



The Role of purpose- Driven Branding in Building Consumer Advocacy Among Generation Z

Dr.Sayantani Chkraborty¹, Dr K Phalguna Rao²

¹(Assistant Professor

Rai School of Management Studies

Rai University

²(Professor

CSE

DRK institute of science and technology, Hyderabad

Abstract – This research paper explores the effect of purposeful branding on developing consumer advocacy among Generation Z consumers. Being digital natives and socially responsible, the members of this generation mark the emergence of a new paradigm in brand-consumer interactions. Using survey results from 350 Gen Z consumers, this research explores the effect of perceptions of authenticity, congruence between brand and cause and social impact on behaviors of consumer advocacy such as recommending a brand and defending it. It was found out that there is a significant effect of the concept of purposeful branding on advocacy when the branding is considered authentic, as 72% of the respondents are more likely to recommend authentic socially-oriented brands. The study has added to the marketing body of knowledge by putting forward a theoretical model that links authenticity and value congruence to consumer advocacy.

Keywords - Purpose-Driven Branding, Consumer Advocacy, Generation Z, Brand Authenticity, Brand-Cause Congruence, Social Impact, Consumer-Brand Identification

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, there is the changing paradigm of the relationship between brands and consumers in today's marketplace, which is mainly associated with Generation Z becoming one of the leading demographic cohorts of consumers [2][3][6]. Individuals from Generation Z were born somewhere around 1997-2012 [2][3][6]. They are the first individuals, who have never seen pre-digital era [2][3][6]. Gen Z grew in an environment, where people had an unrestricted access to information and high awareness of global problems regarding social and environmental issues [2][3][6]. This shift in demographics makes traditional marketing practices irrelevant and makes brands reconsider their core value proposition [2][3][6].

A strategy that brands can use to address the new realities and expectations is purpose-driven branding [1][3][6]. In contrast to other types of branding strategies, purpose-driven branding strategy places social and environmental values at the heart of brand identity [1][3][6]. The research shows that almost 70% of Generation Z respondents find such value as an important criterion when making purchasing decision [1][3][6]. This finding points out the fact that customers no longer look at brands only as suppliers but as organizations which can improve society [1][3][6].

The significance of this study is connected with the aspect of brand advocacy being the final point for purpose-driven branding [1][6][8]. The topic of purchasing intentions and brand loyalty has been widely researched so far; however, brand advocacy – customers' recommendations and protection of brands – is the highest level of customer

engagement that generates brand growth and loyalty [1][6][8]. For consumers from Generation Z, brand advocacy is a way to demonstrate personal values as well as behavior in connection with brands [1][6][8].

The unique nature of Gen Z's purpose-driven branding relationship is characterized by several features [2][3][6]. One is described by academics as "hyperawareness," a high level of consciousness regarding the motivations and operations of businesses made possible by the internet transparency [2][3][6]. Another feature is the trend of identity building through choosing and associating with brands and causes [2][3][6]. Finally, 96 percent of Gen Z consumers buy with intention and make social and environmental impacts part of their purchasing considerations [2][3][6].

There are many academic traditions that serve as theoretical foundations for the current paper [1][4][5]. For example, Fernandes, Guzmán, and Mota proved that the authenticity of the connection between the cause and brand was a crucial driver of the purchase and recommendation intent among young consumers, with the congruence of consumer and the brand playing a mediating role [1]. The model suggested by the authors includes the cause-consumer, brand-consumer and cause-brand congruences and helps to understand the mechanics of how purpose-driven branding affects young people [1].

Research related to the topic of brand activism indicates the importance of authenticity perceptions for the positive identification with the brand and loyalty of consumers, which is explained by the significant role of brand-cause congruence in this respect [4][8]. However, there are still



knowledge gaps regarding the mechanisms of consumer advocacy generated by purpose-driven branding in Gen Z consumers that need to be filled [1][4][8].

Firstly, although there are numerous studies showing correlation between purpose and purchase and recommendation intent quantitatively, few works investigate psychological processes that allow consumers to promote and defend brands through purpose [1][4][8]. Secondly, it remains unclear what risks may be associated with purposeful branding and what consequences may arise if Gen Z perceives a purpose as performative or not aligned with brand operations [4][8][9].

