



The Impact of Gen-X, Gen-Y and Gen-Z Brand Image/ Perception (Positioning and Reputation) on the Chocolate Industry Brands Advocacy Behavior

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Abstract

Title: The Impact of Gen-X, Gen-Y and Gen-Z Brand Image/ Perception (Positioning and Reputation) on the Chocolate Industry Brands Advocacy Behavior.

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This thesis examines the impact of brand positioning and reputation of cohorts X, Y, and Z, focussing on factors that promote their development of brand advocacy. The study focuses on the German chocolate market.

For many, chocolate is a luxury food, a moment of pleasure, or an emotional balance in stressful times. These characteristics make chocolate products highly emotional, with factors such as brand trust, recommendation/promotion, and defense playing a significant role in product choice.

The aim is to define the individual preferences of each generation and find out why they matter. To do this, this paper explores the generational personality traits and patterns each generation values.

In order to achieve this goal, literature, and explorative research are carried out in this thesis. The explorative methodology consists of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method involves interviews and projective techniques. The quantitative method validates the variables obtained from the qualitative method with a survey.

The results show that Generation-X, Y, and Z have different preferences, tendencies, and requirements, indicating that companies must target them differently.

Keywords: Generation-X, Generation-Y, Generation-Z, Brand image, Brand positioning, Brand reputation, Brand Advocacy, Trust, Recommendation, Promotion, Defense

Resumo

Título: O Impacto da Imagem/Percepção da Marca (Posicionamento e Reputação) de Gerações X, Y e Z no Comportamento de Advocacia de Marcas na Indústria do Chocolate

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Esta tese analisa o impacto do posicionamento e da reputação da marca nas gerações X, Y e Z, com foco nos fatores que promovem o desenvolvimento da advocacia de marcas. O estudo é centrado no mercado alemão de chocolates.

Para muitas pessoas, o chocolate é um alimento de luxo, um momento de prazer ou um equilíbrio emocional em tempos de estresse. Essas características tornam os produtos de chocolate altamente emocionais, sendo fatores como confiança na marca, recomendação/promoção e defesa fundamentais na escolha do produto.

O objetivo é definir as preferências individuais de cada geração e entender por que elas são relevantes. Para isso, este trabalho explora os traços de personalidade e os padrões geracionais valorizados por cada grupo.

Para alcançar esse objetivo, são realizadas pesquisas bibliográficas e exploratórias nesta tese. A metodologia exploratória consiste em métodos qualitativos e quantitativos. O método qualitativo inclui o uso de entrevistas e técnicas projetivas. O método quantitativo valida as variáveis obtidas no método qualitativo por meio de uma pesquisa.

Os resultados mostram que as gerações X, Y e Z possuem preferências, tendências e exigências distintas, indicando que as empresas precisam direcionar suas estratégias de forma diferenciada para cada geração.

Palavras-chave: Geração X, Geração Y, Geração Z, Imagem da marca, Posicionamento da marca, Reputação da marca, Advocacia de marca, Confiança, Recomendação, Promoção, Defesa

Contents Page

- 1. Introduction 1**
- 2. Literature Review 3**
 - 2.1 Generation-X, Y, Z..... 3*
 - 2.1.1 Definition of Generation 3
 - 2.1.2 Profile Generation-X..... 3
 - 2.1.3 Profile Generation-Y 4
 - 2.1.4 Profile Generation-Z 4
 - 2.2 Brand Equity..... 5*
 - 2.3 Brand Image / Perception..... 6*
 - 2.3.1 Brand Positioning 6
 - 2.3.2 Brand Reputation..... 7
 - 2.4 Brand Advocacy..... 7*
 - 2.4.1 Trust 7
 - 2.4.2 Recommendation/ Promotion..... 8
 - 2.4.3 Defense..... 8
- 3 Methodology 9**
 - 3.1 Research Topic and Hypotheses 9*
 - 3.2 Research Design 10*
 - 3.3 Data Collection..... 10*
 - 3.3.1 Semi-structured Interview 10
 - 3.3.2 Projective Technique 11
 - 3.3.3 Quantitative Survey 12
- 4 Results and Analysis Qualitative Research 14**
 - 4.1 Semi-structured Interview 14*
 - A) Chocolate Consumption 14
 - B) Familiarity with german chocolate Market 14
 - C) Brand Communication 14
 - C.1 Brand Awareness & Preferences 14

