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Motives for building relationships between Generation Z customers and businesses via YouTube in Poland and Great Britain

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article was to identify and assess the motives for building relationships between Generation Z customers and businesses via YouTube in Poland and Great Britain. The study of these motives is part of the broader research conducted by the authors among students in Poland and Great Britain in 2023. The study used a survey method with the CAWI technique. Descriptive statistical measures were used to analyze the research material. The results show that before using a service or purchasing a product of a specific company, respondents often searched for its account on YouTube. The most important benefits associated with following the company on YouTube by respondents in both countries surveyed were also identified. The relationship between the benefits analyzed and the respondent's gender and place of residence was also examined.

Keywords: Generation Z, social media, YouTube, management, marketing, company-customer relations

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M37

Introduction

Theories that are part of the achievements of management sciences offer various assumptions leading to the achievement of a competitive position of an enterprise. According to the assumptions of the resource-based theory, resources can allow an enterprise to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage [Barney, 2001]. One of the resources of a business is a relational capital, based on the company building lasting internal and external relationships. The foundation for building relationships that can be unique is knowledge of the company's stakeholders. The ability to strengthen relationships with customers, perceived as a source of competitive advantage for businesses, is becoming more and more important in the current operating conditions of entities [Dalla Pozza, Goetz, Sahut, 2018; Ołola, Grabowska, Krupka, 2023; Santouridis, Veraki, 2017]. Unfortunately, customer-related knowledge is still underestimated by businesses, even though knowledge and customer relationship management are considered as key processes in learning organizations [Mazurek-Łopacińska, 2018].

Gao and Feng [2016] emphasized that social media issues are still in their early stages, so the lack of well-established measures may be a major obstacle in examining customer perceptions and behaviors towards marketing activities on social media platforms [Gao, Feng, 2016]. Therefore, future researchers need to make further efforts to validate a robust scale to obtain accurate and reliable results related to customer behavior in this emerging area.

Alalwan et al. [2017] noted that research sample selection has been largely discussed in the literature as one of the most important issues to be considered in subsequent research. Jung et al. [2016] and Harrigan et al. [2017] noted that the vast majority of previous research has typically come from developed countries. Therefore, it is worth considering different countries (i.e., developed, emerging, developing), cultures and different contexts. Moreover, all customer segments, including their age, gender and education level, should be included to obtain a more accurate picture of their perceptions and behaviors on these innovative social media platforms [Hudson et al., 2015]. Following these tips, the authors decided to conduct research in different countries, with a special focus on Generation Z.

The research results presented in this study concern only Generation Z representatives who used YouTube during the study period. The choice of this social networking site results from the analysis of reports and research conducted around the world. There is a decline in the popularity of social media such as Facebook and Twitter among Generation Z representatives [Dorsey, 2016; Mintel, 2019]. Statistical data collected in October 2022 regarding Generation Z users in Great Britain who use selected social media platforms on a daily basis indicate that less than half of respondents used Facebook [Statista, 2022]. The most frequently used platforms by Generation Z include YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat [Briggs, 2022; Dumford et al., 2023; Morning Consult, 2022]. The choice of users of the YouTube social networking site also results from the authors' current research results among Generation Z. Based on the data collected in 2021 and 2023, the authors identified

the most popular social networking sites in the surveyed groups of respondents. In the study conducted in 2021 in Poland and Great Britain, the surveyed representatives of Generation Z indicated YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram as the most popular social networking sites [Korombel, Ławińska, 2021]. The results of another study conducted in 2023 confirmed that in Poland, representatives of Generation Z most often chose YouTube, Facebook and Instagram, while in Great Britain, respondents most often used Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok [Ławińska, Korombel, 2023].

The aim of the article was to identify and assess the motives for building relationships between Generation Z customers and businesses via YouTube in Poland and Great Britain. The implementation of the set aim was made possible by identifying the following research questions:

1. Do Generation Z representatives look for the company's account on YouTube before using its service or purchasing its product?
2. Does the gender of a Generation Z representative influence their willingness to search for a company's account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service?
3. Does the place of residence of a Generation Z representative influence their willingness to search for a company's account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service?
4. What benefits do Generation Z representatives rate the most when observing the company on YouTube?
5. Does the gender of a Generation Z representative influence their assessment of the benefits of following a company on YouTube?
6. Does the place of residence of a Generation Z representative influence their assessment of the benefits of following a company on YouTube?

Literature review

Social media is one of the greatest innovations in communication in the 21st century, which is a direct result of the use of Web 2.0 assumptions and translates into all aspects of enterprise marketing activities. Social media can be defined as Internet portals whose main purpose is to enable interaction between their users [Grębosz, Siuda, Szymański, 2016]. One of the first definitions of social media was proposed by Rheingold [1993]. He described it as a social cluster that emerges on the Internet in a situation where individuals, using the network, conduct public conversations long enough and with sufficient emotional involvement, to create personal relationships with other individuals in cyberspace. Kaplan and Haenlein [2010] describe social media as a group of online applications based on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allow users to create and exchange content.

Companies use social media not only for digital advertising, but also for customer service, acquiring innovative ideas and creating engaged brand communities. User-generated content related to a brand/product/service can radically shape consumer perceptions and pose

a challenge to marketers [Enginkaya, Yilmaz, 2014; van Tonder, 2016]. Among consumers, the opinions of others are perceived as more objective than the marketing messages of companies [Akar, Topçu, 2011]. Although the decision-making process of consumers has changed significantly, the process of justifying their purchasing decisions has not. Where once it was enough to simply go shopping and make a purchase, today's consumers conduct extensive research online and share information via social media [Enginkaya, Yilmaz, 2014].