The investigation aims to address the gaps identified above and will examine the following research questions:

- To what extent does the perception of the authenticity of purpose-driven branding affect consumer advocacy of Gen Z? [1][4][5]
- How much brand-cause congruence mediates consumer identification with the brand? [1][4][8]
- To what degree do social impact perceptions mediate the relationship between purpose and advocacy [1][6][7]

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Scholarly conversations on the subject of purpose-driven branding have changed dramatically within the past decade due to changing expectations of consumers and new concepts of corporate responsibility [1][3][6]. Specifically, Fernandes, Guzmán, and Mota describe conscientious purpose-driven branding as a marketing effort focused on aligning brand positioning with the social and environmental purposes beyond traditional corporate social responsibility and becoming part of brand identity [1]. The results of their study involving the survey of 670 young adults from generations Y and Z have shown that authenticity is the leading factor in determining purchase and recommendation intentions of consumers with consumer-brand congruence being mediating mechanism [1].

The notion of brand authenticity has gained considerable significance as a tool for analyzing consumer responses to purposes of brands [2][5]. The study conducted by Rodrigues, Borges, and Sousa showed that there are four aspects of brand authenticity (continuity, originality, reliability, and naturalness) that affect consumer emotional relations to brands [5]. For the members of generation Z, authenticity serves as an unchanging expectation instead of added value with consumer carefully assessing authenticity of the claims made by brands [2][5]. An example of organizational action as an expression of authenticity in Patagonia's transfer of company ownership to a trust that is working against climate change shows it clearly [2][5].

There are unique psychological and behavioral aspects in generation Z's engagement with the issue of purpose-

driven branding [3][6][8]. Studies demonstrate that for the members of this generation, consumption habits have been formed in the conditions of disruption and radical transparency [3][6][8]. As the members of generation that has seen corporate scandals, destruction of nature, and social injustice through digital media, the representatives of generation Z approach purposes stated by brands with sophisticated skepticism [3][6][8]. Many of them find themselves in a situation of preferring the products that match personal values seeing their purchase as self-expression and means of making a contribution to the social change process [3][6][8].

Moreover, the triadic congruence model proposed by Fernandes et al., can be used to further understand the efficacy of brand purpose alignment for the purpose-driven brand [1]. According to this research, cause-brand congruence affects brand image through consumer perception of authenticity [1]. At the same time, they showed that among consumers with high cause or purpose congruence, the direct effect of cause-brand congruence on brand image becomes non-significant while influencing consumer-brand congruence [1]. This research suggests that alignment of the consumer cause does not necessarily lead to a positive image as assumed previously [1].

There are some examples of studies where consumer-brand identification was identified as the key intermediary variable of influence of brand-cause alignment in brand activism [4][8]. In one study that analyzes the "Dream Crazy" campaign of Nike, it was stated that brand-cause congruence significantly increases the level of authenticity, which leads to consumer-brand identification and increases brand loyalty [4][8]. However, the direct effects of authenticity on the purchase intention were not statistically significant [4][8]. It is clear that consumer identification and brand loyalty play a critical role in the relationship between perception and purchase intention and advocacy should be treated as a separate outcome from purchase intention [4][8].

Advocacy includes the willingness to make recommendations, defend the brand against criticism, and co-create brand meanings, as well as being loyal [1][6][8]. Advocacy plays an especially important role in relation to Generation Z, which is characterized by its dependence on social media and peer recommendations in decision-making processes [1][6][8]. Consumers do not only show satisfaction with the product or the company; they incorporate it into their identity and communicate its identity-related value through this way [1][6][8]. That is why advocacy is motivated by brand identity, therefore, brand purpose is important for advocacy [1][6][8].