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| C.1.1 | Brand Touchpoints | 14 |
| C.1.2 | Impact of Personal Values and Lifestyle on Brand Image/ Perception | 15 |
| C.1.3 | Evaluating Brand Attitudes: Functionality Versus Alignment with Personal Values and Emotional Connection..... | 15 |
| C.2 | Brand Positioning | 16 |
| C.2.1 | Key Distinguishers of Chocolate Brands | 16 |
| C.2.2 | Defining the Ideal Chocolate Brand | 16 |
| C.2.3 | Unique Qualities of Preferred Chocolate Brands | 17 |
| C.2.4 | Touchpoints for Brands to Connect with Gen-X, Gen-Y & Gen-Z | 17 |
| C.2.5 | The Role of Emotional and Rational Values in Shaping Brand Personality and Positioning..... | 18 |
| C.2.6 | Impact of Social and Personal Values on Brand Identity and Market Positioning | 18 |
| C.3 | Brand Reputation | 18 |
| C.3.1 | The Significance of Brand Reputation in Consumer Trust | 18 |
| C.3.2 | Brand Reputation Touchpoints..... | 19 |
| C.3.3 | Key Dimentions on Brand Reputation | 19 |
| D) | Brand Advocacy | 19 |
| D.1 | Trust in Brands | 19 |
| D.1.1 | Building Brand Trust..... | 19 |
| D.1.2 | Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions | 20 |
| D.1.3 | Essential Brand Attributes..... | 20 |
| D.1.4 | Effective Touchpoints for Building Brand Image/ Perception and Trust.... | 20 |
| D.2 | Recommendation and promotion..... | 21 |
| D.2.1 | Willingness to Recommend Brands | 21 |
| D.2.2 | Decision-Making Factors in Brand Choice | 21 |
| D.2.3 | Key Touchpoints for Encouraging Brand Recommendations and Referrals | 21 |
| D.3 | Brand Defence | 22 |
| D.3.1 | Consumer Reactions to Brand Crises..... | 22 |
| D.3.2 | Impact of Brand Crises on Consumer Perception | 22 |
| D.3.3 | Crucial Touchpoints for Brand Defense and Maintaining Customer Trust During a Crisis..... | 22 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 4.2 | <i>Projective Technique</i> | 23 |
| A) | Brand Image/ Perception | 23 |
| B) | Associations with Professions and Social Roles | 24 |
| C) | Emotional Connection to Brands..... | 24 |
| D) | Preferences for Innovation and Tradition | 24 |
| 5 | Main findings qualitative Methodology | 25 |
| 6 | Results and Analysis Quantitative Research | 27 |
| 6.1. | <i>Generational Profiles – Demographics – Consumer Behavior</i> | 27 |
| 6.1.1 | Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies | 28 |
| 6.2 | <i>Brand Image/ Perception</i> | 28 |
| 6.2.1 | Positioning..... | 28 |
| 6.2.2 | Reputation | 32 |
| 6.2.3 | Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies | 32 |
| A.) | Brand Positioning | 32 |
| B.) | Brand Reputation | 33 |
| 6.3 | <i>Brand Execution</i> | 33 |
| 6.3.1 | Brand Seasonal Products | 33 |
| 6.3.2 | Brand Touchpoints | 35 |
| 6.2.3 | Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies | 36 |
| A.) | Seasonal Products | 36 |
| B.) | Touchpoints | 36 |
| 6.4 | <i>Brand Advocacy</i> | 36 |
| 6.4.1 | Trust | 36 |
| 6.4.2 | Recommendation/ Promotion..... | 38 |
| 6.4.3 | Defence | 40 |
| 6.4.4 | Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies | 41 |
| A.) | Trust..... | 41 |
| B.) | Recommendation | 41 |
| C.) | Defense | 42 |
| 7 | Main findings quantitative Methodology | 43 |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 8 | Conclusions and Implications..... | 46 |
| 9 | Limitations | 48 |
| | Bibliography..... | 50 |
| | Appendix | 54 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|--|------------|
| For example | – e.g. |
| Generation-X | – Gen-X |
| Generation-Y | – Gen-Y |
| Generation-Z | – Gen-Z |
| Brand Positioning | – BP |
| Brand Product Related Attributes | – PR |
| Brand Diversity and Customizability | – DC |
| Brand Social Responsibility and Sustainability | – SRS |
| Brand Appearance and Touchpoints | – AT |
| Brand Behavior and Loyalty | – BL |
| Standard-Deviation | – Std.Dev. |
| Human Related | – HR |
| Animal Welfare | – AW |
| Environmental Aspects | – EA |
| Corporate Ethics and Transparency | – CET |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Audience, Independent, Dependent Variables..... | 9 |
| Table 2: Independent & Dependent Variables Semi-structured Interviews | 26 |
| Table 3: Gen-X Q9 Q11..... | 29 |
| Table 4: Gen-Y Q9 Q11..... | 30 |
| Table 5: Gen-Z Q9 Q11 | 30 |
| Table 6: Final Independent & Dependent Variables..... | 45 |
| Table 7: Brand Positioning - Semi-structured Interviews | 59 |
| Table 8: Brand Reputation - Semi-structured Interviews | 59 |
| Table 9: Q6..... | 77 |
| Table 10: Q7 | 77 |
| Table 11: Q8..... | 78 |
| Table 12: Q9..... | 78 |
| Table 13: Q10..... | 78 |
| Table 14: Q11 | 78 |
| Table 15: Q13 | 79 |
| Table 16: Q18..... | 79 |
| Table 17: Q20 | 79 |
| Table 18: Q21 | 79 |
| Table 19: Q24 | 80 |
| Table 20: Q25 | 80 |
| Table 21: Q28..... | 80 |
| Table 22: Q33 | 80 |
| Table 23: Commonalities generations (I) | 81 |
| Table 24: Commonalities generations (II)..... | 81 |
| Table 25: Commonality frequencies among generations..... | 81 |
| Table 26: Influence IV Brand Positioning on DV Brand Trust (Q10 Q24)..... | 81 |
| Table 27: Influence IV Brand Positioning on DV Brand Recommendation/ Promotion (Q25) | 82 |
| Table 28: Influence IV Brand Positioning on DV Brand Defense (Q28)..... | 82 |
| Table 29: Influence IV Brand Reputation on DV Brand Trust (Q10 Q24)..... | 82 |
| Table 30: Influence IV Brand Reputation on DV Brand Recommendation/ Promotion (Q25) | 83 |
| Table 31: Influence IV Brand Reputation on DV Brand Defense (Q28) | 83 |