Thanks to the development of social media, social media marketing (SMM) has developed, and as a result, modern solutions for marketing innovations have emerged, using the open innovation model as an instrument for creating a competitive advantage of an enterprise [Stanisławski, 2014]. One of the most advanced means of communication is video, which engages more of the recipient's senses. Vlogs and YouTube channels are very popular video marketing tools. In 2017, YouTube announced that users watch one billion hours of video per day [Goodrow, 2017]. The website is visited by 2 billion logged-in users each month, and users spend an average of one hour a day on mobile devices. According to data published in February 2024, 2.49 billion people worldwide use YouTube, with more women than men [Dean, 2024].

Olson et al. [2021] citing the Ascend2 report [2018] listed the strategic priorities of businesses in relation to digital marketing: (1) increasing sales prospects/leads, (2) increasing customer acquisition, (3) increasing customer engagement, (4) increasing brand awareness, (5) improving result measurability, (6) increasing website traffic, and (7) improving web user experience. Running a YouTube channel can be a strong part of a company's marketing strategy. Depending on the purpose, industry and recipient preferences, these may be instructional videos explaining how products work, or showing solutions to the most common problems, or a collection of answers to FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). There are also reports from conferences, industry meetings, video testimonials from consumers, and even the production process of a selected product [Grębosz, Siuda, Szymański, 2016].

The authors of the Ascen2 report [2018] emphasized that potential customers are almost always online and an effective digital marketing strategy provides the roadmap required to engage them. Acquiring more customers is a top priority for marketing managers that highlights the importance of supporting and aligning the marketing strategy with the sales process. Consumer behavior is significantly influenced by, among others, the culture of the country in which they grew up. Culture can influence perceptions of brands and products, and can also shape the consumer's response to promotional and advertising content. People may be more inclined to purchase those products or services that are considered fashionable or attractive by their community [Agag et al., 2024; de Mooij, 2019; Baskentli, Hadi, Lee, 2023; Faqih, 2022; Swoboda, Sinning, 2020].

A special group of customers of modern businesses is the so-called Generation Z that is the subject of the research in this study. Generation Z is also called Digital Natives, iGeneration or Next Generation [Barreiro, Bozutti, 2017]. There are discrepancies in the literature on the subject regarding the date of birth of Generation Z representatives. The authors, following several other researchers, assumed 1995 as the first year of birth of people representing

Generation Z [e.g., Bassiouni, Hackley, 2014; Hampton, Keys, 2017; Kamenidou et al., 2019], while 2009 was considered as the last year of birth of this generation.

Generation Z representatives are considered to be digitally competent, creative, and innovation-oriented. A very good knowledge of information technology [Priporas, Stylos, Fotiadis, 2017] and its intensive use on a daily basis allows people belonging to Generation Z to move efficiently in the virtual world, as well as to provide information to other participants via social media [Van den Bergh, Pallini, 2018]. Therefore, there is no doubt that entrepreneurs should strive to get to know Generation Z and build long-term relationships with them.

Methodology

The study of Generation Z motives for building relationships with companies via YouTube is part of a broader study conducted by the authors among students in Poland and Great Britain in 2023. The research employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, utilizing survey research as an indirect measurement method. It employed survey as the research technique and survey questionnaire as the research tool. The selection of variables used in the study was based on a critical analysis of relevant literature [Gummerus et al., 2012; Gregor, Kubiak, 2014].

There is no consensus in the literature regarding the year of birth of Generation Z representatives. The most frequently cited date is 1995, which the authors of the paper adopted as the cut-off year for their study.

The authors also assumed that the independent variable in their study is the specific group of respondents being tested, rather than the entire population of Generation Z. Due to the challenge of definitively determining the age range of Generation Z, it becomes problematic to treat this variable as independent. However, the authors found it valuable to use Generation Z as a heuristic, as generational profiling is now prevalent in popular media and culture, providing a descriptive framework.

Before starting the main research, the authors conducted a pilot study in 2018, which allowed them to identify and rectify any errors in the survey questionnaire before proceeding with the main study. In 2023, a total of 322 students participated in Poland (166 females and 156 males), while a total of 318 students participated in Great Britain (199 females and 119 males). From the data collected in both countries, the authors selected for further analysis only the responses of those respondents who used YouTube. The research employed the CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing) technique. In Poland, an online survey questionnaire was administered through the Webankieta.pl platform, while in Great Britain data collection was outsourced to an external institution specializing in survey administration. It is important to note that the sampling method used in both studies was non-probabilistic. While utilizing non-probabilistic sampling, the authors employed statistical inference as an

opportunity to identify relationships within the groups studied, as descriptive statistics alone would not allow for such analysis.

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

The authors acknowledge that survey research has certain limitations, such as providing only a surface-level understanding of the phenomena under study and the possibility of providing inaccurate answers by respondents. A potential criticism of the presented research results is that the study was conducted on a small group of participants. While small sample sizes can raise methodological concerns, such as limitations in generalization, they can still provide valuable insights when proper statistical tests are applied for inference [Nachar, 2008; Yates, 1934].

Results

The presented results are a fragment of the research conducted by the authors in Poland and Great Britain in 2023. From the data collected in both countries, the authors selected for further analysis only the answers of respondents who used YouTube. Table 1. contains characteristics of research samples from both countries.