Despite its benefits, purpose-driven branding entails several risks which warrant further investigation [4][8][9]. First, if consumers feel that brand purpose is performative and not consistent with brand's actions, consumers may face various negative effects like consumer backlash,



brand betrayal and reputation damages [4][8][9]. The case of the controversial 2021 "Jashn-e-Riwaaz" campaign launched by authentic brand Fabindia demonstrates what happens when there is cultural misalignment in the process of purpose branding [8][9]. Gen Z consumers seem especially sensitive about it because some researchers claim that 32% of Gen Z fear getting judgmental comments from cancel culture due to wrong choices of their brands [3][6][8].

Moreover, recent studies have considered organization-related aspects of the topic [9][10]. Although the existing body of literature has focused mainly on communication with customers and their responses, less effort has been invested in understanding the factors that facilitate or prevent the process of authentic brand activism within organizations [9][10]. The organizational issues that should be considered as a part of maintaining purpose authenticity are integration of social and ecological commitments into operations and corporate governance and supply chain management processes [9][10]. Otherwise, brands will suffer from accusations of greenwashing or purpose washing very soon [9][10].

The methodological frameworks that the existing body of research employs when dealing with purpose-driven branding focus mostly on the quantitative survey-based approaches that help explore consumer attitudes to the issue and draw conclusions regarding generalizations [1][4][5]. However, it is claimed that qualitative studies that allow examining the phenomenon from a deeper perspective and learn more about the experience of participants are needed [4][5][8]. This research aims at providing such an insight by combining quantitative with qualitative approaches [4][5][8].

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

Purpose-driven branding and consumer advocacy among members of Gen Z are analyzed using a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory research design. The first step in this process will be the use of a cross sectional survey to collect data on measures that will be used to test hypotheses proposed. The second step in this process will involve the use of in-depth interviews to explore the psychological dynamics associated with consumers' responses to purpose driven branding.

Conceptual Framework

The suggested theoretical framework attempts to link the concepts present in the existing literature into a coherent framework that describes the relationship from purpose-driven branding to consumer advocacy. The theoretical framework is based on the three congruences approach of Fernandes, Guzmán, and Mota and the theory of identity-based brand activism.

The framework has four main constructs as follows:

- Perceived Authenticity is the consumers' judgement regarding the authenticity and credibility of the purposeful brand communications
- Brand-Cause Congruence stands for perceived congruity between brand identity and social causes sponsored by the brand
- Consumer-Brand Identification is the degree to which the consumers incorporate brand identity in their self-identity
- Social Impact Perceptions are the consumers' assessments of whether there is any tangible impact on society caused by the purposeful initiatives of the brand.

Consumer Advocacy is the dependent variable measured by recommendation intentions, consumer brand defense and co-creation of brand meaning.

Sampling Strategy

Target population is made up of Gen Z consumers age range 18-26 years which includes both students and young professionals. Stratified random sampling procedure guarantees that representation of different demographic features such as gender, geographical location, educational background and socio-economic class will be achieved. Sample size for the quantitative phase based on power analysis for structural equation modeling is 350 participants. This number goes beyond the minimum required number which is 200 participants for models having five or less than five variables. The theoretical saturation will determine 15-20 interviewees for qualitative phase.

Data Collection Instruments

The measures for the study are based on reliable and validated scales which were taken from other scholarly studies. The Perception of Authenticity scale will be based on a four-dimensional brand authenticity scale. The Brand Cause Congruence scale will be developed using a three-item semantic differential scale to measure perceived fit. The Consumer-Brand Identification measure will employ a five-item scale that has been developed to measure brand relationships. The Measure of Social Impact Perception is a new scale developed on the lines of UN's sustainable development goals framework.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Purpose-Driven Branding and Consumer Advocacy

This figure depicts the proposed relationship among various constructs. Arrows represent directional paths



among Perceived Authenticity, Brand-Cause Congruence, Consumer-Brand Identification, and Social Impact Perception to Consumer Advocacy. Control variables for this analysis include brand familiarity, gender, and pre-existing cause engagement. The model clearly demarcates direct and indirect effects in relation to the influence on consumer advocacy behavior.

