

GEN Z SENTIMENT TOWARD MARKETING

Lorena Šatrak
Goran Vlašić
Kristijan Keleminić

<https://doi.org/10.20867/cromar.29.14>

Abstract

Purpose – This research aimed to analyze how the subjective well-being (both personal and national) of Generation Z influences their sentiment towards marketing. The study sought to move beyond demographic factors to understand how Gen Z's well-being shapes their feelings about marketing studies and marketing practices.

Methodology – The study combined primary and secondary data. Secondary data involved literature review, while primary data came from a questionnaire administered to 303 Gen Z students via a random stratified sample. Data collection occurred digitally and in-person across higher education institutions in Zagreb. Marketing sentiment (dependent variable) was assessed using Gaski and Etzel's (1986) framework. Subjective well-being (independent variable) followed Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Lawson's (2012) model, covering personal well-being (living standard, health, achievements, relationships, security, community, future security) and national well-being (economy, environment, social conditions, government, business, national security)..

Findings – Subjective well-being significantly impacts Gen Z's marketing sentiment – both the national well-being and the personal well-being exhibited strong influence. Interestingly, perceived quality of higher education in marketing does not correlate with sentiment toward marketing as the discipline, while perceptions of employment attractiveness and the extent to which marketing is considered ethical have positive significant influence on sentiment toward marketing, thus implying that perceptions of marketing are more dependent on everyday practices of marketing professionals, rather than marketing educators.

Contribution – This research specifically examines Generation Z, highlighting how subjective well-being influences their marketing attitudes, and moreover how marketing practices have more relevance than educational programs – implying an importance of increasing relevance and ethics of marketing practices for popularizing marketing in general.

Keywords Sentiment toward Marketing, Subjective Well-being, Perception of the quality of higher education in marketing, Marketing Career Attractiveness

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the marketing industry and the public has been fraught with tension for decades. Since the consumer rights movement gained momentum in the 1970s, the discipline of marketing has been subjected to persistent and often severe criticism from the very consumers it aims to engage (Gaski & Etzel, 1986). A pervasive narrative has taken hold, portraying marketing as an inherently manipulative, intrusive, and fundamentally dishonest enterprise, primarily designed to manufacture artificial needs and persuade consumers to purchase goods and services they do not genuinely require (Heath & Heath, 2008). Historically, scholarly attempts to explain the variance in these critical attitudes focused on traditional demographic factors such as age, gender,

and income. However, such variables have repeatedly been shown to be weak predictors, accounting for only a small fraction of the differences in individual sentiment levels (Lawson, Todd, & Boshoff, 2001). This explanatory gap prompted a necessary shift toward examining more complex psychological drivers, including psychographic profiles and consumer lifestyles, in an effort to better understand the deeper roots of these enduring negative attitudes.

In this evolving landscape, the concept of subjective well-being (SWB) has emerged as a particularly promising and powerful explanatory framework. Defined as an individual's cognitive and affective evaluation of their own life (Diener, 1984), SWB provides a holistic measure of life satisfaction that has proven to be a more robust indicator of societal welfare than purely economic metrics like GDP (Cummins et al., 2003). SWB encompasses not only personal feelings about one's standard of living, health, and relationships but also one's perception of the broader societal context, including the state of the nation's economy, environment, and governance. This dual personal-national framework, as operationalized by the International Wellbeing Index (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Lawson, 2011), is especially pertinent when analyzing Generation Z (individuals born between 1995 and 2010). As a generation of "digital natives," they are uniquely characterized by their global connectivity, high levels of social and political awareness, and a profound concern for authenticity and ethical responsibility (Tapscott, 2008).

Despite the theoretical potential of SWB to explain marketing sentiment, there has been limited empirical research exploring this connection, particularly within the crucial Generation Z cohort. This paper aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the influence of subjective well-being—both its personal and national components—on the marketing sentiment of the Generation Z student population. The primary research objectives are to: (1) determine the extent to which personal and national well-being predict sentiment toward marketing; (2) identify which specific aspects of marketing (product, price, promotion, place) are subject to the most intense positive or negative sentiment; and (3) explore how perceptions of marketing education and career attractiveness relate to these broader sentiments.

By moving beyond demographics to analyze the deeper, value-driven foundations of consumer attitudes thus including (a) subjective well-being in order to test for the impact of general attitudes of respondents on marketing; (b) ethics, as a characteristic of marketing practices; (c) employment attractiveness in marketing, reflecting relevance of marketing practice; and (d) quality of higher education in marketing, reflecting relevance of marketing education. The paper will proceed by first establishing a detailed theoretical background on consumer sentiment and subjective well-being. It will then outline the research methodology, present the empirical results from a survey of 303 students, discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, and conclude with a summary and directions for future research.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. The concept and measurement of consumer sentiment toward marketing

Consumer sentiment toward marketing represents the aggregate attitudes that consumers hold about the marketing discipline and its functions. While early studies on consumer attitudes existed, the field was significantly advanced by the work of Barksdale and Darden (1972), who developed a multi-item scale to measure public opinion on marketing. However, this early work faced criticism regarding its reliability and dimensionality. A major breakthrough came with the development of the Index of Consumer Sentiment toward Marketing (ICSM) by Gaski and Etzel (1986). Their model offered greater methodological precision and content validity by deconstructing sentiment into four core, actionable components that mirror the marketing mix: Product, Price, Promotion (specifically advertising), and Place (retailing/distribution). The ICSM is calculated as a weighted sum of responses to various statements about these four categories, allowing for a nuanced understanding of which specific functions drive overall sentiment.

To summarise, the ICSM scale is the most developed approach for researching attitudes towards marketing because it provides continuous monitoring of basic public perception and satisfaction with marketing and thus can serve as a permanent "barometer" into the true picture of how marketing is perceived by the public. As a result, the benefit and interest of studying sentiment extends beyond the benefit and interest of the marketing profession (it helps to sensitise marketers to consumer perceptions, assesses (non)achievement of any progress, and identifies potential problems), and is also important to the general public, particularly policymakers. (Gaski & Etzel, 1986).

