

Generation Z Customer Orientation as an Element of Social Customer Relationship Management

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Abstract— Building relationships with Generation Z on social media is becoming a challenge for present-day enterprises. Gen Zers have a huge purchasing power, and by 2030 they will be the largest customer base. Customer orientation, as an element of social CRM, enables enterprises to build relationships with customers by appropriately responding to the needs and preferences of their existing and future customers. The aim of the paper was to identify the expectations of surveyed representatives of Gen Zers towards the benefits of customer-company interactions on social media. The study of Generation Z attitudes towards brands on social media is part of broader research conducted by the authors among students in Poland and Great Britain in 2020. The method used in the study was a survey, as part of which the CATI surveying technique was used. For analysis of the study material, descriptive statistics measures were used. Analysis of the collected empirical data provided the basis for verifying the research hypotheses. Although the results of the study do not apply to a representative sample, they allow to deepen the knowledge on the behaviour of the representatives of generation Z in social media. The findings show what benefits of following a brand on social media by respondents were significant in both the analysed countries. Additionally, the strength of the relationships between the analysed variables and the respondent's gender and place of residence was verified.

Keywords— customer orientation, social CRM, Generation Z

1. Introduction

Research confirmed that social media technologies are key in building relationships and taking initiatives aimed at customer engagement as well as in the information process. The stronger the customer orientation, i.e., the culture of building long-term relationships with customers, the more the customers' commitment increases. Customer

orientation has a direct impact on social information processes, i.e., managers' ability to capture, integrate, access and use customer information. Moreover, by using a variety of social media an organisation can increase its CRM possibilities [1].

Customer orientation continues to be a fundamental and integral competence of a modern organisation. Every enterprise relies on the customer to earn money and engages in direct interactions with them. It is the customer and their needs that set the basic directions of development and it is the customer that at the end of the day decides to purchase and accept the offer [2]. Companies should pay attention to the way every new generation behaves on social media and how it engages with such systems. Such a knowledge will allow companies to gain a deeper understanding of social media usage habits and may help them to respond to the expectations of the youngest customers in a way they expect [3].

Members of Generation Z, i.e., people born in 1995 and later, are starting to participate in the market game [4]. Also known under the names iGen, Gen Z, Centennials, and Founders [5], they constitute around 40% of customers in the United States, Europe and BRICS countries, and around 10% in other countries. This makes Generation Z a significant partner for businesses today: it has a huge purchasing power, not only direct but also indirect one through impact on household spending. Hence, if businesses do not want to lose their market share, they have to learn about Gen Zers and include them in their business strategy by building long-term relationships [6], which are a condition for success on a given market even if a company has the best products and business practices [7].

The existing findings of the research on customer orientation as an element of CRM refer to population as a whole and do not distinguish the youngest generation – Generation Z. Although empirical studies on social CRM are evolving, the number of publications related to customer orientation is still limited. The authors perceive the need for more intense research in that area due to its dynamic character – technological progress continues and impacts the market and customer experience. The literature still lacks findings, verified by means of quantitative empirical studies, that precisely identify Gen Zers' behaviours and expectations with respect to the benefits of customer-company interactions on social media. In order to fill this gap, the authors stated the research problem by formulating the following research questions:

1. Which of the benefits of following a brand on social media does a Gen Zer rate highest?
2. Does a Gen Zer's gender or place of residence have an impact on how they evaluate the benefits of following a brand on social media?

Finding out how Generation Z expects to interact with a company and identifying the most important benefits are elements of the concept of customer orientation, which constitutes a stage of social CRM. The aim of the paper was to identify the expectations of surveyed representatives of Gen Zers towards the benefits of customer-company interactions on social media.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 Customer orientation

Scholars suggest that customer orientation is the corner stone of the theory and practice of marketing management [8]. Customer orientation is a behavioural phenomenon and a cultural concept [9] and refers to the extent to which an organisation satisfies and understands the need for building long-lasting relationships [10]. Narver and Slater [11] confirmed that customer orientation is one of three behavioural components (along with competitor orientation and inter-functional orientation) of an enterprise's market orientation. Customer orientation involves any activities related to acquiring information about purchasers in the target market, understanding target customers in order to create a higher value for them on a continuous basis in the form of a desired

product/service and sharing the information throughout the company. Customer orientation requires that the seller understands the whole value chain of the customer, not only the one existing today but also the one that will change over time depending on the internal and market dynamics [11].