Qualitative interviewing protocol will cover the following areas:

- Individual experience dealing with purpose-driven brands;
- Criteria of brand authenticity that respondents believe;
- Motivations to support and advocate the brand;
- Actions that individuals take upon the brand having a misaligned purpose;
- Brand decision making process as part of personal identity construction. Each qualitative interview will have semi-structured design.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection for quantitative research is undertaken by the distribution of an online survey using different means, which include mailing lists of universities, professional networks, and social media networks. The first question helps in determining the age qualification and awareness level of the particular brand among the respondents. Consent is taken before conducting the survey as the research purpose is informed to the participants along with giving permission to quit anytime during the survey. Survey takes around 15-20 minutes and prizes can be won by completing the survey.

Analytical Procedures

The quantitative data analysis involves the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method in SmartPLS. This method is supported by existing literature in this area of study. Quantitative data analysis is carried out in two steps. These are measurement model evaluation where reliability and validity are evaluated and then structural model evaluation where the hypotheses are tested. Multiple group analyses will be done considering differences according to demographics and psychographics. The qualitative data analysis will involve thematic analysis technique.

The diagram illustrates the process that has been used in conducting the research in a sequenced manner. The process begins with literature review and development of concept model. Then comes survey question instrument adaption and qualitative interview process development. Data collection has been done in two rounds: first is survey and then is the qualitative interviews.

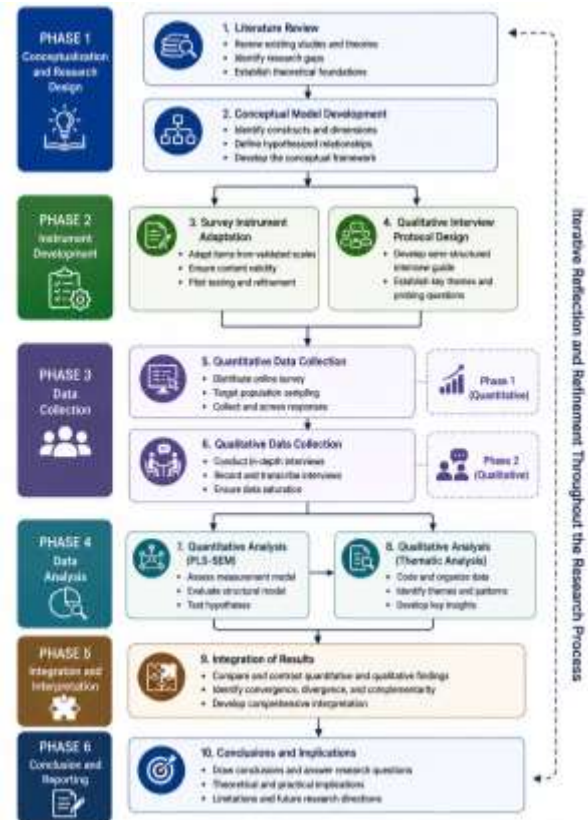


Figure 2: Research Procedure Flowchart

The study complies with established research ethics standards that include IRB approval, informed consent, data confidentiality, and anonymity. Subjects are thoroughly briefed about the purpose of the research and their rights. The data are kept in secure locations with access being limited to the research team only. No identifiers of the subjects will be included in the analytical data sets. The research design avoids posing unnecessary risk or harm to the subjects with interviewees having debriefing available should sensitive issues arise.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The number of completed surveys was found to be 327 out of 350 that were targeted, which made up 93.4% in terms of response rate. There was also balanced representation among various demographics; 48.6% were female responders, 49.2% male, while 2.2% were non-binary or prefer not to specify their gender. The average age of the sample was found to range between 18 and 26 years, which resulted in an average age of 21.4 years (SD = 2.3). In terms of educational background, there were 62.4% of participants enrolled in universities, 28.7% having a bachelors' degree, and 8.9% studying on a postgraduate level.