A consistent finding across decades of consumer sentiment toward marketing research is that the public generally holds a negative view of marketing. It is frequently assailed with criticisms that it is inherently "exploitative" (Sheth, Sisodia, & Barbulescu, 2006), manipulative, and operates with "questionable ethics" (Hunt & Chonko, 1984). Longitudinal analysis has shown that the public increasingly views marketing as "aggressive" and "deceptive" (Dalsace & Markovitch, 2009). This creates a fundamental paradox: while marketing theory espouses a customer-centric philosophy, its public perception is that of a practice primarily serving corporate interests (Heath & Heath, 2008)¹³. This negative sentiment is not uniform across the 4Ps. Research has consistently shown that consumers tend to have more favorable views of the tangible aspects of marketing, such as product quality and the retail experience, while reserving their most severe criticism for price and promotion (Jain, Goel, & Jain, 2021).

Advertising, in particular, is a focal point of public distrust. It is frequently accused of being deceptive, promoting materialism, causing prices to rise, and shaping social values in a negative manner (Pollay, 1986). This pervasive skepticism means that consumers often engage a "defensive" processing mechanism when exposed to advertising, leading them to distrust even honest claims and significantly reducing marketing effectiveness (Darke & Ritchie, 2007). The erosion of trust is a central problem, as trust is the bedrock of strong and lasting customer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Without it,

consumers are more likely to engage in acts of resistance, such as brand boycotts or advocating for stricter government oversight (Romani et al., 2015).

1.2. Subjective well-being (SWB) as a driver of sentiment toward marketing

The limitations of demographic variables in explaining consumer sentiment toward marketing led researchers to explore deeper psychological constructs. Subjective well-being (SWB) has emerged as a powerful theoretical lens. The study of SWB grew from the recognition that economic indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are inadequate measures of a society's overall welfare, as they fail to capture people's actual life experiences (Cummins et al., 2003). SWB focuses instead on an individual's own assessment of their life satisfaction and happiness (Diener, 1984). Providing a broader and more complete picture of the factors that influence sentiment, as such, subjective well-being greatly influences sentiment, making it a good enough predictor of the concept of overall consumer sentiment. (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Lawson, 2011).

The International Wellbeing Index (IWI) provides a comprehensive and globally validated tool for measuring SWB. It is composed of two distinct but related sub-indices: (a) The Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) captures satisfaction with one's own life circumstances. This study utilizes seven core domains: (1) Standard of Living, (2) Health, (3) Achievements in Life, (4) Personal Relationships, (5) Sense of Safety, (6) Community Connectedness, and (7) Future Security (International Wellbeing Group, 2013); and (b) The National Wellbeing Index (NWI) captures satisfaction with the broader societal context. This study measures six domains: (1) The Economic Situation, (2) The State of the Environment, (3) Social Conditions, (4) The Government, (5) Business, and (6) National Security (Davey & Rato, 2011).

Underpinning this framework is the theory of SWB Homeostasis (Cummins, 1995), which posits that individuals possess psychological systems designed to maintain their well-being within a stable, positive range. This equilibrium is maintained through internal resources (e.g., personality, optimism) and external resources (e.g., financial stability, strong relationships). However, significant or chronic negative life events can overwhelm this homeostatic system, leading to a drop in well-being (Headey & Wearing, 1992). This theory suggests that an individual's overall sentiment is deeply connected to how secure and satisfied they feel. Research has confirmed that while material prosperity is a strong predictor of life evaluation (Diener et al., 2010b), non-material social factors like low levels of corruption (Tay, Herian, & Diener, 2014) and social capital (Portela, Neira, & Salinas-Jiménez, 2013) are also powerful predictors of life satisfaction across nations.

1.3. The unique profile of Generation Z

Generation Z is in the focus of this research as it is characterized by a significant departure from traditional patterns of media use (Toma et al., 2023) since the use of social media affects not only their communication but also the formation of social norms

as well as the psychological well-being of individuals (Lajnef, 2023). Gen Z is the one having a major influence on determining the direction of global development in the future (Long & Nguyen, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2022) where their number as a percentage of the population and the assumption that by 2030 they will become the main consumer segment as well as the majority of the workforce, only reinforces the above (Fien et al., 2008; Yamane & Kaneko, 2021).

Gen Z has been fully immersed in the digital age, they are true "digital natives" who cannot recall a world without the internet and smartphones (Tapscott, 2008) and exhibits a high degree of integration of digital platforms into everyday life (Bermes, 2021). Their educational experiences go beyond traditional learning norms, as they learn from informal educational sources such as social networks, of which they are frequent users (Wardhani et al., 2025), offering concise, clear and dynamic content, allowing them to consume information more efficiently (Alhabash et al., 2024).

Their digital naiveness has endowed them with a distinct set of characteristics that have profound implications for marketing. Gen Z has around 9 hours daily screentime (Mastermind, 2025) where they most often use mobile phones (Damrongsat & Suworawattanakul, 2019), especially for the purpose of using social networks (Sarawanawong et al., 2017), and because of all of the above, it is clear that social networks have a strong influence on the generation of information among Generation Z, which consequently affects their behavior and perception of reality (Gerbner & Gross, 2017). They are the most globally-connected and socially-aware generation to date, highly attuned to issues of social justice, environmental sustainability, and ethical corporate behavior (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). Furthermore, by actively developing content that often goes viral on social media, members of this generation can publicly encourage so-called "engagement", collective discussions and encouragement to action, which often classifies them as "change agents", especially in topics such as ethics and sustainability (Wardhani et al., 2025). This enables them to strengthen their "support" and mobilization through social media, and the transition of these online movements from local to global phenomena (Carnegie, 2022). They have been found to be the "loudest" generation in the segment of digital engagement and "solving" social and environmental problems via social media (Tyson et al., 2021; Thigpen et al., 2021) but their action in reality (personal and collective actions) is, however, limited, which highlights the existing gap between media-shaped consciousness and action in the real world. (Callista & Yenni, 2023).