Scholars argue that customer orientation is not merely a set of processes, but also a culture that places emphasis on the customer as the centre of strategic planning and implementation, and that it is essential for creating the highest value for an organisation [11]-[12]. Ruekert [13] defines customer orientation as the extent to which an organisation acquires and uses information from customers, develops a strategy that will meet its customers' needs and implements that strategy responding to the needs and wishes of customers. From the point of view of Deshpandé et al. [14], customer orientation is a set of beliefs that the interests of customers come before those of other stakeholders, such as employees, managers and organisation owners, and that the needs and interests of customers should be given priority.

In order to systematise the knowledge on customer orientation, one can distinguish three basic directions of scientific exploration: customer orientation as a business philosophy, customer orientation as an area of organisational activity and customer orientation as a concept of value creation [15]. Customer orientation was emphasised in conceptual and empirical studies as the main component of market orientation [12].

There are many aspects to customer orientation: customer satisfaction, post-sale services, tailored services for key customers and high quality [11]. Organisations with stronger customer orientation are able to better respond to customer needs through their goods and services [14]. Reimann et al. [16] acknowledged that in order to become a customer-oriented organisation and thus better tailor one's offer to the needs of customers, it is necessary to use CRM to acquire in-depth information about one's customers and then make use of that knowledge.

Since customer orientation started to replace product orientation, tightening relationships with customers has been regarded as leading to a sustained increase in sales revenues [17]. Researchers found that stronger customer orientation in an organisation resulted in improved business performance [11],[8]. The research by

Chuang and Lin [18] found that performance of customer relationship is positively affected by the quality of customer information, which in turn contributes to improved profitability of the company. Moreover, customer orientation is very important in establishing and maintaining long-term company-customer relationships, and represents a distinct concept of competition [19].

It is widely believed that in order for two parties to create and maintain relationships, they both have to feel that they are gaining something [20]. The seller creates value for the purchaser in two ways only: by increasing the benefits for the purchaser relative to their costs and by decreasing the costs of the purchaser relative to their benefits. The seller has to understand who their potential customers are currently, who they may be in the future, what they want today and what they may want in the future [11].

Customers' wishes, concerns and opinions impact strategic business decisions of present-day companies [21],[8]. Customer orientation is a well-studied concept in the literature on marketing strategies and it refers to a set of corporate beliefs and behaviours that are fundamental to customers' interests. The welfare of customers is taken into consideration by listening to their needs and providing solutions tailored to their interests [21]. Customer orientation comprises all the activities connected with generating and disseminating information and responding accordingly to the needs and preferences of the present and future customers. Thus, it is accepted that applying the strategy of customer orientation leads to improvement of the company's performance [21],[8],[11].

The aim of the sustainable orientation of the company, is to create value and competitive advantage for the company. This strategic philosophy of sustainable corporate action is expressed, among other things, by maximizing contributions to society, minimizing negative environmental impacts, and at the same time striving for long-term value growth. The company, focusing mainly on the customer, rationally manages resources by reducing unnecessary production. This means that the company does not waste raw materials, reduces transportation, storage of products and also reduces returns.

2.2 Social Customer Relationship Management

Among the concepts that have the greatest impact on a company's ability to compete for customers are the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) concept and the Supply Chain Management (SCM) concept. The CRM concept enables companies to gain customer loyalty, while the SCM concept ensures customers are served according to the 7R principle (ensuring the right product is available in the right quantity, at the right time, the right quality, the right place, to the right customer at the right price). CRM and SCM systems are interdependent and therefore should be integrated in many areas, including strategy, processes, organizational culture and technology.