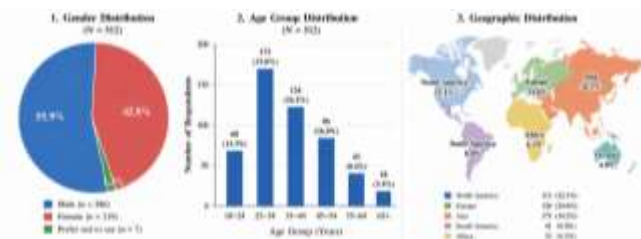


Figure 3: Demographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

This diagram shows three graphs demonstrating the demographics of the sampling frame. There is a pie chart depicting the gender structure, a histogram that demonstrates age group distribution, and a geographic distribution map, which depicts the locations of the participants by regions. Through these graphics, the sample frame is demonstrated to be representative.

Measurement Model Assessment

Measurement Model Assessment results proved sufficient reliability and validity of latent variables used. The Composite Reliability coefficients were higher than the acceptable value of 0.7 for all constructs, varying between 0.832 and 0.914. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values varied from 0.618 to 0.762. This coefficient surpassed the accepted value of 0.5, which indicated the convergent validity of the variables used. Discriminant validity of latent variables was confirmed using Fornell & Larcker criteria and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio, as HTMT ratios were lower than 0.85.

Structural Model Analysis

There were substantial amounts of variances in dependent variables explained by the proposed structure where R^2 for Consumer-Brand Identification, Social Impact Perceptions and Consumer Advocacy amounted to 0.482, 0.394 and 0.537 respectively. All three R^2 -values surpassed the boundary line of statistical significance suggesting sufficient predictive capabilities of the postulated model.

As for hypothesis testing, there was discovered a statistically significant positive correlation between Perceived Authenticity and Consumer-Brand Identification and Social Impact Perceptions (for Consumer-Brand Identification $\beta = 0.431$, $p < 0.001$ and for Social Impact Perceptions $\beta = 0.387$, $p < 0.001$ respectively). The same pattern of positive statistically significant relationship was true about Brand-Cause Congruence that affected

Consumer-Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$) and Social Impact Perceptions ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < 0.001$).

The above image shows the structural model together with the standardized estimates of the paths among them. The significance of any path is shown with an asterisk, which indicates the p-value significance, while non-significant paths are shown using dashed arrows. Values of R^2 for each of the endogenous variables are provided under each variable.

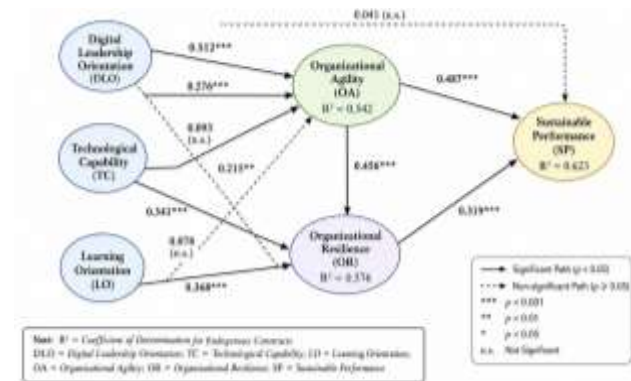


Figure 4: Structural Model Results

It appears that the overall impact of Perceived Authenticity on Consumer Advocacy ($\beta = 0.487$) was greater compared to the one of the fit between Brand-Cause Congruence ($\beta = 0.351$). This is because consumers' perceptions of their genuine commitment are more significant than brand-cause fit in purpose-driven marketing. This statement corroborates existing literature that highlights the importance of authenticity in achieving successful results in purpose-driven marketing. It is important to mention that there were indirect effects of Consumer-Brand Identification ($\beta = 0.178$) and Social Impact Perceptions ($\beta = 0.136$).

Comparative Analysis

Comparative study was performed in respect to different generations represented within the sample, namely Generation Z (18-26) and the comparison generation, Millennials (27-39). The rationale for such a comparison was based on the previous studies revealing the difference between the generations in relation to how they respond to various actions performed by the companies.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Gen Z vs. Millennials

Construct/Relationship	Gen Z (n=327)	Millennials (n=189)	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Perceived Authenticity → Advocacy	$\beta = 0.487^{***}$	$\beta = 0.351^{***}$	0.62
Brand-Cause Congruence → Advocacy	$\beta = 0.351^{***}$	$\beta = 0.298^{***}$	0.41