Table 1. Number and characteristics of respondents (YouTube users) in 2023

Country	Number of respondents	Gender		Place of residence				
		Female	Male	Village	City up to 50 000 residents	City up to 100 000 residents	City up to 250 000 residents	City over 250 000 residents
Poland	297	150	147	150	29	22	64	32
Great Britain	251	154	97	48	48	46	24	85

Source: own study.

One of the stages of the study was to ask respondents (using a question based on an ordinal scale) whether, before using a service or purchasing a product of a particular company, they were looking for its account on YouTube. The data collected (as counts) in Poland and Great Britain in 2023 are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Multiplicity of responses to question relating to searching for company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service by respondents in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Classes	Number	Cumulative number	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Poland				
Never	22	22	7.41%	7.41%
Rarely (only in specific cases)	115	137	38.72%	46.13%
Often	109	246	36.70%	82.83%
Almost always	51	297	17.17%	100.00%
Great Britain				
Never	10	10	3.98%	3.98%
Rarely (only in specific cases)	60	70	23.90%	27.88%
Often	115	185	45.82%	73.70%
Almost always	66	251	26.30%	100.00%

Source: own study.

The majority of respondents (72.1% in Great Britain and 53.9% in Poland) stated that they often or almost always looked for a company’s YouTube account before using a service/purchasing a product,. However, when comparing the number of answers (in %) in individual categories (Table 2), it should be indicated that respondents from Great Britain were more likely to search for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service than respondents in Poland in 2023.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U-test results concerning the relationship between searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service and the gender of the respondent in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Mann-Whitney U test (adjusted for continuity) the relationship between the search for accounts on YouTube of a given company before purchasing its product/service against the variable: gender	Sum of ranks Male	Sum of ranks Female	U	Z	p
results for the survey in Poland	19834.0	24419.0	8509.0	-3.6093	0.0003
results for the survey in Great Britain	12822.5	18803.5	6868.5	-1.1472	0.2513

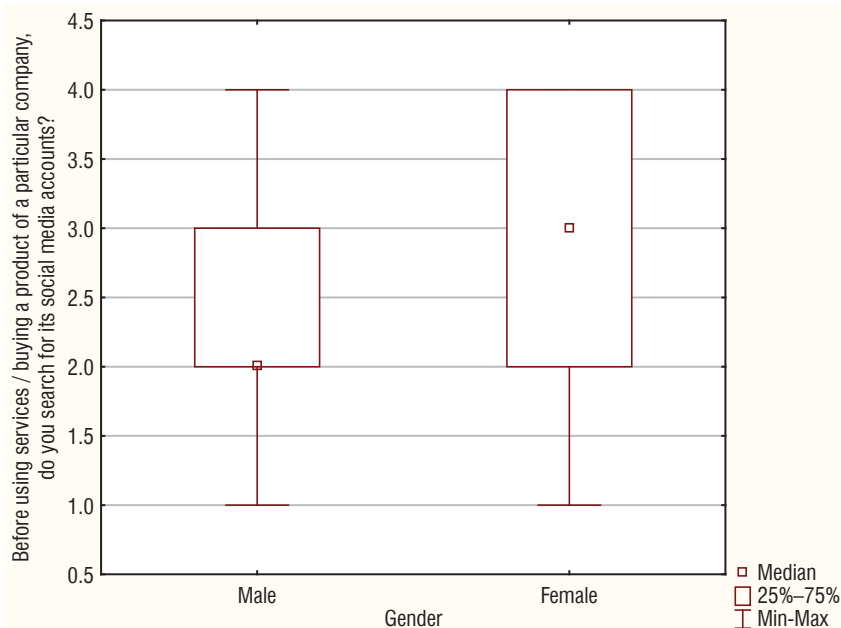
Source: own study.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the relationship between the variables: searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service and the gender of the respondent. This test was used to analyze answers to questions about differences between study groups, because it has the great advantage of being applicable to small samples (Table 3). It can also be used when the measured variables are of an ordinal type, e.g., a Likert scale [Nachar, 2008]. In both studies (in Poland and in Great Britain), respondents were divided into two groups (women and men). The authors could not conclude that the

two groups studied came from a normal distribution because they included a relatively small number of participants. In this case, the authors could not resort to the parametric mean test using the Student's t-distribution because it was not possible to check whether both samples were normally distributed [Fay, Proschan, 2010; Walters, 2021].

The analysis of data collected in Poland in 2023 allowed for the conclusion that gender significantly differentiated the analyzed variable ($p = 0.0003$). Based on the assumed level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the Z statistics of the Mann-Whitney U test with continuity correction, as well as on the exact U statistics, following assumptions can be made. There are statistically significant differences between female respondents and whole Generation Z respondents in Poland in the frequency of searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service. These differences are due to the fact that women are more likely to perform the described activities using YouTube than men. These can be described using the median, quartiles and the maximum and minimum values, which are also visible on the box-and-whisker chart (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Relationship between the frequency of searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service and the gender of the respondent in Poland in 2023



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

Source: own study.

The interpretation of the data presented in Table 3 and Figure 1 facilitates the inference that women using YouTube – representatives of Generation Z in Poland – looked for accounts of specific companies on YouTube significantly more frequently than men before purchasing

a product/service. In the case of data collected in Great Britain, no significant relationship was found between the variables: searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service and the respondent's gender.

The next stage of the analysis was to verify whether there is a relationship between the variables: searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service (variable X) and the respondent's place of residence (variable Y).