With increasing popularity of social media, customer relationship management has changed noticeably and gained a lot of attention from researchers and practitioners in recent years. Only recently, i.e., since 2003, have social media been used on a mass scale [22]. Social media are defined in the literature in various ways. Kaplan and Haenlein [23] define social media as a group of applications based on Internet solutions that rely on ideological and technological bases of Web 2.0 and enable creation and sharing of user-generated content. According to other definitions, social media are any activities, practices and behaviours in a community of people who go online to share information, knowledge and opinions [24]. Scholars distinguish various typologies of social media depending on their type and features [22],[24],[25]; for instance Kaplan and Haenlein [23] categorised social media into: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds. Whenever the authors write about social media in the present paper, they refer to both social networking services (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and media sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube).

Initially, users mainly used social media for staying in touch with their peers. Currently, customers expect (sometimes even demand) the same level of interactivity from businesses. Hence, companies should aim to use new technologies to make it easier for customers to engage in interactions with them [26]. Social media, by offering the possibility of establishing relationships, facilitate customer engagement [27]–

[29] and social interactions among consumers, leading to increased trust and purchasing intention [30]. It is evident that an increasing number of customers use social media to constantly search for information about a brand and interact with other consumers [31],[28].

Social media provide huge opportunities for entrepreneurs, e.g., to gain insight into the market, engage in communication with users, and consequently in a better interaction with customers [32]. Nowadays, organisations all over the world increasingly use social media for a variety of business goals such as customer relationship management, among other things [33]–[35]. Morgan [36] confirmed that CRM needs social media to better serve customer interests, build customer support, enhance customer experience and help them choose channels that ensure better cooperation. Soltani and Navimipour [37] identified five categories of CRM techniques: E-CRM, knowledge management, data exploration, data quality and social CRM. Based on the literature, social CRM is defined as using at least one type of social media technologies for customer relationship management [33]–[34],[38]–[39].

Adoption, use and implementation of social CRM is an active research area in the academia. Scholars agree that the development of social media technologies has led to the emergence of social CRM as a new version of a CRM strategy [40]. Instead of concentrating on traditional CRM technologies in the form of packages such as Sage CRM or Salesforce CRM, social CRM focuses on the technology of social media [39]–[40].

The transition from traditional CRM (e-mails, call centre, direct phone calls) to social CRM is a new challenge for present-day enterprises. Scholars call this process "transition", because rather than abandoning the old practices of CRM, companies should integrate and focus attention on the new ones [32]. Baird and Parasnis [41] stress that the key and most important step in building a social CRM strategy is understanding what customers value most when in the social media platform environment. This is all the more important, since there are significant discrepancies between what companies think is important to customers and what is actually important to them during their interaction with companies in that environment. Social CRM (or CRM 2.0) is a business philosophy and strategy, supported by a technological platform, business rules, processes and social

features, designed so as to engage a customer in a mutual conversation in order to ensure mutually beneficial value, build trust and a transparent business environment [42],[37].

Brand promotion and marketing campaigns via social media do not cost companies much, and they are widely viewed as a convenient instrument for introducing products to the target segment, especially in difficult times, e.g., in a crisis. Social media, which allow everyone to become a content producer and deliver it through interactive, relationship-based communication, are recognised as the most powerful tool in the business practice. Hence, they are actively used by marketers to implement their strategies [43]. Companies search for more innovative and profitable ways of selling their products or services, and pay more attention to social media as a powerful survival tool. The pace of shifting from traditional media to social media seems to be increasing, especially after the recession [43].

While large enterprises integrate customer relationship systems (CRM) with social media in order to improve their relationships with customers, small enterprises seem to build customer relationships only based on social media [44],[38]. However, compared to traditional CRM systems, social CRM appears to be a budget-friendly tool for entrepreneurs with limited resources. Thanks to the use of social media, even micro enterprises as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) can enter the global market with minimum costs and effort. Despite being aware of the opportunities provided by social media, the majority of SMEs use them mainly as a marketing tool [45]–[46] without having a formally defined customer-oriented management strategy in place [44].