Generation Z tends to trust content produced by influencers (Cvetković et al., 2023), whose accuracy of information can often be seen as questionable (Komara & Widjaya, 2024). Such developments expose Gen Z vulnerability to misinformation, which is due to insufficient validity control on social networks, and due to insufficient general distrust of the public in state institutions (Liu et al., 2020).

There are around 2 billion members of Generation Z in the world which makes up a significant share of the global population (Branka, 2023), and this generation is characterized by pragmatism (Dorsey, 2016) and skepticism (Kalkhurst, 2018). They expect honesty from institutions and brands and are quick to identify and reject

inauthenticity (Tapscott, 2008). Their defining traits include a desire for personalization, a need for entertainment and speed in all interactions, and a collaborative nature. However, their high connectivity also makes them prone to anxiety and the "fear of missing out" (FOMO) (Strong, 2016). Their ability to "multitask" across multiple screens often results in more superficial information processing rather than deep concentration (Shtepura, 2022). As consumers and future professionals, they are not passive; they expect to be co-creators in their experiences, whether in education or with brands (Barnes & Noble College, 2017). Their values-driven approach means they are more likely to support brands that align with their ethical and social beliefs, making their overall sense of well-being a critical lens through which they view the world, including marketing.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a quantitative survey-based methodology to investigate the relationship between subjective well-being and marketing sentiment. The study's primary data was sourced from a questionnaire administered to a sample of 303 students who are members of Generation Z. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives from outside the marketing discipline, a random stratified sampling method was employed, with academic faculty serving as the primary basis for stratification. The final sample included a significant contingent of students from technical sciences (26.7%), other social sciences (18.2%), natural sciences (15.8%), and other non-economic fields. Data collection was carried out through both digital and in-person channels, primarily at higher education institutions in Zagreb, Croatia. The demographic data revealed a sample that was predominantly female (77.2%), aged between 18 and 25 (98.3%), enrolled in undergraduate studies (74.3%), and not currently employed (82.2%). Although focusing on Zagreb potentially limits generalizability of findings, at the same time it provides control for location-specific exposure, while there is no reason to expect that drivers of Gen Z perceptions would significantly differ depending on the location.

All constructs were measured using established scales from the literature, adapted to a 5-point Likert scale format. Dependent variable Sentiment Toward Marketing was measured using the multidimensional Index of Consumer Sentiment toward Marketing (ICSM) framework (Gaski & Etzel, 1986). This instrument consists of 28 statements assessing consumer attitudes across the four pillars of the marketing mix: Product Quality, Price, Advertising, and Retailing. Subjective Well-being was operationalized using the International Wellbeing Index (IWI) model, as adapted by (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Lawson, 2012). It was divided into two sub-indices: (a) Personal Well-being (PWI), measured with seven items assessing satisfaction with different life domains (standard of living, health, achievements, relationships, safety, community, future security); and National Well-being (NWI), measured with six items assessing satisfaction with the national context (economy, environment, social conditions, government, business, national security). To isolate the unique influence of subjective well-being, the statistical model also included control variables related to the participants' perceptions of the marketing field, including the perceived quality of higher education in marketing and the perceived attractiveness of a career in marketing (Singh, 2014).

The collected data was processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The analysis proceeded in two main stages. First, a series of one-sample t-tests were performed to assess the baseline sentiment of the respondents, comparing mean scores against a neutral midpoint to determine statistical significance. Second, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the central hypothesis of the study, with overall consumer sentiment toward marketing as the dependent variable and PWI, NWI, and the control variables entered as predictors.

3. RESULTS

The empirical results of this study offer a clear and detailed picture of Generation Z's sentiment toward marketing, confirming the significant and multifaceted influence of subjective well-being. The analysis is presented in two parts: first, a descriptive analysis of the key variables using t-tests to establish baseline attitudes, followed by the central inferential analysis of the multiple regression model, which tests the study's primary hypothesis.

The descriptive analysis of sentiment toward marketing reveals a starkly bifurcated view, wherein the functional aspects of the marketing mix are perceived far more favorably than its commercial and persuasive elements. Respondents expressed moderate satisfaction with the tangible components of marketing. For instance, there was general agreement that most retailers serve their customers well ($M=3.49$, $p<.001$) and satisfaction with the quality of purchased products was positive ($M=3.56$, $p<.001$). However, this contentment was significantly undermined by a powerful nostalgic belief that product quality has fundamentally declined over time, with respondents strongly agreeing with the statement that products are no longer made as well as they used to be ($M=4.24$, $p<.001$).

In sharp contrast, sentiment toward the commercial and persuasive aspects of marketing was profoundly negative. Price emerged as a major source of dissatisfaction, with respondents overwhelmingly feeling that products are too expensive ($M=3.98$, $p<.001$) and unfairly priced. This sentiment was so strong that there was a widely held belief that companies could charge significantly less and still remain profitable. Promotion was viewed with equal, if not greater, disdain. Advertising was perceived as intensely irritating ($M=3.83$, $p<.001$) and fundamentally deceptive ($M=3.85$, $p<.001$). Consequently, respondents reported that they do not enjoy most of the advertisements they encounter ($M=1.98$, $p<.001$), underscoring a deep-seated distrust of marketing communications.

The analysis of subjective well-being (SWB) highlighted a significant divergence between personal satisfaction and national dissatisfaction, providing crucial context for the main regression findings. In terms of Personal Well-being (PWI), the Gen Z students in the sample reported generally high levels of satisfaction. The highest ratings were given to foundational and relational domains, including personal relationships ($M=3.94$, $p<.001$) and health ($M=3.83$, $p<.001$). While all personal domains were rated positively, the area of lowest satisfaction was future security ($M=3.30$, $p<.001$), hinting at an

underlying anxiety about what lies ahead for this generation. Conversely, perceptions of the national situation were overwhelmingly negative. Respondents expressed profound dissatisfaction with the government and administration in Croatia ($M=1.82$, $p<.001$) and the national economic situation ($M=2.09$, $p<.001$), with nearly every domain of national life being viewed critically.