To assess the correlation between two qualitative features [Akoglu, 2018, pp. 91–93], the authors used a non-parametric test again – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Table 4). The following set of hypotheses was verified:

$$H_0: \rho = 0$$

$$H_1: \rho \neq 0$$

The verification of the null hypothesis helped to assess whether the existing relationship between the studied variables (X and Y) in the sample is only accidental or may be a regularity in the studied communities (countries).

Table 4. Spearman's rank order correlation concerning relationship between searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service and respondent's place of residence in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Spearman rank order correlation of the variables: the search for accounts on YouTube of a specific company before purchasing its product/service & place of residence	N of valid ones	Spearman's rank R	t(N-2)	p
results for the survey in Poland	297	0.0833	1.4361	0.1520
results for the survey in Great Britain	251	-0.0678	-1.0725	0.2845

Source: own study.

The obtained Spearman's R coefficients are not statistically significant (Table 4). The analysis did not provide any basis for establishing statistically significant correlations between the examined features: searching for a company account on YouTube before purchasing a specific product/service and the respondents' place of residence in Poland in 2023. The same applies to coefficients calculated for data collected in Great Britain in 2023 – the obtained Spearman's R coefficients are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

The next stage of the study was to find out which benefits of following the company on YouTube were significant for Generation Z representatives in both countries surveyed. Respondents were presented with a list of benefits (along with the opportunity to indicate other benefits not mentioned in the question) and asked to rate each of them on a scale from 1 to 5. Where 1 meant the least important benefit and 5 was the most important. Because the level of measurement of the variables studied was based on an interval scale [Harpe, 2015, pp. 836–850], it was possible to calculate average and standard deviation values of individual benefits (Table 5).

Table 5. Average values and standard deviations of benefits associated with company observing on YouTube by respondents in Poland and Great Britain in 2023

Benefits of following a brand on YouTube	Poland		Great Britain	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new	3.99	0.9794	3.64	1.1519
Opportunity to ask additional questions	3.20	1.1535	3.57	1.1052
Chance to win prizes in competitions	2.63	1.3425	3.53	1.1428
Meeting new people gathered around the brand	2.87	1.3005	3.10	1.2415
Possibility of having problems solved faster	3.60	1.1137	3.76	1.0548
Using interesting games, applications related to the brand	3.23	1.2905	3.38	1.1888
Opportunity to receive a discount coupon	3.55	1.2431	3.84	1.1188
Possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand)	2.78	1.2484	3.46	1.1500

Source: own study.

The analysis of averages made it possible to identify the most important benefits associated with following a company on YouTube. Respondents in both countries indicated the same three most significant benefits, but in a slightly different order of importance. Respondents in Poland indicated:

1. possibility of being up-to-date with what is new;
2. possibility of having problems solved faster;
3. opportunity to receive a discount coupon.

In turn, respondents in Great Britain indicated:

1. opportunity to receive a discount coupon;
2. possibility of having problems solved faster;
3. possibility of being up-to-date with what is new.

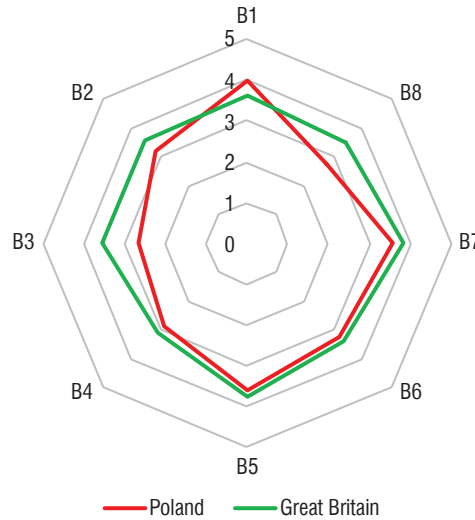
Differences in the assessment of individual benefits in both countries can be seen in Figure 2.

The comparison of means (Figure 2) also supports the inference that respondents in Poland rated only the possibility of being up-to-date with what is new higher than respondents in Great Britain. However, respondents in Great Britain rated all other benefits higher than respondents in Poland in 2023.

Among other benefits of following a company on YouTube, respondents in Poland mentioned: obtaining information about the product that the respondent is interested in, the opportunity to receive feedback, the opportunity to see the assortment in detail, the opportunity to get to know the brand better, the opportunity to meet people, quick contact to ask for information that is not directly provided.

However, respondents from Great Britain indicated: possibility of purchase from random company, new product videos, getting different opinions from people, participating in activities organized by the company, being influenced by social media stars, discussing brand movements with friends, finding good products worth money.

Figure. 2. Average benefit assessments of company observing on YouTube by respondents in Poland and Great Britain in 2023



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

Source: own study.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U-test results concerning the relationship between the benefit assessment of company observing on YouTube and the respondent’s gender in Poland in 2023

Variables	Sum of ranks Male	Sum of ranks Female	U	Z	p
possibility of being up-to-date with what is new & gender	20414.5	23838.5	9089.5	-2.7667	0.0057
opportunity to ask additional questions & gender	20556.0	23697.0	9231.0	-2.5154	0.0119
chance to win prizes in competitions & gender	21305.5	22947.5	9980.5	-1.4478	0.1477
meeting new people gathered around the brand & gender	22227.5	22025.5	10902.5	-0.1689	0.8658
possibility of having problems solved faster & gender	22492.0	21761.0	10883.0	0.1988	0.8424
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & gender	23111.0	21141.5	10263.5	1.0553	0.2913
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & gender	20701.0	23552.0	9376.0	-2.3007	0.0214
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & gender	20841.5	23411.5	9516.5	-2.0941	0.0362