1. Introduction

<Chocolate makes you happy!>=

It seems reasonable to suggest that a significant proportion of the German population would likely resonate with this assumption. This is supported by the German per capita consumption, projected to reach 7.99 kg in 2024 (Statista, 2024).

During the festive season, whether Christmas or Easter and on birthdays, chocolate is a popular gift for family and friends. However, there are occasions throughout the year when people treat themselves or others to something special.

For many consumers, chocolate represents a moment of pause, a reward, and a way of coping with stress and emotional eating (Parker, Parker, & Brotchie, 2006). This indicates that chocolate is a consistent presence in the lives of many consumers, serving as a reliable source of comfort and enjoyment in both positive and negative circumstances. It is a trustworthy partner in moments of satisfaction.

This consumption is reflected in the key figures of the market. Germany's chocolate market is expected to have a turnover of 8.1 billion euros (Bocksch, 2024) in 2024, with projected growth to 9.21 billion euros by 2029 (Statista, 2024), highlighting its cultural and economic significance.

The investigation of this thesis is motivated by chocolate's growing product category, driven by strong emotions, requiring each product to differentiate itself through various emotional factors (Parker, Parker, & Brotchie, 2006).

However, the products provided by chocolate manufacturers are very similar, with differences primarily in flavor, shape, color, variety, and ethical and environmental practices. The high number of competitors in this saturated market highlights the importance of prioritizing brand advocacy.