Bolton et al. [3] point out that a benefit derived by the consumer from using social media may motivate them to engage with the company again. Satisfaction of needs and benefits derived from the relationship with a brand may cause commitment on the part of the consumer. Customers may gain various benefits from engaging with brand communities on social media [47]:

- practical benefits (e.g., familiarity with and awareness of the vendor's offer),
- social benefits (resulting from the interactions between the company and customer and associated with appreciation and even friendship) and social enhancement (resulting

from the need to feel useful, recognised and needed in the community),

- entertainment benefits (resulting from relax and play, e.g., game),
- economic benefits (receiving discounts, saving time, participation in lotteries and competitions).

Based on the above classification of benefits and specific characteristics of Generation Z, the authors formulated the following research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *A respondent of Generation Z evaluates the social benefits of following a brand on social media highest.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *A Generation Z respondent's gender has no impact on the evaluation of the benefits of following a brand on social media.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *A Generation Z respondent's place of residence has no impact on the evaluation of the benefits of following a brand on social media.*

3. Research methodology

For the research problem formulated by the authors, the aim of this paper was stated, namely: identification the expectations of surveyed representatives of Gen Zers towards the benefits of customer-company interactions on social media. The research into the attitudes of Gen Zers towards brands on social media is part of broader research conducted by the authors among students in Poland and Great Britain in 2020. In both the cases, which included qualitative and quantitative aspects, the method of indirect measurement in the form of survey research, the technique of a survey, and the research tool of a survey questionnaire were used.

The catalogue of the variables used in the research was proposed based on critical analysis of the literature [47, 48]. There is no agreement in the literature regarding the year of birth of representatives of Generation Z. The most often cited date is the year 1995, which the authors of the paper adopted as the cut-off year in their study.

The authors also assumed that the independent variable is the tested group of respondents, not the entire population of generation Z. The difficulty in unequivocally indicating the age range of generation Z makes it problematic to treat this variable as an independent variable. The authors found that using Gen Z as a heuristic is useful because generational profiling now exists as description in popular media and popular culture.

Before commencing the main research, the authors conducted a pilot study in 2018, which allowed them to identify and eliminate errors in the survey questionnaire before proceeding to the main research. A total of 157 students participated in the research conducted in Poland, and responses of 151 students (126 females and 25 males) were qualified for the analysis. A total of 150 students participated in the research conducted in Great Britain, and responses of 150 people (80 females and 70 males) were qualified for further research. The research was conducted using the CAWI technique. In Poland, an online survey questionnaire was made available on the Webankieta.pl platform, while data collection in Great Britain was commissioned to an external institution specialising in conducting surveys. The sampling for both studies was non-probabilistic. Using non-probabilistic selection, the authors also applied statistical inference, treating it only as an opportunity to identify relationships in the studied groups, which descriptive statistics does not allow. It is also important to stress the high degree of feminisation of the group of the Polish students qualified for the research, which impacted the gender structure of the respondents.

Based on the research results, the authors calculated the number and frequency of the respondents' responses to the individual questions on the survey. The authors are aware that the applied sampling technique does not allow the researcher to estimate the error appearing when generalizing the regularities observed in the sample to the entire population. In order to identify possible relationship occurring in the studied groups, the authors used statistical inference for which they assumed a certain level of significance – descriptive statistics does not provide such possibilities. Statistical inference was conducted with ex ante significance level at $\alpha = 0.05$, and p value was calculated for each test. In order to find out whether there is sufficient proof to reject H_0 against H_1 ($p < \alpha$) or not ($p \geq \alpha$), p value was compared with the level of statistical significance. All the analyses were conducted using software Statistica v.13.

The authors are aware that survey research has limitations such as providing merely superficial understanding of the phenomena being studied or inaccurate answers given by respondents. Criticism of the presented research results may be that the research was conducted on a small group of participants. Small samples may be

methodologically questionable (e.g., generalisation is difficult), but they can be useful in inference if proper statistical tests are used [49].