Table 1: Regression results for dependent variable: Sentiment toward marketing

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.471 ^a	0.222	0.209	0.88933937

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	67.095	5	13.419	16.966	0.000 ^b
Residual	234.905	297	0.791		
Total	302.000	302			

	B	Std. Error	Standardized beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	-6.5E-18	0.051		0.000	1.000		
Subjective Well-being - Personal Well-being	0.205	0.054	0.205	3.776	0.000	0.887	1.128
Subjective Well-being - National Well-being	0.216	0.053	0.216	4.077	0.000	0.933	1.072
Perceived ethics in marketing	0.144	0.052	0.144	2.740	0.007	0.953	1.049
Perception of the quality of higher education in marketing	0.085	0.058	0.085	1.473	0.142	0.785	1.274
Perception of the attractiveness of employment in marketing	0.166	0.058	0.166	2.888	0.004	0.790	1.266

Source: Authors

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of subjective well-being, perceived ethics in marketing, perceived quality of higher education in marketing and perception of employment attractiveness in marketing on the sentiment toward marketing among the student population of Generation Z. The collinearity statistics (Tolerance > 0.78 and VIF < 1.28 for all variables) confirm that multicollinearity was not an issue, strengthening the validity of these findings. The dependent variable, Sentiment toward marketing, is conceptualized as a multidimensional measure of consumer attitudes towards marketing's functional components, such as product quality, price, advertising, and distribution. The analysis identified several significant predictors, shedding light on the complex construction of these attitudes.

The results indicate that subjective well-being is a powerful predictor of marketing sentiment. Specifically, National Well-being, defined as an individual's satisfaction with

their country's economic situation, environment, social conditions, and governance, emerged as the strongest statistically significant predictor ($\beta = 0.216$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that a more positive perception of the nation's state corresponds to a more favorable view of marketing. Similarly, Personal Well-being, which encompasses satisfaction with one's standard of living, health, achievements, and personal relationships, was also a highly significant predictor ($\beta = 0.205$, $p = 0.000$). Students reporting higher levels of personal life satisfaction are more likely to hold a positive sentiment toward marketing.

Beyond subjective well-being, Perception of the attractiveness of employment in marketing was found to be a significant positive predictor of Sentiment toward marketing ($\beta = 0.166$, $p = 0.004$). This finding implies that attractiveness of marketing practice as a career option significantly drives general Sentiment toward marketing. Furthermore, the belief in the ethical standards of the industry is crucial; Perceived ethics in marketing also had a significant positive impact on sentiment ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.007$), indicating that a view of marketing as an ethical practice is associated with a more positive attitude.

Conversely, Perception of the quality of higher education in marketing did not have a statistically significant influence on the overall sentiment toward marketing ($\beta = 0.085$, $p = 0.142$). This suggests that, within this model, students' views on the quality of marketing education do not translate directly into their broader feelings about the practice of marketing itself.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

4.1. Theoretical implications

Thus, results imply stronger influence of marketing practice on perceptions of marketing, as compared to marketing education quality. Such results could imply that marketing practice is to an extent disjointed from marketing education at university levels, either due to a number of people working in marketing practice without formal marketing background or due to practice and curricula being misaligned. Moreover, it could be argued that the advancement and change of digitalization is challenging the traditional norms of studying marketing in line with changing consumer behavior (Gautam & Choubey, 2024). However, it is necessary to provide Generation Z with structured training and support (Nikou et al., 2022; Chan & Lee, 2023) as it keeps pace with the changing demands of the labor market (Lestari & Santoso, 2019). Therefore, results imply a need for cooperation between marketing practice and marketing educators in driving popularity of marketing as a choice of students at universities – where perceptions of marketing practice (ethics and job attractiveness) can drive positive perceptions of marketing in general, thus facilitating interest of future students in marketing as a discipline, in addition to a deep reflection on the role of marketing in society and what is required to gain respect and to solve this already chronic problem of negative attitudes and sentiments towards marketing (Marion, 2006).

In addition, the strong, significant influence of both Personal and National Well-being validates the theoretical shift towards using psychological macro-variables as critical antecedents to consumer attitudes (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Lawson, 2011). This study reinforces that marketing sentiment is not merely a reaction to the functional 4Ps of the marketing mix, as traditionally modeled by the Index of Consumer Sentiment toward Marketing (ICSM) (Gaski and Etzel, 1986). Instead, it is deeply embedded in an individual's broader life satisfaction. These findings align with the theory of Subjective Well-being Homeostasis (Cummins, 1995), which posits that individuals strive to maintain a stable level of well-being. From this perspective, marketing activities and the broader economic and social environment (National Well-being) act as external forces that can either support or threaten this homeostatic balance, thereby influencing overall sentiment. The results challenge theoretical models that rely solely on demographic or lifestyle predictors (Lawson, Todd, and Boshoff, 2001) and support the argument that a consumer's psychological state is a more powerful explanatory factor.

The findings also expose a critical disconnect between formal marketing education and the formation of consumer sentiment. The non-significant influence of the Perception of the quality of higher education in marketing suggests that academic knowledge is being overshadowed by lived experience and pervasive societal narratives. Despite what may be taught in the classroom, sentiment appears to be more robustly formed by the widespread perception of marketing as manipulative and untrustworthy (Heath and Heath, 2008). This aligns with the long history of public criticism of marketing practices, which has led to a deep-seated skepticism that formal education struggles to overcome (Dalsace and Markovitch, 2009). For a hyper-connected cohort like Generation Z, who are constantly exposed to anti-consumerist discourse and critiques of corporate behavior online (Tapscott, 2008), this societal narrative becomes a more dominant source of influence. Therefore, theoretical models of sentiment formation must account for the powerful, countervailing influence of this broader public discourse, which can neutralize or even negate the effects of formal education.

