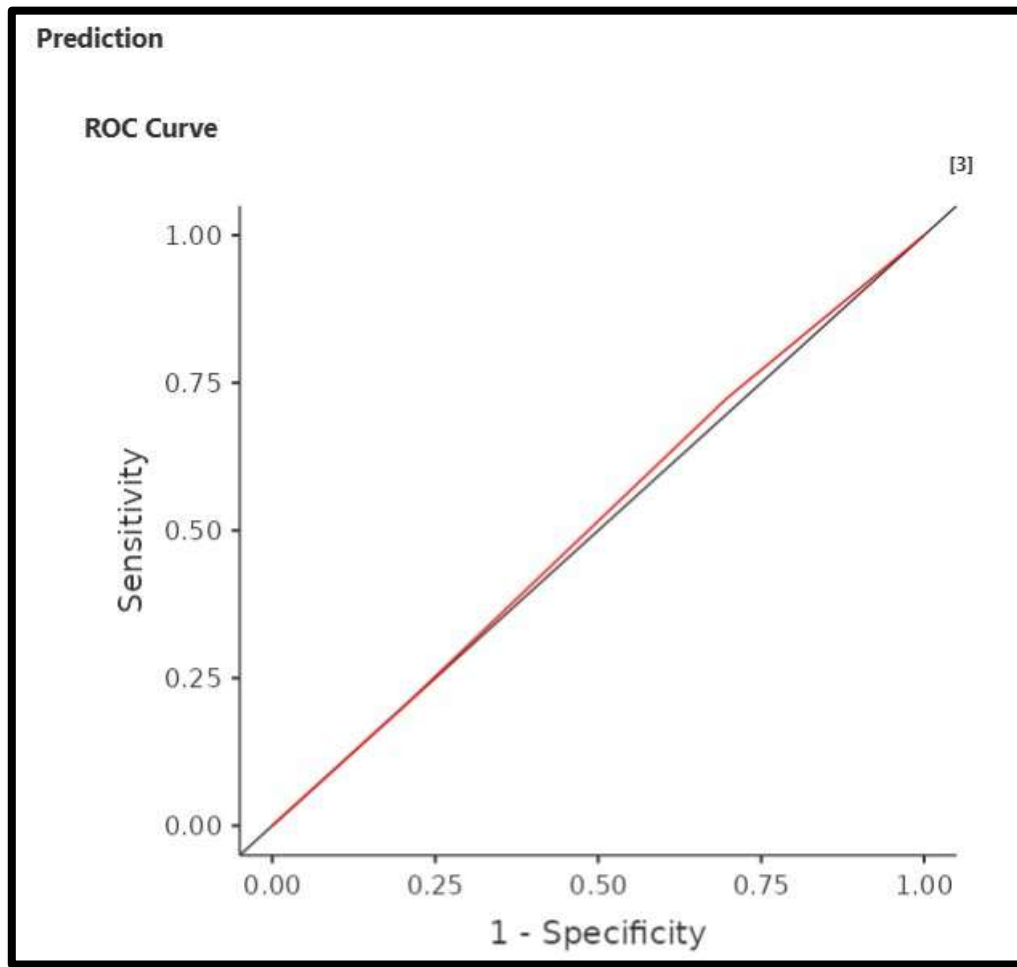
Binomial Logistic Regression

Model Fit Measures			
Model	Deviance	AIC	R^2_{McF}
1	153	157	2.63e-4

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Model Coefficients - Purchased via influencer				
Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Intercept	-0.4440	0.554	-0.801	0.423
Trust influencer over ad	0.0544	0.270	0.201	0.841

Note. Estimates represent the log odds of "Purchased via influencer = 2" vs. "Purchased via influencer = 1"