4. Results

In the first step, the authors made an attempt to find out which benefits of following a brand on social media by respondents were significant in both the analysed countries. The respondents were presented

with a catalogue of benefits (along with the possibility of indicating other benefits than those mentioned in the question) and asked to assess each of them on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 – signified the least significant benefit, while 5 – the most significant one. As the measurement level of the analysed variables was based on interval scale [50], it was possible to calculate the mean score for the individual benefits, standard deviation value and coefficients of variation (Table 1).

Table 1. Mean score, standard deviation and coefficient of variation of the benefits of following a brand on social media by respondents in Poland and Great Britain in 2020

Benefits of following a brand on social media	Poland			Great Britain		
	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new	4.2252	0.7931	18.77	3.4000	1.0991	32.33
Opportunity to ask additional questions	3.2252	1.1205	34.74	3.3267	1.1082	33.31
Chance to win prizes in competitions	3.1060	1.2445	40.07	3.3133	1.1766	35.51
Meeting new people gathered around the brand	2.8212	1.2387	43.91	2.9267	1.1591	39.61
Possibility of having problems solved faster	3.5695	1.1166	31.28	3.5400	1.1564	32.67
Using interesting games, applications related to the brand	3.2517	1.2123	37.28	3.2333	1.1895	36.79
Opportunity to receive a discount coupon	3.7086	1.1752	31.69	3.5200	1.1394	32.37
Possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand)	2.7086	1.0557	38.98	3.1800	1.1590	36.45

Analysis of the means enabled identification of the most important benefits of following a brand on social media. The respondents in both the countries indicated the same 3 most important benefits, but in a somewhat different order of importance. The respondents in Great Britain indicated: (1) Possibility of having problems solved faster, (2) Opportunity to receive a discount coupon, (3) Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new. The respondents in Poland indicated: (1) Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new, (2) Opportunity to receive a discount coupon, (3) Possibility of having problems solved faster.

The comparison of the means (Figure 1) also revealed that the respondents in Poland rated 'Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new' higher compared to the respondents in Great Britain. The respondents in Great Britain, in turn,

rated 'Possibility of influencing the brand' higher than the respondents in Poland. As far as the other benefits mentioned in the table are concerned, the mean scores were similar between the respondents in both the countries (the differences in the means between both the analysed groups were usually around 0.2). The dispersion of the results obtained in both the countries was also similar. This is evidenced by analysis of the values of the coefficient of variation, which is one of the measures of dispersion that is used to study the degree of variation in the value of a variable. The values of the coefficient of variation are similar in both of the analysed groups of respondents (countries), which shows that the mean score for each of the benefits of following a brand/product/service on social media in each group deviates within a similar range. The value of

the coefficient of variation suggests that the difference in the dispersion of the scores given by the respondents in both the analysed countries is small - the variation is at an average level. The only

exception is small variation in the score for 'Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new' given by the Polish respondents in 2020.

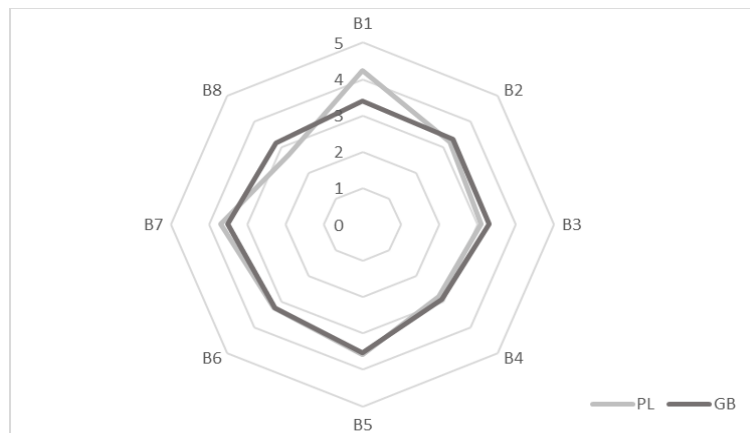


Figure 1. Mean score for the benefits of following a brand on social media by respondents in Poland and Great Britain in 2020. B1 – Possibility of being up-to-date with what is new, B2 – Opportunity to ask additional questions, B3 – Chance to win prizes in competitions, B4 – Meeting new people gathered 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)