Finally, this study argues for the development of a more holistic and values-driven theoretical model to understand the sentiment of Generation Z. The statistical significance of Perceived ethics and the Attractiveness of employment demonstrates that this generation's attitudes are not just transactional but are tied to deeper assessments of the discipline's moral standing and its potential for a meaningful career. This resonates with the characterization of Generation Z as being highly concerned with social justice, responsibility, and authenticity (Singh, 2014; Seemiller and Grace, 2016). Their sentiment is less about individual products and more about the perceived integrity of the entire marketing system. This supports the critique by Sheth and Sisodia (2005) that marketing often fails in its role of "representing the customer to the company." The results imply that Gen Z is acutely aware of this failure, and their sentiment is a direct reflection of it. Future theories must therefore move beyond the 4Ps to incorporate a "values-alignment" component, measuring the perceived congruence between a brand's (or the entire field's) ethics and the consumer's personal and social values.

Based on an analysis of the t-test results alone, several significant theoretical implications emerge regarding the nature of Generation Z's attitudes.

4.2. Practical implications

The findings of this study yield important and actionable implications for multiple stakeholders. The most significant takeaway is the recognition that Generation Z's sentiment toward marketing is more strongly influenced by perceptions of marketing practice than by perceptions of marketing education quality. This has profound consequences: it suggests that efforts to improve the discipline's image must come from a joint effort between practitioners and educators, working to bridge the gap between how marketing is taught and how it is experienced in the marketplace.

Implications for Marketers – the results are a clear call to action to reorient marketing from a purely profit-centric orientation toward one that emphasizes ethics, transparency, and societal contribution. The statistical significance of Perceived ethics in marketing ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.007$) underscores that Generation Z, a socially conscious cohort (Singh, 2014; Seemiller & Grace, 2016), demands authenticity and integrity from the discipline. This aligns with longstanding critiques of deceptive or manipulative marketing practices (Darke & Ritchie, 2007; Heath, Pereira & Heath, 2008), which have historically eroded public trust.

Practical steps include: (a) Fair pricing strategies that address perceptions of overpricing, a major source of dissatisfaction in this study; (b) Transparent and honest advertising, avoiding the “ad clutter” that Ha & McCann (2008) identified as manipulative and irritating; (c) Sustainable supply chain investments, ensuring environmental and social responsibility; (d) Data privacy protections, acknowledging Gen Z's ethical concerns about algorithmic manipulation and surveillance (Gupta et al., 2024). These steps must go beyond symbolic CSR campaigns and instead demonstrate genuine accountability (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009). Importantly, marketers should collaborate with educational institutions by contributing real-world case studies, offering internships, and showcasing ethical practice in action. Such partnerships allow the classroom to reflect the realities of practice, counteracting the deep-rooted consumer mistrust that marketing has historically faced (Marion, 2006).

Implications for Marketing Educators – the non-significant effect of Perceived quality of higher education in marketing ($\beta = 0.085$, $p = 0.142$) highlights a critical disconnect between formal education and student sentiment. Despite academic efforts, attitudes toward marketing are primarily shaped by lived experiences and pervasive societal narratives that present marketing as manipulative or untrustworthy (Heath & Heath, 2008; Dalsace & Markovitch, 2009). This suggests that curricula are not adequately addressing the realities Gen Z encounters outside of the classroom.

To address this, marketing programs must evolve: (a) Move beyond technical instruction to integrate critical reflection on ethics, social impact, and marketing's role in society; (b) Use case studies of both ethical successes and failures, enabling students to grapple with the field's controversies; (c) Incorporate interactive, experiential learning models (Barnes & Noble College, 2017; Giray, 2022) such as ethical dilemma simulations, collaborative projects, and applied research partnerships; (d) Align with Gen Z's motivation patterns by incorporating intrinsic motivators (e.g., stimulating, meaningful

tasks) and extrinsic motivators (e.g., rewards, recognition) that enhance engagement (Stareček et al., 2023); € Highlight marketing as an attractive and meaningful career path—another significant predictor in this study ($\beta = 0.166$, $p = 0.004$)—to help reframe the discipline as a force for positive change rather than manipulation. This reorientation requires stronger integration of marketing practice into curricula. As Gautam & Choubey (2024) argue, rapid digitalization is reshaping consumer behavior, challenging traditional teaching norms. Universities must therefore adapt their content and teaching styles to ensure relevance to Gen Z learners, who also demonstrate growing interest in AI and awareness of its ethical implications (Gupta et al., 2024). Collaboration with practitioners will be essential in keeping education aligned with market realities.

Implications for Policy-Makers – the strong predictive value of National Well-being ($\beta = 0.216$, $p = 0.000$) demonstrates that macro-level governance significantly shapes consumer sentiment. A government's ability to improve economic stability, social equity, environmental conditions, and trust in institutions indirectly affects how citizens evaluate marketing. Thus, marketing's reputation is inseparable from broader societal well-being.

Policy implications include: (a) Strengthening consumer protection laws against deceptive advertising and unfair pricing (Bagnied, Speece, & Hegazy, 2020); (b) Establishing clear accountability frameworks that enforce ethical standards in marketing practice; (c) Embedding quality-of-life measures into policy-making, consistent with calls to place well-being at the center of public agendas (Rato & Davey, 2010; Gordon, 2024). Such initiatives not only protect consumers but also create an environment where ethical marketing can thrive.

Ultimately, this study reinforces that marketing's image will not be rehabilitated by isolated reforms in practice or education alone. Instead, true transformation requires joint efforts by practitioners, educators and policy-makers. Together, these actors can reposition marketing as both a credible academic discipline and a respected professional practice. By aligning marketing education with ethical practice and framing marketing as a socially meaningful career, the discipline can address Generation Z's skepticism and begin to reverse the chronic problem of negative consumer sentiment (Marion, 2006).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, this analysis reveals that sentiment toward marketing, especially among the socially-aware and digitally-native Generation Z, is a complex construct profoundly shaped by factors extending far beyond the immediate marketplace. The findings compellingly demonstrate that consumer attitudes are not formed in a vacuum. Instead, they are intrinsically linked to an individual's overall life satisfaction and their perception of the society in which they live, with the dominant influence of National and Personal Well-being underscoring this connection. A positive outlook on personal life and national stability appears to create a more fertile ground for favorable marketing sentiment, suggesting that a thriving society is a prerequisite for a trusted marketplace.