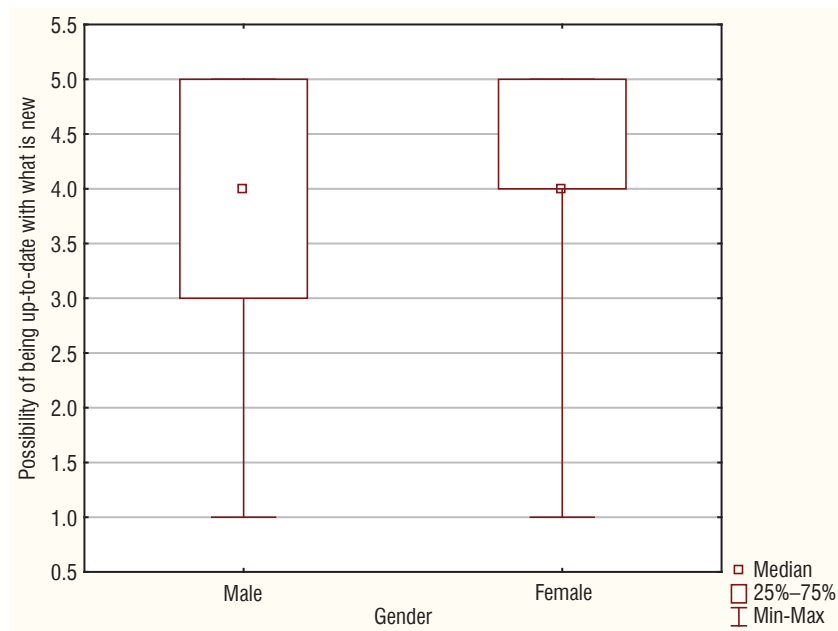
Source: own study.

The next stage was to examine whether there is a relationship between individual benefits of following the company on YouTube and the respondent’s gender. For this purpose, non-parametric tests for two independent groups were used. These tests verify the hypothesis that the two samples analyzed come from different general populations (statistical communities). The requirement for using the test was the ability to arrange the variables analyzed (measurement

data) in ascending order, i.e., from the minimum to maximum value. The Mann-Whitney U test was used (Tables 6 and 7) because the data are measurable, but their distribution is not normal and the data are ordinal [Nachar, 2008; Walters, 2021]. In the case of ordinal data, the null hypothesis (H_0) assumes that the types of distributions of the groups analyzed do not differ significantly from each other.

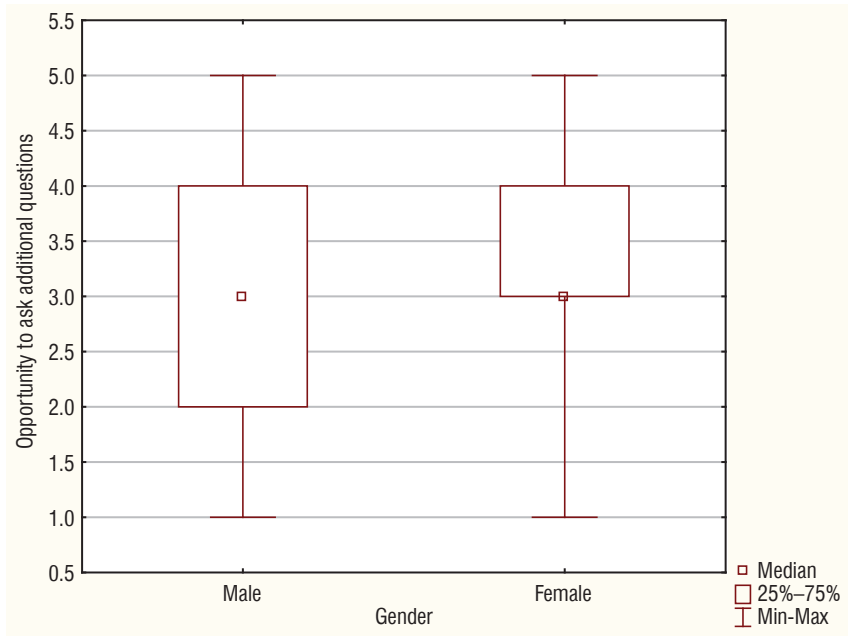
Based on the assumed level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the Z statistics of the Mann-Whitney U test with continuity correction, as well as on the exact U statistics, it can be assumed that there are statistically significant differences between female respondents and all generation Z respondents in Poland in 2023 in terms of the assessment of four of the benefits mentioned. These differences are due to the fact that female respondents rated selected benefits of following a company on YouTube higher than male respondents. These can be described using the median, quartiles and the maximum and minimum values, which are also visible on box-and-whisker charts (Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Figure 3. Relationship between the possibility of being up-to-date with what is new on YouTube and the respondent's gender in Poland in 2023