Among other benefits of following a brand/product/service on social media, the respondents in Poland mentioned the following:

- fast and interesting (e.g., in the form of films) information about promotions, discounts and competitions,
- learning about and following what's new, knowing about the launch of a new product earlier,
- possibility of following the comments of others and the rates of the product by the person presenting it,
- access to more information about the brand and products,
- faster contact, assistance in online shopping, gaining information about the details of the products, opportunity to try out the products (product samples),
- possibility of observing what is fashionable, learning about new trends,
- possibility of being engaged in the life of the company, finding a job.

The respondents from Great Britain, in turn, indicated the following:

- getting direct info quickly, instant communication,

- knowing immediately when a certain brand releases something new,
- promotions, offers, discounts,
- inspiration, creativity,
- to check whether there are some stocks left,
- being able to see how the company operates behind the scenes.

The next step was finding out whether there is a relationship between the individual benefits of following a brand on social media and the respondent's gender. To do that, non-parametric tests for two independent groups were used. These tests are used to verify the hypothesis that two analysed samples are drawn from different statistical populations. The requirement for the use of the test was possibility of arranging the variables (measurement data) being analysed in an ascending order, i.e., from the minimum value to the maximum value. The Mann–Whitney U test (Table 2 and 3) was used, as the data are measurable, but their distribution is not normal distribution and the data are ordinal type [49, 51]. In the case of ordinal type data, the null hypothesis (H_0) assumes that the distribution types of the analysed groups do not differ significantly from each other.

Table 2. Results of the Mann–Whitney U test concerning the relationship between the evaluation of the benefits of following a brand on social media and the respondent's gender in Poland in 2020

Variables	Sum of ranks Female	Sum of ranks Male	U	Z	p
possibility of being up-to-date with what is new & gender	9639.50	1836.50	1511.50	0.3532	0.7239
opportunity to ask additional questions & gender	9782.50	1693.50	1368.50	1.0749	0.2824
chance to win prizes in competitions & gender	9521.50	1954.50	1520.50	-0.2792	0.7801
meeting new people gathered around the brand & gender	9534.50	1941.50	1533.50	-0.2111	0.8328
possibility of having problems solved faster & gender	9643.00	1833.00	1508.00	0.3514	0.7253
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & gender	9643.50	1832.50	1507.50	0.3477	0.7280
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & gender	10137.00	1339.00	1014.00	2.9526	0.0032
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & gender	9720.50	1755.50	1430.50	0.7494	0.4536

A statistically significant relationship was observed between 'Opportunity to receive a discount coupon' and gender of the respondent in Poland ($p = 0.003151$). It is reasonable to infer that women participating in the survey evaluated 'Opportunity to receive a discount coupon' when following a specific company's fan page before purchasing its product/service significantly higher than male

respondents. These conclusions are confirmed in Figure 2.

Summing up, of all the analysed variables (Table 2), only one dependence was identified (Figure 2). It is reasonable to infer lack of relationship between the other analysed benefits of following a brand on social media and gender of the respondent in Poland.