It has been established that organizations must adopt a consumer-centric approach to maintain their relevance in the market (Zinnbauer & Eberl, 2005). However, catering to each individual's subjective needs and characteristics is impossible. Consequently, organizations must segment consumer groups according to specific characteristics to reduce the intensity of their work while still maintaining a consumer-centric approach (Zlatanova-Pazheva, 2024). One potential method for clustering is by generational cohorts (Zlatanova-Pazheva, 2024), which is presented in this thesis.

The research question being answered in this dissertation is: "*How do brand positioning and brand reputation influence brand advocacy behaviors (trust, recommendation, and defense) among Gen-X, Gen-Y, and Gen-Z in the chocolate industry?*".

To answer this question, an extensive literature review of secondary data was conducted, covering the theoretical background of the technical terms and frameworks referred to during the explanation and analysis of the primary research. The methodologies used included both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For the qualitative part, semi-structured and projective techniques were used. For the quantitative methodology a survey was conducted to validate variables added during the qualitative analysis. Following the explanation of the application, this paper will provide an analysis and discussion of the insights gained. Ultimately, it highlights the research limitations and provides a concluding summary.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Generation-X, Y, Z

2.1.1 Definition of Generation

To start, it is important to define the term of a generation. With regard to generational experts like William Strauss and Neil Howe, a generation represents a specific span of time (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Traditionally, a life span has lasted between 20 – 25 years, marking the average span between the birth of the parents and their own children. As an increasing number of women are deciding to start a family later in life, this statement can no longer be considered valid. However, this is not the only factor contributing to the definition of generations.

Due to the constantly growing digitalization and globalisation, information flows, and intercultural exchanges are faster and more complex (Kolnhofer-Derecskei, Reicher, & Szeghegyi, 2017). The consumption or avoidance of social media has the effect of creating completely different profiles of people who not only differ in terms of culture and digitalization but also significantly influence basic attitudes, preferences, and decisions (McCrindle Research , 2014). This leads to the generations being defined more sociologically than biologically. Today, persons (max. 15 years apart) who are influenced by the same events and developments can be considered as the same generational cohort (McCrindle Research , 2014)

There is no universal definition of the exact age structures. A review of a range of sources found that the age difference between individual generations fluctuates between one and three years. The difference depends on the definition applied to the term generation. This paper defines the generations according to the following birth years, following the exact age range of 15 years from McCrindle:

Generation-X: 1965 - 1980

Generation-Y: 1981 - 1996

Generation-Z: 1997 – 2012.

2.1.2 Profile Generation-X

The term Generation-X refers to a demographic cohort born between 1965 and 1980 following named Gen-X. As of November 2024, this encompasses individuals aged between 59 and 44 years old.

This generation grew up without digital media or internet access, making them the most conservative group with regard to digital initiatives. They experienced a huge transition with the growing access to technology nowadays (Dolot, 2018). They are biased by their pragmatic approach and influenced by events like the economic crisis (Lissitsa & Kol, 2016). This makes them highly price-sensitive, with decisions being primarily based on rational factors. Stability and consistency play significant roles in their actions (Gaidhani, Arora, & Sharma, 2019). Members of Gen-X are more risk-averse and demonstrate less brand loyalty than members of Generation-Y and Z (Lissitsa & Kol, 2016). They are technologically aware but less integrated with digital technology than younger generations (Lissitsa & Kol, 2016).

2.1.3 Profile Generation-Y

The term Generation-Y refers to a demographic cohort born between 1981 and 1996 following named Gen-Y. As of November 2024, this encompasses individuals aged between 43 and 28 years old.

Based on the literature research, this generation appears to be the middle ground between Gen-X and Generation-Z. Members of the cohort grew up with digital technologies yet only became conscious of them in their late teens or even later. This reflects their transition from analog to digital technologies in their formative years. It can be derived that they are a balanced generation characterized by a pluralistic approach to values and environmental requirements (Singh & Dangemei, 2016).