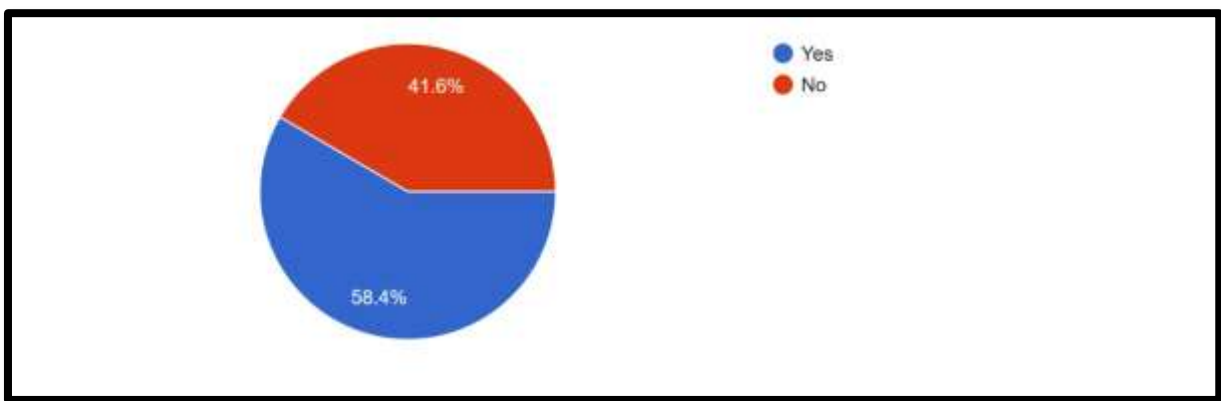


Interpretation:

The results of the binomial logistic regression analysis indicate that trust in influencer recommendations over advertisements does not significantly predict whether an individual has made a purchase based on influencer marketing. The model's explanatory power is extremely low, as reflected in the negligible R^2 value ($2.63e-4$), suggesting that the predictor offers almost no additional information about purchasing behavior. Additionally, the p-value for the variable "Trust influencer over ad" is 0.841, which is far above the standard threshold of 0.05 for statistical significance. This means there is no meaningful association between trusting influencer recommendations and the likelihood of purchasing via influencer marketing in this sample. In summary, the analysis supports the null hypothesis, indicating that trust in influencer recommendations does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions influenced by influencers among these respondents.

4. Have you ever purchased a product/service based on influencer marketing?

RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	66	58.4%
No	47	41.6%



Interpretation

The survey reveals that a significant proportion of respondents (58.4%) have made a purchase based on influencer marketing, while 41.6% have not. This indicates that influencer marketing holds notable persuasive power within this sample, with more than half of the participants acting on recommendations or promotions from influencers. The data underscore the influence that social media personalities and content creators can exert on buying decisions among Generation Z, making influencer marketing a relevant and potentially impactful strategy for brands targeting this demographic.