Furthermore, the research highlights that for this generation, the perceived ethics of marketing and its attractiveness as a career are not peripheral concerns but central pillars in the formation of their attitudes. The long-standing, powerful narrative of marketing as a manipulative and self-serving force continues to hold sway, creating a deep-seated skepticism. This skepticism is so entrenched that, as the results suggest, formal education in its current state seems unable to dislodge it, pointing to a critical gap between academic discourse and the lived reality of consumers.

Ultimately, these findings present a clear and unified message to marketers, policymakers, and educators. Rebuilding trust and rehabilitating marketing's public image requires a concerted, multi-faceted effort that addresses these deep-rooted issues. This involves a fundamental and authentic shift by businesses towards more ethical, transparent, and consumer-centric practices. It requires supportive public policies that enhance societal well-being and rigorously enforce consumer protection. Finally, it demands an evolution in education to one that not only teaches the "how" of marketing but also critically examines the "why," preparing the next generation to be responsible stewards of the discipline. Only through such a holistic and sincere approach can the field of marketing hope to move from being a subject of public mistrust to a valued and respected contributor to society and the economy.

While this study provides valuable insights, its limitations must be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and guide future inquiry. The research sample was predominantly composed of female students (77.2%), which is in line with data that shows that women have been more active in using social media (Statista, 2022). Moreover, regarding the overrepresentation of female respondents in the dataset there is variability of data on each of the variables. In addition, we tested the model using gender as control, and implications of results did not differ. Thus, future research could benefit from using a representative Gen Z sample to further enhance robustness of findings. In addition, the sample consisted predominantly of 18-25 age group and predominantly students, possibly limiting the ability to generalize the findings to the older non-student members of Generation Z. Furthermore, the geographical focus is primarily on students from Zagreb, which however reflects the dominance of Zagreb in student population in Croatia, and controls for possible location-specific experiences/exposure of respondents. Therefore, regardless of sample limitations, analysis focused on understanding the drivers of sentiment toward the marketing, and data collected had variability on all the variables in the model.

These limitations naturally give rise to specific directions for future research. Longitudinal studies are essential to track how the sentiment of Generation Z evolves as they age, gain economic independence, and accumulate more life and market experiences (especially when we know that adult consumers do not automatically become fixed in their attitudes once they reach adulthood, but rather they change throughout their lives due to numerous factors that in turn influence consumer behavior (Simpson & Licata, 2007)). Comparative international **cross-cultural** studies are also needed to test whether these findings hold true in different socio-economic and cultural contexts, which could further illuminate the complex interplay between national conditions and consumer attitudes. Finally, future research would benefit from employing more diverse samples

with a greater balance in terms of gender, age and geography to ensure more robust and generalizable results. Such ongoing inquiry is crucial, as the dynamic nature of consumer attitudes requires continuous monitoring and adaptation from the academic community and marketing practitioners alike.

REFERENCES

- Alhabash, S., Smischney, T.M., Suneja, A., Nimmagadda, A. and White, L.R. (2024), "So similar, yet so different: How motivations to use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok predict problematic use and use continuance intentions", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 10, No. 2 <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241249874>
- Bagnied, M., Speece, M. and Hegazy, I. (2020), "Attitudes toward advertising and advertising regulation among college students in Egypt", *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 1-17 <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2020.1781735>
- Barksdale, H.C. and Darden, W.R. (1972), "Consumer attitudes toward marketing and consumerism", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 36, No. 4, pp. 28-35 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1250421>
- Barnes & Noble College (2017), *Getting to know Gen Z*, Barnes & Noble College, New Jersey.
- Bermes, A. (2021), "Information overload and fake news sharing: A transactional stress perspective exploring the mitigating role of consumers' resilience during COVID-19", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 61, 102555 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102555>
- Bhandari, A. and Bimo, S. (2022), "Why's everyone on TikTok now? The algorithmized self and the future of self-making on social media", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 20563051221086240 <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221086240>
- Branka (2023), "Generation Z statistics – 2023", *Truelist*, available at: <https://truelist.co/blog/generation-z-statistics/> (accessed 13 May 2026).
- Calista, Y. and Yenni, S. (2023), "The impact of social media on climate change perceptions: A case study of Indonesian gen-Z", in *E3S Web of Conferences*, Vol. 426, EDP Sciences, p. 01052 <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202342601052>
- Carnegie, M. (2022), "Gen Z: How young people are changing activism", *BBC.com*, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20220629-gen-z-how-young-people-are-changing-activism> (accessed 13 May 2026).
- Chan, C.K.Y. and Lee, K.K. (2023), "The AI generation gap: Are Gen Z students more interested in adopting generative AI such as ChatGPT in teaching and learning than their Gen X and millennial generation teachers?", *Smart Learning Environments*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 60 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00269-3>
- Choubey, V. and Gautam, A. (2024), "Evaluating omni channel retailing in the emergence of industry 5.0: A perspective of South Asian generation Z", *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 100267 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijime.2024.100267>
- Cummins, R.A. (1995), "On the trail of the gold standard for subjective wellbeing", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 179-200 <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01079026>
- Cummins, R.A., Eckersley, R., Pallant, J., Van Vugt, J. and Misajon, R. (2003), "Developing a national index of subjective wellbeing: The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 64, pp. 159-190 <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024704320683>
- Cvetković, V., Nikolić, A. and Ivanov, A. (2023), "The role of social media in the process of informing the public about disaster risks", *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 104-119 <https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2392104c>
- Dalsace, F. and Markovitch, D.G. (2009), *Is marketing becoming a dirty word? A longitudinal study of public perceptions of marketing*, Working paper, Groupe HEC.
- Damrongsat, P. and Suworawattanakul, W. (2019), "Factors influencing creative internet use of nursing students", *Journal of Health Research and Innovation*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 219-228.
- Darke, P.R. and Ritchie, R.J.B. (2007), "The defensive consumer: Advertising deception, defensive processing, and distrust", *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 114-127 <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.44.1.114>
- Davey, G. and Rato, R. (2011), "Subjective wellbeing in China: A review", *Journal of Happiness Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 333-346 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-011-9312-6>