Their Gen-X parents strongly influence them. However, they differ from their parents because they adopt a highly achievement-driven and goal-focused approach. In addition, they place a high value on having meaningful work in which they fulfill themselves (Gaidhani, Arora, & Sharma, 2019). In making purchasing decisions, consumers of Gen-Y place a high value on the emotional benefits associated with brands (Lissitsa & Kol, 2016). It is impossible to assume that the entirety of the generation is digitally networked, given the different forms and points of contact with digital media.

2.1.4 Profile Generation-Z

The term Generation-Z refers to a demographic cohort born between 1997 and 2012 following named Gen-Z. As of November 2024, this encompasses individuals aged between 27 and 12 years old.

This generation can be defined as digital natives. Besides the conventional name, Gen-Z is also named Gen-Tech or the Social-Web-Generation.

They are born and raised in an era that has seen the greatest technological changes and innovations, marking early touchpoints with digital initiatives and innovations. Gen-Z has the most digital touchpoints and understanding of technological advancement, of the three generations, marking their digital-first mindset (Singh & Dangemei, 2016; Gaidhani, Arora, & Sharma, 2019).

Because they grew up with problems such as global warming, they are particularly sensitive to sustainability and resource shortages. However, this is not the only factor differentiating them from previous generations. Individuality and mindfulness are two key values reflected in their life approach. They tend to place less value on materialism and attach greater importance to special moments and experiences (Singh & Dangemei, 2016). This indicates their preference for innovation and transparency (Gaidhani, Arora, & Sharma, 2019).

As a result of having had access to all information from an early age, individuals belonging to Gen-Z have a significantly limited attention span. They are quickly bored by content that does not correspond to their values and ideas (Singh & Dangemei, 2016; Gaidhani, Arora, & Sharma, 2019).

2.2 Brand Equity

Brand Equity can be seen as part of the holistic brand. It is intangible and implemented through many targeted measures.

It embodies a brand's value beyond its physical assets (Biel, 1992). It represents factors like brand awareness, preferences, and trust, which help differentiate the brand from its competitors (Sammut-Bonnici, 2014). As a result, brand equity reflects the premium consumers are willing to pay for the branded product (Biel, 1992).

Brand equity management is an important part of a brand's corporate strategy and needs to be managed closely (Sammut-Bonnici, 2014). However, since those brand assets are intangible, measuring these components involves much effort. Effective brand equity management makes a lasting contribution to increased brand loyalty, fostering the reduction of price sensitivity.

The concepts defined in the following all contribute to brand equity.

2.3 Brand Image / Perception

Brand perception describes how consumers perceive a brand and their associations with it (Plumeyer, Kottemann, Böger, & Decker, 2017; Wänke, Herrmann, & Schaffner, 2007). It is subjective and individual to each customer and significantly influences purchasing decisions and loyalty (Biel, 1992). This subjectiveness makes a close management difficult. This paper examines brand perception in relation to brand image, explained in more detail below.

Brand image is the cumulative set of associations and mental impressions consumers have of a brand. It is seen as a critical indicator influencing a brand's reputation, especially its credibility. For customers it serves as a guideline with tangible attributes like product features and intangible ones like emotional traits (Biel, 1992). A brand's image is based on consumers' perception and is formed by the associations in their minds (Plumeyer, Kottemann, Böger, & Decker, 2017). It represents how consumers think and feel when they see a brand (Wijaya, 2013).

While a brand can influence the brand image through brand positioning, it is the consumers themselves who ultimately determine the image they associate with the brand. Measuring brand image reveals consumer's perceptions and desirable or undesirable associations (Plumeyer, Kottemann, Böger, & Decker, 2017).

Brand image is a challenging aspect to manage and control, given that consumers with diverse backgrounds, values, and preferences often perceive the chosen positioning differently (Plumeyer, Kottemann, Böger, & Decker, 2017).