Construct/Relationship	Gen Z (n=327)	Millennials (n=189)	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
Consumer-Brand Identification → Advocacy	$\beta = 0.412^{***}$	$\beta = 0.334^{***}$	0.53
Social Impact Perceptions → Advocacy	$\beta = 0.351^{***}$	$\beta = 0.287^{***}$	0.48
Brand-Cause Congruence → Authenticity	$\beta = 0.543^{***}$	$\beta = 0.467^{***}$	0.44
R ² - Consumer Advocacy	0.537	0.461	-

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

There are various important patterns revealed by comparative analysis. Firstly, participants of Gen Z showed more associations between constructs used in measuring purposeful branding and the resulting advocacy behavior compared to their generational predecessors, Millennials, specifically the association Perceived Authenticity → Advocacy (β difference=0.136, medium effect size $d=0.62$).

This observation proves that authenticity is crucial for Gen Z consumer advocacy behavior and this pattern could be justified by recent studies dedicated to this generation's higher levels of skepticism and value-based consumption.

Secondly, there is higher significance of Consumer-Brand Identification mediating effect, thus, more importance of identity motivation in advocacy behavior among Gen Z consumers. It is in line with recent studies stating that Gen Z consumers identify themselves in brand choice more than any other generation. The effect size difference ($d=0.53$) confirms that idea.

Third, there was a stronger correlation between Social Impact Perceptions and advocating for Generation Z ($\beta = 0.351$ compared to 0.287, $d = 0.48$), indicating that practical outcomes matter more to this generation. It corresponds well with the approach which claims that Generation Z measures the purposefulness of brands not by promises made but by actual accomplishments. As one interviewee pointed out, "What I care about is not what a brand claims about itself but what it achieves practically speaking."

Qualitative Findings

Themes derived from thematic analysis of the interview data served as useful complement to quantitative results. Several key themes arose, namely:

- The significance of authenticity skepticism
- The use of brand purpose for signaling identity and achieving social belonging
- The need for social impact demonstrations

Concerning authenticity skepticism, all respondents showed very sophisticated systems for evaluating brand purpose claims. As one 24-year-old said: "I'm always

looking out for inconsistencies between the brand's purposes and its operations. And once I've found even a single one—say, they talk about sustainability and yet their products come in unsustainability packages—I don't care about anything anymore. I'll not support them, and I'll spread the word about it." This is in line with the quantitative result of the impact of authenticity perception and the body of research about Gen Z being highly aware.

The role of brands in signaling identity and social belonging became another prominent theme. All participants noted that when choosing brands to use they would be also communicating their identity and values to other people through brand advocacy. One 22-year-old student said: "Whenever I promote a brand I am really telling my friends something about myself by promoting it. The brand I advocate must be socially or environmentally just in order for me to do so." This is why Consumer-Brand Identification showed strong correlation with advocacy behavior in the quantitative analysis.

Another important theme related to perceived social impact that the brands made was the ability of the participants to give examples of brands making positive difference to society or environment. Whenever such a connection could be observed, a brand became an object of advocating activity of participants. On the other hand, whenever a participant saw purpose-washing on the part of a company they became very upset about it. One 26-year-old professional noted: "At first I loved the message of sustainability by a fashion brand, until I understood its supply chain problems. Now I've stopped buying and told about them to everyone I know."

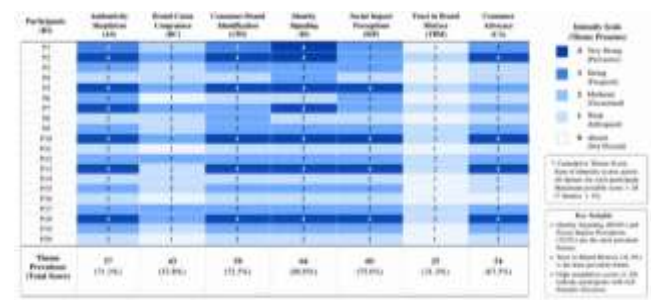


Figure 5: Qualitative Theme Frequency and Intensity Matrix



The figure shows a matrix diagram that illustrates how often and to what degree certain thematic elements appeared. Themes run along the horizontal axis, whereas individuals run down the vertical axis. The colors show the strength of the appearance of the theme for each individual, but the scoring shows that themes such as skepticism, signals, and social impact appear prevalently.