Hypothesis 3: Brand Values/Sustainability and Brand Loyalty

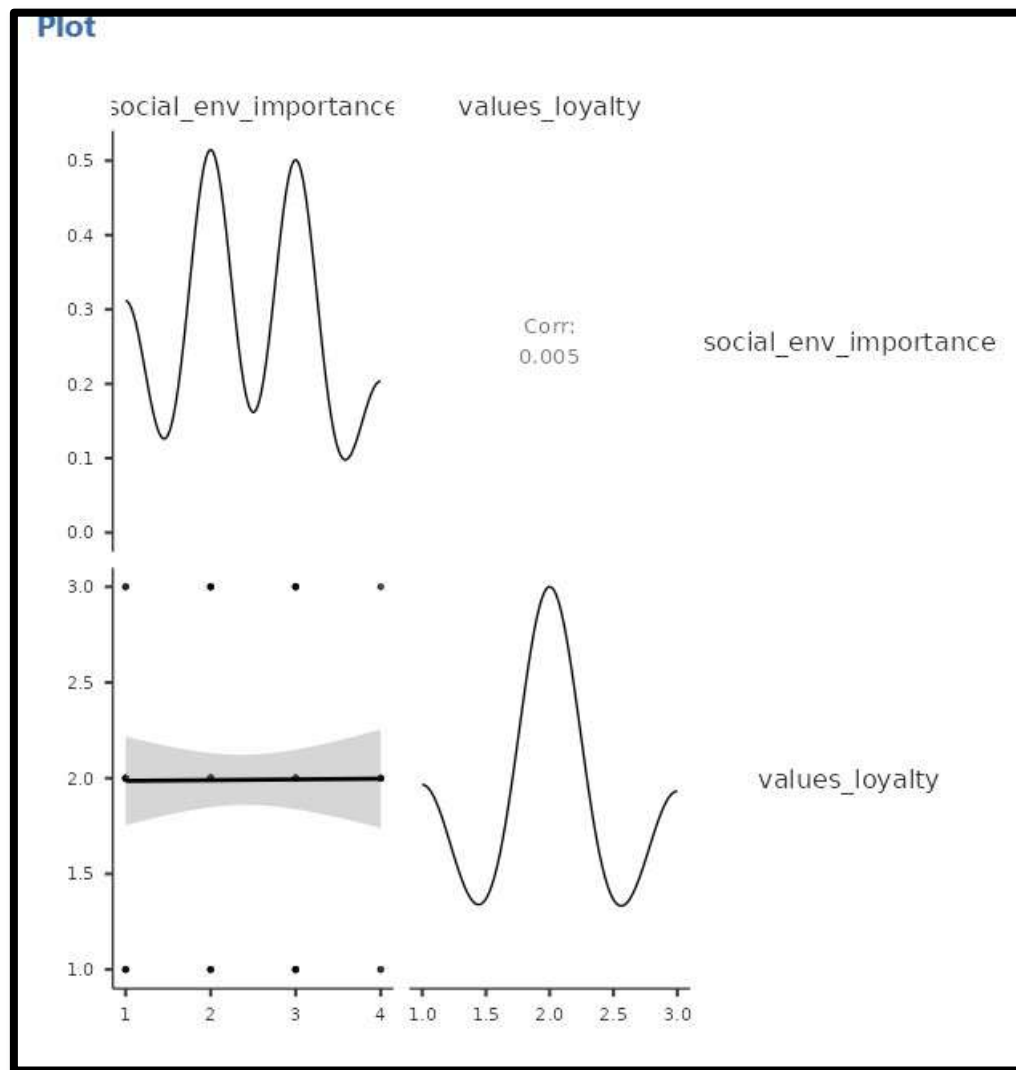
- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** The perceived authenticity of a brand's sustainability initiatives does not significantly impact brand loyalty among Generation Z.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** The perceived authenticity of a brand's sustainability initiatives significantly increases brand loyalty among Generation Z.

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		social_env_importance	values_loyalty
social_env_importance	Spearman's rho	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
values_loyalty	Spearman's rho	0.005	—
	df	111	—
	p-value	0.960	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