2.3.1 Brand Positioning

The strategic brand positioning is chosen by the brand itself. It is about finding a unique place in the market where a brand can stand out. The process aims to create strong, favorable, and unique brand associations (Cristea, Capatina, & Stoenescu, 2015) to create a distinctive and differentiated place in the customer's mind (Keller & Tony Apèria, 2008). This involves using strategies like highlighting special features of the product, creating strong brand recognition, and emphasizing what makes the brand different from competitors (Sammut-Bonnici, 2014). A brand's positioning must be clear, simple, and easy to understand for the customer. It is essential that the brand's positioning is consistent with every action the brand takes, both internally and externally (Thompson, 2003). It leads to consumer loyalty and willingness to seek out the brand (Fuchs, 2010; Cristea, Capatina, & Stoenescu, 2015).

2.3.2 Brand Reputation

Brand reputation can be defined as a stakeholder's long-term judgment of a brand's actions. It is built on brand image and reflects a brand's trustworthiness, authenticity, credibility, and ability to deliver on its promises over time (Greyser, 2009). In short, a good reputation is built on the alignment of the customer's actual experience with the brand's promises (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). A strong brand reputation increases trust and loyalty to brands, resulting in long-term brand favourability (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Conversely, a negative brand reputation can also cause considerable damage to a brand. For this reason, it is essential to build a sustainable and well-founded brand reputation that aligns with the company's strategic initiatives (Greyser, 2009).

2.4 Brand Advocacy

Brand advocacy, at best, arises from the above structures and processes. This paper understands it with regard to trust, recommendation or promotion, and defense. These three dimensions can be included as attributes with rising brand advocacy. Stage one: trust in the brand and its products. Stage two recommending the brand to friends and family, and stage three in which the consumer would defend the brand even in a crisis situation. The individual stages are explained in more detail below. Consumers who fulfill the criteria for brand advocacy are following called advocates (Tabaku & Mirela, 2015).

2.4.1 Trust

Brand Trust reflects a consumer's confidence in the brand's reliability and ability to consistently deliver on its promises (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). The level of trust is the customer's expectation that the brand will lead to a positive outcome for the customer (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemàn, 2005). It comprises cognitive and affective elements like reliability, honesty, and integrity (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

Brand trust can therefore be seen as a key contributor to long-term customer relationships (Bernarto, Berlianto, Meilani, Masman, & Suryawan, 2020), which contribute to brand advocacy (Tabaku & Mirela, 2015) and brand equity (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemàn, 2005).

2.4.2 Recommendation/ Promotion

Recommendation and Promotion include word of mouth of positively influenced customers (Tabaku & Mirela, 2015). This behavior is rooted in the consumer's trust and identification with the brand's image or values (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

The loyalty and associated conviction of the stakeholders for the product and the brand make them informal brand ambassadors sharing their experiences within their network. Word of mouth is one of the most powerful tools a company can gain. It is very difficult to control because it has to come from the customer's power of persuasion. A customer will only engage in promotional activities for a company if they are convinced by a unique selling point, whether that be the product itself or the values of the company. It is important to remember that different generations have different requirements due to their differentiated generational profile (Tabaku & Mirela, 2015).

2.4.3 Defense

Brand Defense is the highest possible connection a brand can have with a customer. This also means it is the most difficult to reach, as advocates actively defend the brand against criticism or negative perceptions to correct misinformation (Tabaku & Mirela, 2015). This behavior is often motivated by a strong sense of loyalty and identification with the brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). Consumers feel personally attacked because they see themselves reflected in the brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Topic and Hypotheses

This paper discovers The Impact of Gen-X, Gen-Y and Gen-Z Brand Image Perception (Positioning and Reputation) on the Chocolate Industry Brands Advocacy Behavior. The research was limited to the German market to narrow down the vast field of the chocolate industry.

To determine the influences and factors, the following research question is investigated:

<How do brand positioning and brand reputation influence brand advocacy behaviors (trust, recommendation, and defense) among Gen-X, Gen-Y, and Gen-Z in the chocolate industry?>

It is important to emphasize that this work does not focus on detailing brand positioning and reputation strategies. Instead, it examines generational differences and commonalities, employing exploratory methods to identify how each generation can be effectively reached and influenced.