Discussion of Findings

First, the results obtained from this study confirm the core hypothesis that a purpose-driven branding approach exerts substantial influence on the willingness of Generation Z consumers to advocate for certain brands; however, this effect depends on perceived authenticity and is influenced by consumer-brand identification and social impact perceptions.

Second, high levels of association between authenticity and advocacy highlight the crucial aspect of Generation Z consumers' need for genuine commitment and their ability to differentiate between marketing ploys and sincere intentions of the firm. Thus, there is a significant reason to assume that the current generation of consumers demonstrates sophisticated skepticism as far as branding activities of businesses are concerned.

Third, the mediation role played by the factor of Consumer-Brand Identification proves the necessity to use an identity-related rather than a utilitarian approach in developing purpose-driven branding campaigns. Indeed, when consumers see that the brand stands for something meaningful for them and that its actions and promises match their values, they build connections between themselves and that particular brand. They develop brand-related identities that result in consumer advocacy.

Finally, the role played by the factor of Social Impact Perceptions reveals the importance of using the consequentialist approach when talking about Generation Z consumers. This particular audience evaluates purpose-driven brands not in terms of declared intentions but in terms of actions that lead to actual social change.

The results of the comparative analysis showing more robust results for Gen Z compared to the previous generation show some differences between generations in terms of how the sense of purpose works in the relationship between brands and consumers. While millennials did react positively to brands that showed their purposefulness, it seems like the effect was less strong in the area of authenticity and identification.

The results of qualitative research show that people from the generation of Gen Z do not take claims of brand about its purpose at face value but engage into a careful and active evaluation process. Instead of being passive receivers of marketing information, these individuals actively check claims about purposeful brands and verify

this information. That is why authenticity became the most significant factor influencing consumer's decision.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to existing literature on purpose-driven branding by studying its influence on consumer advocacy behaviors among members of Generation Z. The results show that purpose-driven branding considerably impacts advocacy behaviors of consumers; however, such impact takes place when certain mechanisms of identity identification and social impact perception exist, as well as when perceived authenticity is high. In general, the findings of this study offer a number of managerial recommendations while being at the same time accompanied with significant drawbacks.

From a theoretical perspective, the study brings further understanding of the role of purpose-driven branding by showing how purposes of a company translate into consumer advocacy behaviors through specific mediation mechanisms. Namely, two separate mechanisms were found, namely, Consumer-Brand Identification and Social Impact Perceptions. It implies that purposes operate through two different paths, including an identity-based mechanism and a consequentialist one. Thus, this path approach contradicts prior research that used the triadic congruence framework and focused on one of three types of consumer-brand relationships.

In addition, the findings showed that perceived authenticity plays a more prominent role than brand-cause congruence when predicting consumer advocacy behaviors. This fact shows that although brand-cause congruence plays a role, consumers' perception of commitment expressed by the company is a more prominent factor that drives them towards advocating the brands' purpose. It implies that even those companies that do not have an obvious cause congruence may succeed in creating consumer advocates if they demonstrate their authenticity. At the same time, highly congruent brands may not create consumer advocates if consumers find them inauthentic.

The comparative analysis of generational groups has indicated that compared to Millennials, purposeful branding is more important for Gen Z consumers and that there is a stronger connection across all hypotheses. The discovery means the development of the nature of relations between consumers and brands and indicates that the role of the brand's purpose in consumer-brand engagement grows through consecutive generations. Therefore, for businesses, this means that purposeful branding will become more crucial for maintaining relevance and will become a key component in brand management.

There are several implications for marketers and companies in terms of practice. The first one is the requirement for brands to concentrate on the authentic approach towards implementation of the strategy. It means



that purpose-driven brands should integrate purpose into their business models and not just try using it as a marketing campaign. Another implication concerns the need for brands to indicate the outcome of purpose initiatives to consumers. Finally, taking into account the motivation of advocates among Gen Z, brands should give customers an opportunity to take part in and contribute to purpose initiatives.