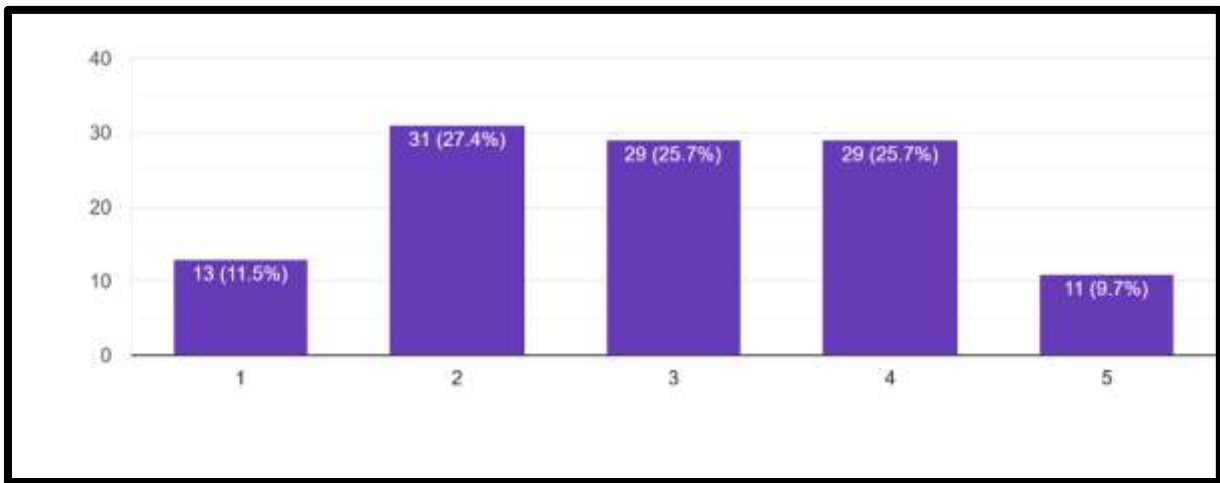


Interpretation

The Spearman correlation analysis between the importance of a brand supporting social or environmental causes (social env importance) and loyalty to brands that align with personal values (values loyalty) shows an extremely weak positive association, with a Spearman's rho of just 0.005. The accompanying p-value of 0.960 is far above the conventional threshold for statistical significance, indicating there is no meaningful relationship between these two variables in this sample. In other words, how important respondents find social or environmental causes does not appear to be related to their sense of loyalty to brands that share their values.

5. How likely are you to switch brands after a negative experience?

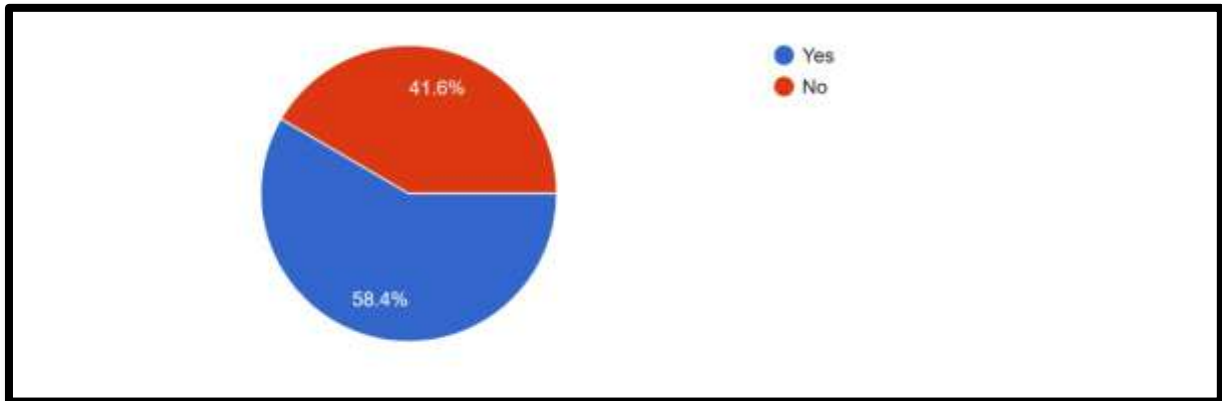
RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
1	13	11.5%
2	31	27.4%
3	29	25.7%
4	29	25.7%
5	11	9.7%

**Interpretation**

The survey shows that while all degrees of likelihood to switch brands after a negative experience can be found, there is a sizeable number of respondents that are high likelihood switchers. In fact, over half of the respondents chose ratings of 3 to 5, suggesting a mid to very high. Almost 52% of participants selected either a 3 or a 4, while almost 10% chose the highest likelihood rating of 5. However, we see that only approximately 11.5% stated they were not at all likely to switch from their brands after a negative experience. These results fit well within broader consumer trends and previous research. As previously mentioned, research consistently finds that one negative experience can drive consumers away from their preferred brands, and more than half of shoppers say that they are willing to switch to a different retailer after just one bad experience. These statistics remind us that brands need to focus on providing their customers with good experiences, as well as preventing the loss of customers that may have faced negative experiences; in both cases, regaining existing customer loyalty is critical.

6. Have you refused to do business with a brand because of a bad website/app experience?

RESPONSES	NO OF RESPONDENTS	% OF RESPONDENTS
Yes	66	58.4%
No	47	41.6%



Interpretation

Looking at the survey, 58.4% of participants said they have refused to do business with a brand because of its app or website experience, while 41.6% said they have not. This shows the significant bearing that digital interactions have on brand loyalty. When nearly 6 out of 10 customers would switch brands on the basis of a bad online experience, brands now know that enhancing their digital touchpoints is not just about getting new customers, but also retaining their current customer base in a crowded marketplace.