Based on the research question, the following dependent and preliminary independent variables can be named:

Table 1: Audience, Independent, Dependent Variables

| Audience/ Target | Independent Variables (IV) (=factors that influence the dependent variables) | Dependent Variables (DV) (= outcomes that are being measured) |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Gen-X Gen-Y Gen-Z | Brand Image/ Perception - Positioning - Reputation | Brand Advocacy - Brand Trust - Brand Recommendation/ Promotion - Brand Defense |

Having the following Hypothesis in mind:

H1: Brand Image/ Perception (IV) on brand trust (DV)

Brands that embody consistency and establishment are more likely to be trusted by Gen-X, while brands that demonstrate authenticity, transparency, and alignment with ethical values such as sustainability and responsibility are more valued by Gen-Y and Gen-Z.

H2: Brand Image/ Perception (IV) on brand recommendation and promotion (DV)

Brands that emphasize functional attributes, such as product quality and reliability, are more likely to be recommended by Gen-X and Gen-Y. In contrast, brands that align with personal values and social causes are more likely to receive active recommendations from Gen-Z.

H3: Brand Image/ Perception (IV) in brand defense (DV)

Brands that align with the ethical or social values of Gen-Z are more likely to receive public support from that group. Conversely, brands that focus more on product performance and brand history rather than social issues are less likely to be defended by Gen-X and Gen-Y.

3.2 Research Design

The study used different methods in two phases to gather qualitative and quantitative data. For the qualitative methodology, the initial phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of each generation to gain primary insights into the general perception of chocolate brands. Additionally, projective techniques with representatives of each generation were used to explore intuitive, unbiased perceptions. Ultimately, a quantitative survey was conducted to gather perceptions from a more extensive research sample and validate or reorganize the insights gained from the qualitative methodology. The sequential process, combining qualitative depth and quantitative breadth, enables a well-studied exploration of the research question (Hopf , 2012).

All research methods were conducted in German, and the content was translated into English.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interview

The methodology allowed first insights into the topic and explored the foundational differences between the generations. The Interviews were partly conducted via videoconference or in

person, with a note-taking process where the talks were transcribed immediately with a software while conducting the interviews.

Each interview took about 20 – 30 minutes and was centered around a semi-structured pre-defined interview guide (see Appendix I). However, each had different focal points since the interview aimed to take insights from each generation, focusing on the individuality of each participant (Misosch, 2019).

Regarding the sampling, five participants from each generation were surveyed, marking a total of 15. Participants were selected in advance based on their age (59-44, 43-28, 27-12), along with psychological and psychographic factors. This included whether the participants came from urban or rural areas and their professions. This careful selection process guarantees that, despite the small number of participants per generation, the broad and diverse perspective of the respondents is obtained. A list of all interview participants can be found in Appendix II. After conducting the interviews, they were analyzed to validate the primary independent variables and identify new ones that emerged. To do so, the Qualitative Content Analysis after Mayring was established. To ensure an efficient and structured analysis, the interviews were analyzed using MAXQDA software.

The transcribed interviews were analyzed using inductive category development within the software (see Appendix III). This approach involves creating color-coded categories directly from the interview content without using pre-existing codes or categories. The data was thoroughly reviewed to identify naturally occurring themes and patterns, which were then organized into relevant categories. Given the exploratory nature of the research methodology, the inductive process is particularly well-suited for extensive data of open-ended questions, enabling new insights and organically developed categories to emerge, allowing flexible and customized analysis (Mayring, Qualitative Content Analysis, 2000; Mayring , Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse, 1991)

3.3.2 Projective Technique

Moreover, Projective Techniques were conducted. This method used a predefined guide that encouraged intuitive and spontaneous responses from participants, allowing for unbiased answers (Appendix V). The objective was to select preferred chocolate brands, with each participant choosing independently. They were then asked to personify these brands to an extreme degree, describing how each brand would behave as a person, how it would act, and

how interactions would unfold in various situations. The projective techniques were carried out with 15 individuals, five each per generation (see Appendix VI).

It is important to clarify that these participants differed from those interviewed. However, the basic prerequisites and selection criteria remained consistent.

Each projective technique lasted between 10 and 15 minutes, depending on how deeply participants engaged with the scenario and their level of creativity.