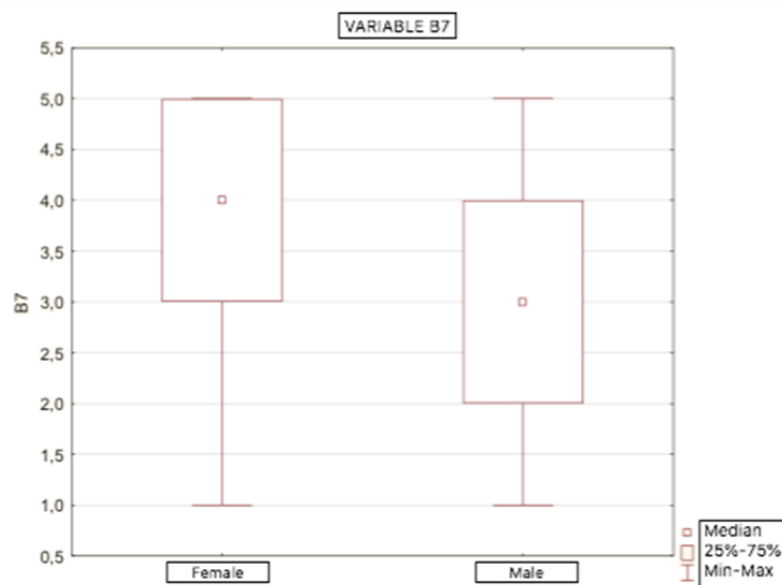


Figure 2. Relationship between the evaluation of 'Opportunity to receive a discount coupon' on a social media fan page and gender of the respondent in Poland in 2020

Table 3. Results of the Mann–Whitney U test concerning the relationship between the evaluation of the benefits of following a brand on social media and the respondent's gender in Great Britain in 2020

Variables	Sum of ranks Female	Sum of ranks Male	U	Z	p
possibility of being up-to-date with what is new & gender	6168.50	5156.50	2671.50	-0.5031	0.6149
opportunity to ask additional questions & gender	6092.50	5232.50	2747.50	-0.2033	0.8389
chance to win prizes in competitions & gender	6225.50	5099.50	2614.50	-0.7225	0.4700
meeting new people gathered around the brand & gender	5571.00	5754.00	2331.00	1.8189	0.0689
possibility of having problems solved faster & gender	5689.00	5636.00	2449.00	1.3696	0.1708
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & gender	5665.50	5659.50	2425.50	1.4526	0.1463
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & gender	5184.00	6141.00	2699.00	-0.3923	0.6948
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & gender	5601.00	5724.00	2361.00	1.7121	0.0869

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test for the data collected in Great Britain (Table 3) do not provide any grounds for rejecting the null hypothesis ($p > 0.05$). For all of the mentioned benefits, the distribution types of the analysed groups do not differ significantly from each other. No relationship exists between the individual benefits of following a brand on social media and the respondent's gender.

The last stage of the statistical analysis of the collected data was verification whether there is a relationship between the following variables: benefits of following a brand on social media (variable X) and the respondent's place of residence (variable Y). In order to assess the relationship between two qualitative features [52], the authors again used a non-parametric test – Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Table 4 and 5).

Table 4. Spearman's rank-order correlation of the relationship between the benefits of following a brand on social media and the Polish respondent's place of residence in 2020

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	151	0.1284	1.5808	0.1160
opportunity to ask additional questions & place of residence	151	0.1195	1.4693	0.1439
chance to win prizes in competitions & place of residence	151	0.0340	0.4147	0.6790
meeting new people gathered around the brand & place of residence	151	0.0638	0.7799	0.4367
possibility of having problems solved faster & place of residence	151	0.0778	0.9530	0.3421
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & place of residence	151	0.0982	1.2039	0.2305
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & place of residence	151	0.0586	0.7167	0.4747
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & place of residence	151	0.0394	0.4810	0.6313

The statistical analysis did not provide any grounds for rejecting the null hypothesis. No statistically significant correlations were found between the analysed variables ($p>0.05$). The Polish

respondent's place of residence was not statistically related with the analysed benefits of following a brand on social media.