Hypothesis 4: Negative Digital Experiences and Brand Switching

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** The impact of negative digital experience on switching likelihood of Generation Z consumers is not significant.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** Negative digital experience has a significant impact on the switching likelihood of Generation Z consumers.

Contingency Tables

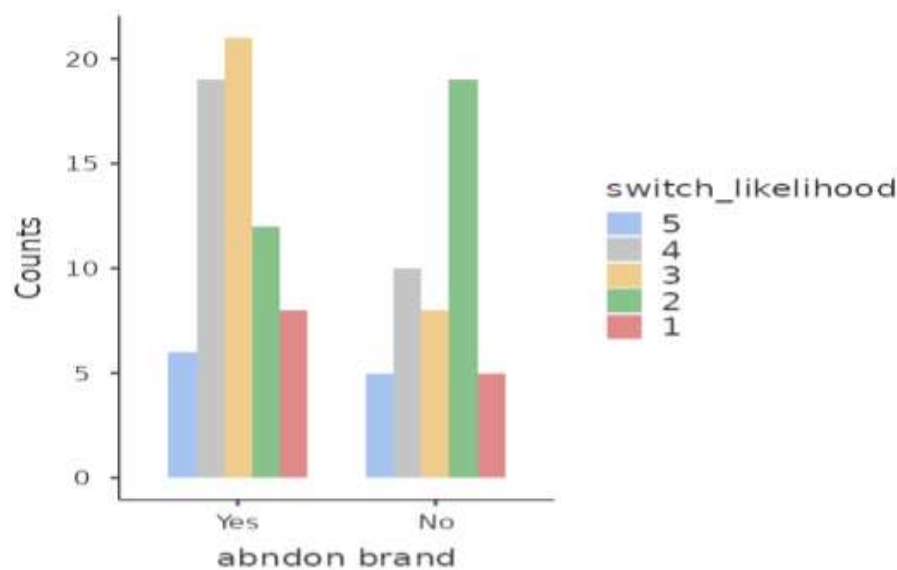
Contingency Tables

abndon brand	switch_likelihood					Total
	5	4	3	2	1	
Yes	6	19	21	12	8	66
No	5	10	8	19	5	47
Total	11	29	29	31	13	113

χ^2 Tests

	Value	df	p
χ^2	8.02	4	0.091
N	113		

Plots



Interpretation

The chi-square test results indicate that there is no statistically significant association between having abandoned a brand due to a poor website or app experience and the likelihood of switching brands after a negative experience, as the p-value is 0.091, which is above the typical 0.05 threshold for significance. While the cross-tabulation shows that individuals who have previously abandoned a brand tend to report higher switching likelihoods, these differences are not strong enough to be considered statistically significant in this sample. This suggests that, although a link may exist, it is not robust enough to draw firm conclusions in this dataset, and other factors may also influence consumers' likelihood to switch brands after negative experiences.

DISCUSSION:

This study analyzed the factors influencing brand loyalty among Generation Z using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The survey data highlighted nuanced attitudes toward digital engagement, influencer marketing, brand values, and the role of negative digital experiences.

Digital Engagement and Brand Loyalty:

A slight majority of respondents (54%) reported not following any brands on social media, while 46% indicated engagement with brands on these platforms. Regarding personalized marketing, 43.4% did not prefer personalized content and product recommendations, 31% expressed a preference, and 25.7% were undecided. Correlation analysis revealed a weak positive but non-significant relationship between following brands on social media and preference for personalized content or recommendations, with p-values above 0.05 for both Pearson's and Spearman's coefficients. Thus, the null hypothesis—stating no significant relationship between digital engagement and brand loyalty—was accepted in this sample.

Influencer Marketing:

When asked about trust in influencer recommendations versus traditional advertisements, only 29.2% of respondents expressed greater trust in influencers, while 49.6% trusted advertisements more, and 21.2% sometimes trusted influencer recommendations. Despite this, 58.4% reported having purchased a product or service based on influencer marketing. However, regression analysis showed that trust in influencer recommendations did not

significantly predict such purchase behavior: the model demonstrated an extremely low explanatory power (R^2 of 0.00026), and the p-value for the predictor was 0.841—well above the typical 0.05 significance threshold. These findings support the null hypothesis that trust in influencer marketing does not significantly affect Generation Z's brand loyalty or purchase actions.