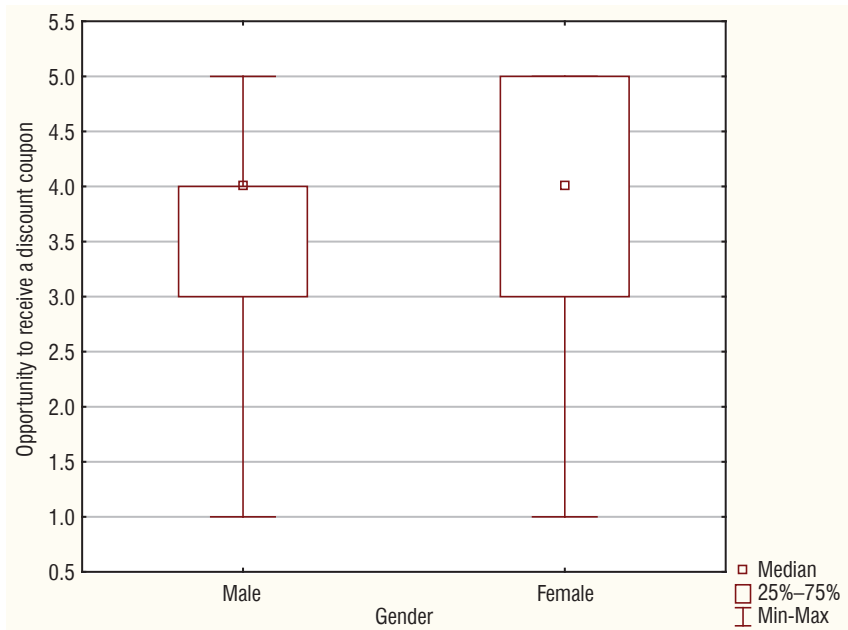
Source: own study.

Figure 4. Relationship between the opportunity to ask additional questions on YouTube and the respondent's gender in Poland in 2023



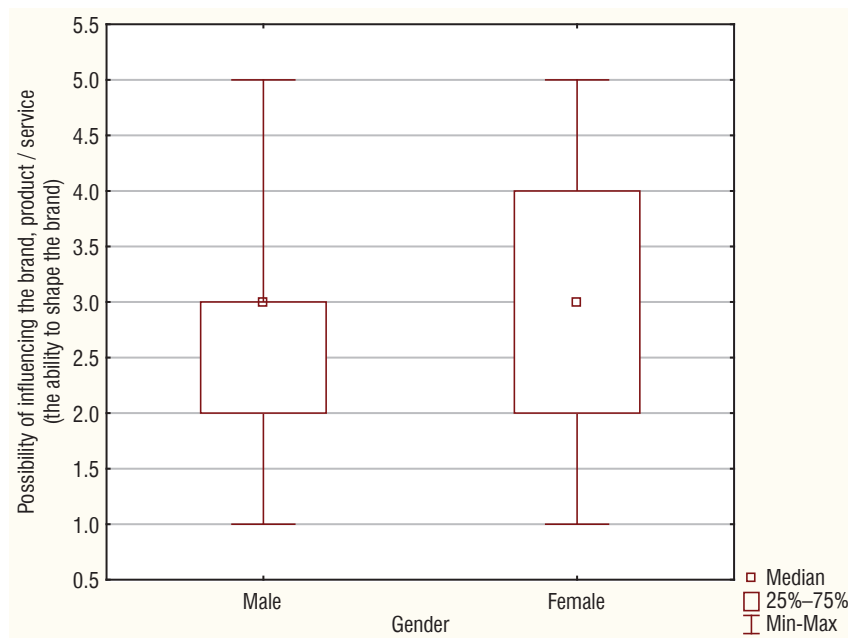
Source: own study.

Figure 5. Relationship between the opportunity to receive a discount coupon and the respondent's gender in Poland in 2023



Source: own study.

Figure 6. Relationship between the possibility of influencing the brand, product (the ability to shape the brand) and the respondent's gender in Poland in 2023



Source: own study.

The data presented in Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 confirm that there are statistically significant differences between female respondents and all Generation Z respondents in Poland in the following variables:

- the possibility of being up-to-date with what is new on YouTube, and the respondent's gender,
- the opportunity to ask additional questions on YouTube, and the respondent's gender,
- the opportunity to receive a discount coupon, and the respondent's gender,
- the possibility of influencing the brand, product (the ability to shape the brand) and the respondent's gender.

In the study carried out in Poland, in the case of the remaining benefits listed in Table 6 (???). The analysis of the collected data did not allow for the conclusion that gender significantly differentiated the analyzed variables ($p < 0.05$ was not obtained for any of the variables). This means that in the surveyed group of YouTube users, both women and men assessed these benefits at a similar level.

Based on the adopted level of $\alpha = 0.05$, the Z statistics of the Mann-Whitney U test with continuity correction, as well as on the exact U statistics, it can be assumed that there are statistically significant differences between female respondents and all Generation Z respondents in Great Britain. These differences are due to the fact that women rated two of the benefits presented higher than men: the possibility of being up-to-date with what is new and the opportunity to receive a discount coupon. These can be described using the median, quartiles

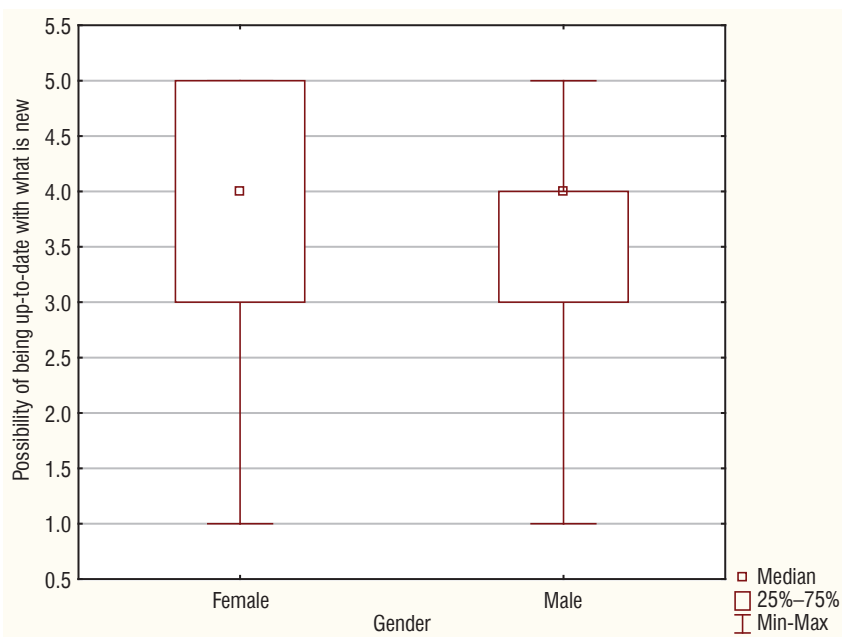
and the maximum and minimum values, which are also visible on box-and-whisker charts (Figures 7 and 8).