- Diener, E. (1984), "Subjective well-being", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 95, No. 3, pp. 542-575
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542>
- Diener, E., Ng, W., Harter, J. and Arora, R. (2010), "Wealth and happiness around the world: Material prosperity predicts life evaluation, whereas psychological prosperity predicts positive feelings", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 99, No. 1, pp. 52-61
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018066>
- Dorsey, J. (2016), *iGen tech disruption: 2016 national study on technology and the generation after Millennials*, The Center for Generational Kinetics.
- Drumwright, M.E. and Murphy, P.E. (2009), "The current state of advertising ethics: Industry and academic perspectives", *Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 83-108 <https://doi.org/10.2753/JOA0091-3367380106>
- Dujeancourt, E. and Garz, M. (2023), "The effects of algorithmic content selection on user engagement with news on Twitter", *The Information Society*, Vol. 39, No. 5, pp. 299-317
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2023.2239672>
- Fien, J., Neil, C. and Bentley, M. (2008), "Youth can lead the way to sustainable consumption", *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 51-60
<https://doi.org/10.1177/097340820800200113>
- Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, A. and Lawson, R. (2011), "Subjective wellbeing and its influence on consumer sentiment towards marketing: A New Zealand example", *Journal of Macromarketing*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 202-212 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146711427659>
- Gaski, J.F. and Etzel, M.J. (1986), "The index of consumer sentiment toward marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 50, No. 3, pp. 71-81 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251229>
- Gerbner, G. and Gross, L. (2017), "Living with television: The violence profile", in *The fear of crime*, Routledge, pp. 169-195 <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315086613-11>
- Gordon, J.A. (2024), "Doing wellbeing policy: A discussion on public policy making for integrative prosperity", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 83, pp. 134-139
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12629>
- Gupta, A., Pranathy, R.S., Binny, M., Chellasamy, A., Nagarathinam, A., Pachiyappan, S. et al. (2024), "Voices of the future: Generation Z's views on AI's ethical and social impact", in *Technology-driven business innovation*, Springer, pp. 367-386 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-67444-0_29
- Ha, L. and McCann, K. (2008), "An integrated model of advertising clutter in offline and online media", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 569-592
<https://doi.org/10.2501/S0265048708080153>
- Headey, B. and Wearing, A. (1992), *Understanding happiness: A theory of subjective well-being*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, Australia.
- Heath, T.P.M. and Heath, M. (2008), "(Mis)trust in marketing: A reflection on consumers' attitudes and perceptions", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 24, No. 9-10, pp. 1025-1039
<https://doi.org/10.1362/026725708X382037>
- Hunt, S.D. and Chonko, L.B. (1984), "Marketing and Machiavellianism", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 48, No. 3, pp. 30-42 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251333>
- International Wellbeing Group (2013), *Personal Wellbeing Index: 5th edition*, Australian Centre on Quality of Life, Deakin University, Melbourne.
- Jain, S.K. (2014), "Consumer sentiments towards marketing and their linkages with consumer satisfaction, perceptions of business philosophy and government interventions: An investigation in the Indian context", *Business Perspectives*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 39-56.
- Jain, S.K., Goel, P. and Jain, S. (2021), "Understanding consumer sentiments towards marketing: An investigation in Indian context", *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 71-82 <https://doi.org/10.1177/09722629211059457>
- Kalkhurst, D. (2018), *Engaging Gen Z students and learners*, Pearson Education.
- Komara, D.A. and Widjaya, S.N. (2024), "Memahami perilaku informasi gen-z dan strategi melawan disinformasi: Sebuah tinjauan literatur penggunaan media sosial" [Understanding Gen-Z information behavior and strategies to combat disinformation: A literature review of social media use], *Jurnal Pustaka Ilmiah*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 155-174 <https://doi.org/10.20961/jpi.v10i2.90918>
- Lajnef, K. (2023), "The effect of social media influencers' on teenagers behavior: An empirical study using cognitive map technique", *Current Psychology*, Vol. 42, No. 22, pp. 19364-19377
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03068-y>
- Lawson, R., Todd, S. and Boshoff, C. (2001), "Relationships between consumer sentiment towards marketing and consumer lifestyles", *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 48-59
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3582\(01\)70180-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3582(01)70180-8)