Brand Values and Loyalty:

Statistical examination of the relationship between valuing a brand's support for social/environmental causes and loyalty to brands aligned with personal values showed essentially no association (Spearman's $\rho = 0.005$, $p = 0.960$). This finding suggests that, for the respondents, the perceived importance of social responsibility and personal value alignment does not translate into stronger brand loyalty.

Negative Digital Experiences and Brand Switching:

Over half of the participants (58.4%) acknowledged abandoning a brand due to a poor website or app experience. Additionally, among responses concerning likelihood to switch brands after a negative event, more than half indicated a score of 3 or 4 on a 5-point scale, implying moderate to high switching propensity, while only 11.5% reported no likelihood to switch. The chi-square test results showed no statistically significant association ($p = 0.091$) between having previously abandoned a brand due to a poor digital experience and self-reported likelihood of switching brands after a negative event. While raw cross-tabulations suggested that those who have abandoned a brand before are somewhat more likely to switch again, the difference was not strong enough to reach statistical significance in this sample, indicating that other factors may also contribute to brand switching behavior.

Overall Implications:

The statistical evidence indicates that, for this sample of Generation Z, factors typically assumed to drive brand loyalty—such as digital engagement, influence of social media personalities, and values-based branding—do not consistently translate to stronger loyalty. While influencer campaigns may prompt purchasing action from some, the majority remain skeptical of both influencer and personalized digital marketing efforts. Furthermore, negative digital experiences appear to contribute to brand abandonment, but their effect is not statistically robust when evaluated in conjunction with likelihood to switch. These results

highlight the importance of multifaceted engagement strategies and underscore the complexity of building enduring brand loyalty with Generation Z.

FINDINGS & CONCLUSION:

This study set out to identify the factors influencing brand loyalty among Generation Z, focusing on digital engagement, the impact of influencer marketing, alignment with brand values, and negative digital experiences. Survey results illustrate that a majority of respondents (54%) do not follow brands on social media, and even fewer (31%) prefer personalized content and product recommendations. Correlation analysis supported these patterns, revealing a weak and non-significant relationship between following brands on social media and preference for personalization, which led to acceptance of the null hypothesis—indicating no meaningful association between these elements of digital engagement and brand loyalty in this demographic.

When examining influencer marketing, only 29.2% of respondents trust recommendations from influencers more than advertisements, yet 58.4% reported purchasing as a result of influencer marketing. Despite this purchasing behavior, regression analysis demonstrated that trust in influencer recommendations does not significantly predict actual purchasing decisions, suggesting that while influencer campaigns can drive action, they don't necessarily foster trust or loyalty. With regard to brand values and sustainability, Spearman's correlation produced a near-zero association ($\rho = 0.005$, $p = 0.960$) between the perceived importance of social/environmental causes and loyalty to brands that align with personal values. This indicates that, for many respondents, stated support for social or environmental issues does not translate into measurable brand loyalty.

The study also probed responses to negative brand experiences. Over half of participants (about 52%) expressed at least a moderate inclination to switch brands after a negative experience, and 58.4% have abandoned a brand due to a poor website or app. However, the chi-square analysis found no statistically significant association ($p = 0.091$) between abandoning a brand for poor digital performance and reported likelihood to switch, pointing to a complex relationship with potential influences beyond just digital encounter quality.

In conclusion, the findings show that factors often assumed to shape Generation Z's brand loyalty—including digital engagement, influencer trust, and alignment with social values—were not significantly linked to loyalty outcomes in this sample. Negative digital experiences increase the risk of brand abandonment, yet this link is not statistically robust, highlighting the multifaceted nature of loyalty for this group. For marketers, these results suggest that while influencer campaigns and digital strategies can prompt engagement or purchases, building lasting loyalty among Gen Z requires a more nuanced understanding of their values, expectations, and the diverse ways they interact with brands.

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