Table 7. Mann-Whitney U-test results concerning the relationship between the benefit assessment of company observing on YouTube and the respondent's gender in Great Britain in 2023

Variables	Sum of ranks Female	Sum of ranks Male	U	Z	p
possibility of being up-to-date with what is new & gender	20549.5	11076.5	6323.5	2.1184	0.0341
opportunity to ask additional questions & gender	19946.0	11680.0	6927.0	1.0060	0.3144
chance to win prizes in competitions & gender	20108.5	11517.5	6764.5	1.3001	0.1936
meeting new people gathered around the brand & gender	18979.5	12646.5	7044.5	-0.7763	0.4375
possibility of having problems solved faster & gender	19904.5	11721.5	6968.5	0.9314	0.3517
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & gender	19491.0	12135.0	7382.0	0.1590	0.8737
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & gender	20846.5	10779.5	6026.5	2.6881	0.0072
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & gender	20027.0	11599.0	6846.0	1.1494	0.2504

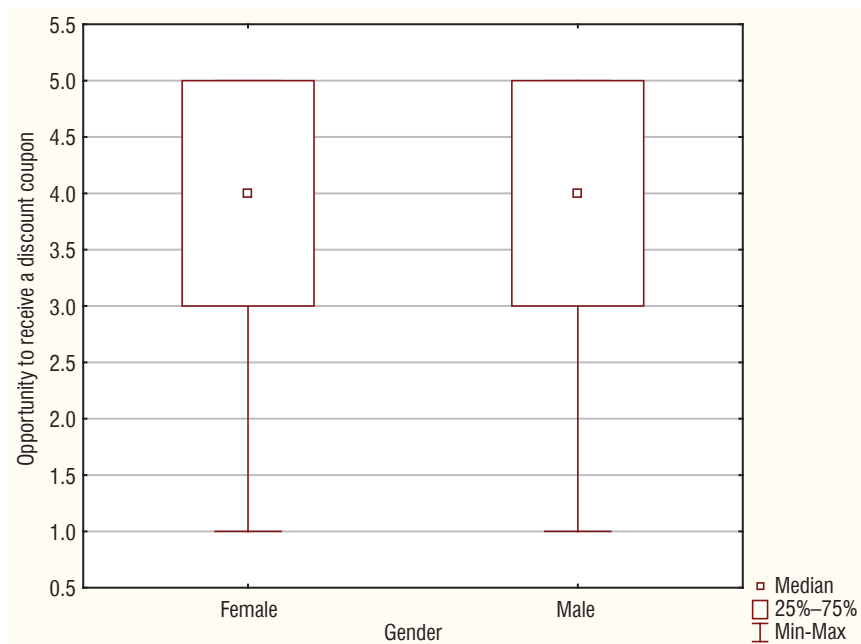
Source: own study.

Figure 7. Relationship between the possibility of being up-to-date with what is new on YouTube and the respondent's gender in Great Britain in 2023



Source: own study.

Figure 8. Relationship between the opportunity to receive a discount coupon and the respondent's gender in Great Britain in 2023



Source: own study.

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test for data from Great Britain (Table 7) do not provide grounds to reject the null hypothesis ($p > 0.05$). In the case of the remaining benefits (apart from those described in Figures 7 and 8), the types of distributions of the groups analyzed do not differ significantly from each other. There is no relationship between the individual benefits of following the company on YouTube and the gender of the respondent.

Table 8. Spearman's rank order correlation; the relationship between benefits of company observing on YouTube and the respondent's place of residence in Poland in 2023

Variables	N of valid ones	Spearman's rank R	t(N-2)	p
possibility of being up-to-date with what is new & place of residence	297	0.0652	1.1214	0.2630
opportunity to ask additional questions & place of residence	297	0.1057	1.8259	0.0689
chance to win prizes in competitions & place of residence	297	0.0548	0.9419	0.3470
meeting new people gathered around the brand & place of residence	297	0.0573	0.9851	0.3254
possibility of having problems solved faster & place of residence	297	0.0873	1.5057	0.1332
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & place of residence	297	0.0907	1.5645	0.1188
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & place of residence	297	0.0350	0.6018	0.5477
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & place of residence	297	0.0870	1.5003	0.1346

Source: own study.

The next stage of the statistical analysis was to verify whether there is a relationship between the variables: benefits associated with following the company on YouTube (variable X) and the respondent's place of residence (variable Y). To assess the correlation between two qualitative features [Akoglu, 2018, pp. 91–93], a non-parametric test was used again– Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Tables 8 and 9).