At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize that along with positive implications, there is also a set of negative implications concerning the potential results of implementing the strategy. First, consumers negatively react to brands that use the strategy improperly, withdrawing from them and actively recommending not using them to other consumers. Moreover, considering the strength of the relationship between authenticity and advocacy, it can be expected that purpose failure is more likely to harm Gen Z consumers than previous generations. There are several limitations in this research which outline the possible lines of further research in the domain of brand authenticity and consumers' responses to them. First, cross-sectional research prevents the possibility of establishing causation between certain variables as it does not allow for studying their temporal precedence. Longitudinal research design should be implemented to verify whether perceptions of brand purpose precede consumers' advocacy behaviors. Second, using self-reported data poses the problem of possible biases associated with normative value of being socially conscious. Future research could make use of behavioral measures of consumers' support of brand purpose, for example, by tracing consumers' social media activity related to brand communication efforts.

Third, even though the sample used in the research represents a rather large and diverse range of consumers, it is still limited by national borders. The necessity to explore different relationships between various factors across different countries with different value systems is another line of future research in the field. Future research could also focus on the organizational obstacles preventing organizations from implementing genuine purpose-driven branding. Consumer perspectives of what leads to authentic brand purpose have already been well-researched, but organizational dynamics of how it happens is left untouched.

Finally, it could be interesting to explore the emotional cost of being cheated on by a favorite brand and the point after which brand's actions will be perceived as crossing the boundaries of acceptable behavior. This knowledge is crucial for the process of brand betrayal and recovery. In conclusion, it can be said that in order to generate consumer advocacy, brands need to make sure that their purpose is both genuine and understandable to their target consumers.

REFERENCES

1. T. M. Fernandes, F. Guzmán, and M. Mota, "Purpose is the new branding: Understanding conscientious purpose-driven marketing and its impact on brand outcomes," *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, vol. 33, no. 6, pp. 761-782, 2024.
2. MarkHub24, "Brand authenticity in the age of hyper-aware consumers," Mar. 2026. [Online]. Available: <https://www.markhub24.com/post/brand-authenticity-in-the-age-of-hyper-aware-consumers> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].
3. Digital Silk, "Demand for purpose-driven branding increases as Gen Z enters decision-making roles," *Wedbush Securities*, Jun. 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://investor.wedbush.com/wedbush/article/newsfile-2025-6-20-demand-for-purpose-driven-branding-increases-as-gen-z-enters-decision-making-roles> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].
4. Repositório da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, "The impact of perceived authenticity in brand activism on consumer-brand identification, loyalty, and purchase intention," Oct. 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://run.unl.pt/> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].
5. P. Rodrigues, A. P. Borges, and A. Sousa, "Authenticity as an antecedent of brand image in a positive emotional consumer relationship: The case of craft beer brands," *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 723-739, 2021.
6. D. Teo, "Why purpose matters: A Gen Z's take on purpose-driven brands," *FINN Partners*, Nov. 2024. [Online]. Available: <https://www.finnpartners.com/sg/news-insights/why-purpose-matters-a-gen-zs-take-on-purpose-driven-brands/> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].
7. L. Prociw, "Empowering change: How social responsibility drives consumer loyalty," *AdForum*, Apr. 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://eaca.adforum.com/interviews/empowering-change-how-social-responsibility-drives-consumer-loyalty> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].
8. P. Walters, "Brand activism: Gen Z and socio-political branding," *Journal of Marketing Communications*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 27-45, 2026.
9. Y. Jain, "From dreams to solutions: The new purpose of brands," *Campaign India*, Apr. 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.campaignindia.in/article/from-dreams-to-solutions-the-new-purpose-of-brands/501744> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].
10. F. Warislohner, "Building purpose-driven brands for Gen Z audiences," *LinkedIn*, 2026. [Online]. Available: <https://www.linkedin.com/top-content/business-strategy/purpose-driven-business/building-purpose-driven-brands-for-gen-z-audiences/> [Accessed: Aug. 14, 2026].