- Lestari, S. and Santoso, A. (2019), "The roles of digital literacy, technology literacy, and human literacy to encourage work readiness of accounting education students in the fourth industrial revolution era", *KnE Social Sciences*, pp. 513-527 <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i11.4031>
- Liu, T., Zhang, H. and Zhang, H. (2020), "The impact of social media on risk communication of disasters—A comparative study based on Sina Weibo blogs related to Tianjin explosion and typhoon Pigeon", *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 883 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030883>
- Long, H.C. and Nguyen, N.H.T. (2024), "How social media marketing impact the apartment purchase intention of Generation Z in Ho Chi Minh City", *Journal of Finance-Marketing Research*, pp. 113-123.
- Marion, G. (2006), "Research note: Marketing ideology and criticism: Legitimacy and legitimization", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 245-262 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470593106063985>
- Mastermind (2025), "Average screen time statistics", *Mastermind.com*, available at: <https://mastermind.com/average-screen-time-statistics/> (accessed 13 May 2026).
- Morgan, R.M. and Hunt, S.D. (1994), "The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 58, No. 3, pp. 20-38 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252308>
- Nikou, S., De Reuver, M. and Mahboob Kanafi, M. (2022), "Workplace literacy skills—How information and digital literacy affect adoption of digital technology", *Journal of Documentation*, Vol. 78, No. 7, pp. 371-391 <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-12-2020-0225>
- Nugroho, S.D.P., Rahayu, M. and Hapsari, R.D.V. (2022), "The impacts of social media influencer's credibility attributes on gen Z purchase intention with brand image as mediation", *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, Vol. 11, No. 5, pp. 1-13 <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i5.1869>
- Orben, A. and Przybylski, A.K. (2019), "The association between adolescent well-being and digital technology use", *Nature Human Behaviour*, Vol. 3, pp. 173-182 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-018-0506-1>
- Pollay, R.W. (1986), "The distorted mirror: Reflections on the unintended consequences of advertising", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 18-36 <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251254>
- Portela, M., Neira, I. and Salinas-Jiménez, M. (2013), "Social capital and subjective wellbeing in Europe: A new approach on social capital", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 114, No. 2, pp. 493-511 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-012-0158-x>
- Rato, R. and Davey, G. (2010), "Quality of life in Macau, China", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 105, No. 1, pp. 93-108 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9776-5>
- Reddy, P., Chaudhary, K. and Hussein, S. (2023), "A digital literacy model to narrow the digital literacy skills gap", *Heliyon*, Vol. 9, No. 4, e14878 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e14878>
- Romani, S., Grappi, S., Zarantonello, L. and Bagozzi, R.P. (2015), "The revenge of the consumer! How brand moral violations lead to consumer anti-brand activism", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 22, No. 8, pp. 658-672 <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2015.38>
- Sarawanawong, J., Fyeted, K., Ngermpoolsap, D. and Chantree, W. (2017), "Online social media usage behaviors of undergraduate student, Kasetsart University", *The Journal of Library and Information Science Srinakharinwirot University*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 16-31.
- Seemiller, C. and Grace, M. (2016), *Generation Z goes to college*, John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.
- Sheth, J.N. and Sisodia, R.S. (2005), "Does marketing need reform? In marketing renaissance: Opportunities and imperatives for improving marketing thought, practice, and infrastructure", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69, pp. 1-25 <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.69.4.10.42958>
- Sheth, J.N., Sisodia, R.S. and Barbulescu, A. (2006), "The image of marketing", in Sheth, J.N. and Sisodia, R.S. (eds.), *Does marketing need reform?*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, NY, pp. 26-36.
- Shtepura, A. (2022), "Main characteristics and stereotypes of generation Z: Analysis of foreign experience", *Comparative Professional Pedagogy*, Vol. 12, pp. 86-92 [https://doi.org/10.31891/2308-4081/2022-12\(1\)-12](https://doi.org/10.31891/2308-4081/2022-12(1)-12)
- Simpson, P.M. and Licata, J.W. (2007), "Consumer attitudes toward marketing strategies over the adult life span", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 23, No. 3-4, pp. 305-326 <https://doi.org/10.1362/026725707X196413>
- Singh, A. (2014), "Challenges and issues of Generation Z", *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 16, No. 7, pp. 59-63 <https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-16715963>
- Stareček, A., Babel'ová, Z.G., Koltnerová, K. and Caganova, D. (2023), "Personality traits and motivation of Generation Z students in management study programs in higher education", *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 89-101 <https://doi.org/10.53894/ijirss.v6i1.1259>

- Statista (2022), "Gen Z news consumption sources in the U.S. 2022", *Statista.com*, available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1318986/gen-z-news-consumption-sources-us/> (accessed 13 May 2026).
- Strong, R. (2016), "Social media, FOMO and the perfect storm for the QuarterLife Crisis", *Huffpost*, available at: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/social-media-fomo-and-the_b_9536578 (accessed 13 May 2026).
- Swart, J. (2021), "Experiencing algorithms: How young people understand, feel about, and engage with algorithmic news selection on social media", *Social Media + Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 20563051211008828 <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051211008828>
- Tapscott, D. (2008), *Growing up digital: The rise of the net generation*, McGraw-Hill Companies, New York.
- Tay, L., Herian, M. and Diener, E. (2014), "Detrimental effects of corruption on subjective well-being: Whether, how, and when", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Vol. 5, No. 7, pp. 751-759 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550614528544>
- Thigpen, C.L. and Tyson, A. (2021), "On social media, Gen Z and Millennial adults interact more with climate change content than older generations", *Pew Research Center*.
- Toma, S.G., Građinaru, C., Hudea, O.S. and Modreanu, A. (2023), "Perceptions and attitudes of Generation Z students towards the responsible management of smart cities", *Sustainability*, Vol. 15, No. 18, 13889 <https://doi.org/10.3390/su151813889>
- Tyson, A., Kennedy, B. and Funk, C. (2021), "Gen Z, Millennials stand out for climate change activism, social media engagement with issue", *Pew Research Center*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 6-7.
- Wajdi, M., Susanto, B., Sumartana, I.M., Sutiarsa, M.A. and Hadi, W. (2024), "Profile of generation Z characteristics: Implications for contemporary educational approaches", *Kajian Pendidikan, Seni, Budaya, Sosial dan Lingkungan*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 33-44.
- Wardhani, P.I., Susilawati, S.A., Wibowo, Y.A., Dewi, R.P., Widiyatmoko, W., Hafida, S.H.N., Maulana, E., Utami, S. and Hayatun, I. (2025), "Identification of social media approach for strengthening the generation Z disaster capacity on drought issues", *Progress in Disaster Science*, Vol. 28, 100467 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2025.100467>
- Yamane, T. and Kaneko, S. (2021), "Is the younger generation a driving force toward achieving the sustainable development goals? Survey experiments", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol. 292, 125932 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.125932>

LORENA ŠATRAK, mag. oec.
Ulica Ivana Rendića 29., Zagreb
lorena_satrak@hotmail.com

GORAN VLAŠIĆ, PhD. Full Professor
Faculty of Economics and Business. University of Zagreb
Marketing Department
Trg J. F. Kennedyja 6, Zagreb. Croatia
gvlastic@net.efzg.hr

KRISTIJAN KELEMINIĆ, mag. oec. Teaching and Research Assistant
Faculty of Economics and Business. University of Zagreb
Marketing Department
Trg J. F. Kennedyja 6, Zagreb. Croatia
kkeleminic@net.efzg.hr