Table 5. Spearman's rank-order correlation concerning the relationship between the benefits of following a brand on social media and the respondent's place of residence in Great Britain in 2020

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	150	0.0222	0.2697	0.7878
opportunity to ask additional questions & place of residence	150	-0.0026	-0.0315	0.9749
chance to win prizes in competitions & place of residence	150	-0.1099	-1.3457	0.1804
meeting new people gathered around the brand & place of residence	150	0.0282	0.3432	0.7319
possibility of having problems solved faster & place of residence	150	0.0151	0.1847	0.8537
using interesting games, applications related to the brand & place of residence	150	0.0832	1.0156	0.3115
opportunity to receive a discount coupon & place of residence	150	-0.0333	-0.4054	0,6857
possibility of influencing the brand (the ability to shape the brand) & place of residence	150	0.0691	0.8431	0.4005

Summing up, the correlation coefficients (Tables 4 and 5) calculated for the data collected among respondents 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 analysed benefits of following a brand on social media.

5. Discussion

The results presented in the paper pertain to the least examined generation in the literature – Generation Z. Information on this generation mainly comes from reports by marketing agencies [53],[7]. The existing research conducted among Gen Zers concentrates around two areas. The first is concerned with factors impacting purchasing decisions. For instance, Maziriri et al. [54] examined the impact of satisfaction with food consumption and restaurant loyalty on repurchase intention and positive word-of-mouth opinions about fast food restaurants in the RSA. Djafarowa and Bowes [55] examined which types of marketing tools on Instagram were most successful in regard to Generation Z's impulse purchasing in the fashion industry in Great Britain. Vasani [56] conducted research on the use and impact of

promotional marketing in Web 2.0 tools on Gen Zers' purchasing decisions.

The second area concerns the way Generation Z consumers use and perceive the current applications of smart technologies. Priporas et al. [57] studied expectations of young consumers and the future of smart e-commerce. Meghisan-Toma et al. [58] analysed the impact of online advertising, social influence, and usage motivation on the behavioural intention related to m-commerce use among Romanian young adults. Recent research focuses on the potential dark side of the use of social media among Gen Zers during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown [59].

6. Conclusion

The research presented in the paper aimed to identify the expectations of surveyed representatives of Gen Zers towards the benefits of customer-company interactions on social media. Analysis of the literature was conducted to present the current state of knowledge and confirm the relevance of the research problems. Not all of the hypotheses formulated by the authors were confirmed.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) was not confirmed, as the respondents in both the countries indicated economic and practical benefits as the most

important. However, from the perspective of the building of customer-orientation by enterprises, an important finding is that both in Great Britain and in Poland respondents evaluated the same benefits highest. Analysing the impact of gender on the evaluation of the analysed benefits (H2), the authors identified lack of such impact in the case of the results obtained in Great Britain. As far as the results obtained in Poland are concerned, it was found that female respondents rated Opportunity to receive a discount coupon when following a company's fan page before purchasing a product/service of a given company significantly higher than male respondents. In both the analysed countries, the research confirmed Hypothesis 3 (H3), which states that a respondent's place of residence has no impact on the evaluation of the benefits of following a brand on social media.

Conversely, the findings that the Gen Zers surveyed in Poland and Great Britain rated economic and informational benefits of following brands on social media highest differ from the results obtained by other researchers. Gummerus et al. [47] identified social benefits, hedonic benefits and functional benefits as key in the customer-brand relationships on social networking portals. It is likely that the differences between these research findings result from a different study periods and the fact that the authors studied only Gen Zers rather than the whole population.

Future research should take into account the emerging benefits, e.g., those connected with the development of technology. Future research might attempt to compare the impact of enterprises' activities on the behaviours of the members of different generations on social media. Further research would allow to find out the impact of the use of social media by Generation Z on the financial performance of companies.

Although the results of the study do not apply to a representative sample, they allow to deepen the knowledge on the behaviour of the representatives of generation Z in social media. Customer orientation, perceived as an element of social CRM, allows companies to achieve various benefits in the area of building relationships with Gen Zers. Learning about customer needs and expectations informs strategic decisions of modern companies. The conclusions formulated in the paper can be used by managers in customer-oriented companies to build long-term relationships. Following the scientists' views [41],

the authors would like to stress that the key and most important step in building a social CRM strategy is to understand what the customers value most when in the environment of a social networking platform.

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