The statistical analysis (Table 8) did not provide grounds to reject the null hypothesis. There were no statistically significant correlations between the variables analyzed ($p > 0.05$). The respondent's place of residence in Poland was not significantly related to the examined benefits related to following the company on YouTube by respondents in Poland in 2023.

Table 9. Spearman's rank order correlation concerning the relationship between benefits of company observing on YouTube and the respondent's place of residence in Great Britain in 2023

Variables	N of valid ones	Spearman's rank R	t(N-2)	p
possibility of being up-to-date with what is new & place of residence	251	0.0856	1.3563	0.1762
opportunity to ask additional questions & place of residence	251	0.1008	1.5991	0.1111
chance to win prizes in competitions & place of residence	251	0.0358	0.5647	0.5728
meeting new people gathered around the brand & place of residence	251	0.1076	1.7080	0.0889
possibility of having problems solved faster & place of residence	251	0.0713	1.1284	0.2602
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & place of residence	251	-0.0248	-0.3914	0.6958
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & place of residence	251	0.0085	0.1335	0.8939
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & place of residence	251	0.0577	0.9115	0.3629

Source: own study.

In the case of the study conducted in Great Britain, no statistically significant correlations were found between the variables analyzed ($p > 0.05$). Place of residence was not significantly related to the dependent variables – benefits related to following the company on YouTube by Generation Z respondents in this group in 2023.

To sum up, the correlation coefficients (Tables 8 and 9) calculated for the data collected among Generation Z representatives in Poland and Great Britain are close to 0 and are not statistically significant. No statistically significant correlations were identified between the respondent's place of residence and the examined benefits related to following the company on YouTube.

Summary

The results of the research conducted clearly indicate that, in both Poland and Great Britain, the majority of YouTube users, Generation Z representatives, often or almost always look for a company's account on the social media of their choice, in order to obtain additional

information before using the service or purchasing a product of a specific company. This means that companies have a tool with a great potential to help build customer relationships – in order to engage Generation Z in business-to-customer relationships, companies should offer the activities and benefits for customers that Generation Z expects. The most important benefits include: the possibility of keeping up to date with new products, the possibility of solving problems faster, and the possibility of receiving a discount coupon. Companies operating in Poland should also take into account the fact that women search for corporate accounts on YouTube more frequently than men. Therefore, the message addressed to customers should take into account the expectations of this gender, especially when products or services are recommended to women. In Poland female YouTube users from Generation Z, more often than men, want to interact with the brand, receive discount coupons, have the opportunity to ask additional questions, and follow the news. In turn, businesses operating in Great Britain, wanting to engage female YouTube users from Generation Z in building company-to-customer relationships, should organize activities that provide the opportunity to receive a discount coupon and enable ongoing monitoring of new products.

It is also important to note that the respondent's place of residence, neither in Poland nor in Great Britain, was significantly related to the examined benefits of following the business on YouTube in 2023.

The study focused on YouTube because it is the world's largest video-sharing platform and the birthplace of the first generation of influencers [Murano et al., 2024]. During its process of diffusion, YouTube has become increasingly attractive to advertisers, not only in terms of classic commercials (such as pre-roll ads) but also in terms of product placement opportunities [Gerhards, 2019]. About 62 percent of businesses post videos on YouTube and use it as an advertising platform. Previous studies have examined user engagement with YouTube videos in the category of science and social media influencers. Researchers found that shorter videos were more likely to be viewed. Social endorsement cues were significantly related to variations in user engagement, with likes having a consistent positive association with all types of engagement [Wang, Jang, Haught, 2023]. Hermawan et al. [2023] suggested that using influencer marketing especially through YouTube, might be beneficial for companies to attract young consumers and make them a potential target market.

The previous literature has documented cultural differences not only in the communication style and content of marketing messages, but also in communication preferences and online behavior of local consumers [Kim, Coyle, Gould, 2009]. Similarly, culture may play a key role in shaping consumers' interactions with brands in social networks. Researchers suggest that culture influences the mode of communication used by marketers to reach consumers on local social networks in different countries [Tsai, Men 2014].

Identifying the motives for building Generation Z relationships with businesses via YouTube not only expands the current state of knowledge, but also provides managers with practical tips for building effective marketing strategies. In response to the gap in existing research and the need to compare the behavior of the same generation in different countries,

the authors analyzed research samples from two different countries, with different levels of economic development, different cultures and different historical contexts. Moreover, customer segments were examined, taking into account their gender and place of residence, to obtain a more accurate picture of their behavior on such an innovative social platform as YouTube.

The motives and features of activity of YouTube Generation Z users identified by the authors are addressed to managers responsible for building marketing strategies. Knowing the motives and features of the activity of this group of recipients, managers, whose goal is to reach customers, provide them with information about the product, encourage them to purchase, ultimately leading to an increase in sales and profit of the business. The obtained findings indicate that the nationality of respondents and their gender are important factors that require differentiation of marketing strategies undertaken by companies addressed to Generation Z customers.

The authors are aware of the limitations that accompany the use of survey research. The relatively small number of respondents participating in the study does not allow to treat the results obtained as representative. Other limitations of the research include the possibility of respondents giving false answers and the possibility of superficial knowledge of the phenomena studied. It would be advisable to consider conducting a study on a larger sample in the future, as well as supplementing the quantitative study with a qualitative study. The presented research results provide knowledge about the motives for building relationships between Generation Z and entrepreneurs via YouTube in Poland and the United Kingdom, but do not provide knowledge about other countries. Extending the research to include representatives of Generation Z from other countries would deepen knowledge on this topic.

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