A qualitative content analysis following Mayring, utilizing MAXQDA software, was also conducted (Mayring, Qualitative Content Analysis, 2000). After color coding the transcripts after recurring characteristics and personality traits, the results were subsequently categorized (see Appendix VII).

3.3.3 Quantitative Survey

A quantitative analysis was conducted through a survey in German via Qualtrics. The data collection period lasted from October 25th2024, to December 06th2024.

The questionnaire used strategically placed questions implemented in Qualtrics. In total 33 Questions were placed to validate the views and preferences of each generation. The format of the questions included Likert scales, multiple-choice options, and rankings to allow participants to provide a wide range of responses.

All response variables combined general answers and specific responses from the interviewees. The survey can be found in Appendix VIII. It should be noted that different display logics were used to tailor the survey to personal preferences. This approach helps to ensure the survey results are not influenced by unqualified or careless responses.

Respondents were advised that their responses were confidential and anonymous and would only be used for non-commercial research purposes.

After the survey closed, the results were exported in CSV format and analyzed using SPSS.

The final sample comprised 216 participants, of whom 210 were valid responses, including 66 from Gen-X, 65 from Gen-Y, and 68 from Gen-Z. Before cleansing the data, it can be said that 11 people did not verify themselves because they exceeded the targeted generations.

After collecting the answers, the dataset was processed using the steps illustrated in Appendix IX.

169 responses remained. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the analysis will reference the sample size of N=169 in the quantitative methodology.

Some questions provide a wide range of variables for selection variability. To stay within the scope of this work, these will be thematically analyzed according to the clusters illustrated in Appendix X.

The response variables were categorized based on the aforementioned clusters (see precise variables, Appendix X). With the calculation of a new variable (as presented in Appendix IX), a ranking for each generation was created, ranging from rank 1 (most important cluster) to rank 6 (least important cluster). Using this ranking, the clusters for each generation are ordered and presented by importance.

The most important variable within each cluster was highlighted to provide deeper insights into generational profiles. This approach allows for identifying behavioral patterns within generations and enables intergenerational comparisons.

For the clustered questions, only the three most important clusters per generation, along with their primary variable, are listed in this thesis, as a detailed explanation would exceed the scope of this work. A comprehensive listing of the results can be found in Appendix XI.

4 Results and Analysis Qualitative Research

4.1 Semi-structured Interview

A) Chocolate Consumption

Regarding chocolate consumption, all generations agreed that they consume chocolate weekly or daily. No clear differences between the generations could be identified.

B) Familiarity with German chocolate Market

Gen-X participants generally report moderate to high familiarity, although one participant claims she does not know the German chocolate market.

Gen-Y reports moderate to high familiarity, though attention to specific brands varies among individuals.

Gen-Z shows the greatest variation, with some individuals rating their familiarity as very high and others as very low.

A noticeable difference can be observed between the weekly or daily consumption of chocolate and the varying levels of familiarity among the generations.

C) Brand Communication

C.1 Brand Awareness & Preferences

C.1.1 Brand Touchpoints

Gen-X interacts primarily with traditional media, particularly television advertising, along with point-of-sale displays and direct price promotions in supermarkets.

In contrast, Gen-Y combines traditional media, such as TV and billboards, with digital platforms, particularly Instagram, to engage with the chocolate brands they prefer.

For Gen-Z, digital media is the main touchpoint, with social platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. They are particularly influenced by content from influencers and trending posts. While in-store displays capture their attention during physical shopping, traditional media has little to no impact on this generation.

C.1.2 Impact of Personal Values and Lifestyle on Brand Image/ Perception

Members of Gen-X tend to place a special focus on price sensitivity and tradition. They differ between affordable brands for everyday use and premium options for special occasions. Their brand familiarity is mainly based on long-term recognition and price awareness, with minimal influence from digital platforms.

Gen-Y does not have such a stringent attitude. Key factors such as sustainability and ethical considerations influence their values and lifestyles. Other participants of this generation place greater importance on practical factors, such as price and availability.

Social media and trends significantly influence Gen-Z, as these areas align closely with their primary interests. However, some members also place importance on habit and tradition.

C.1.3 Evaluating Brand Attitudes: Functionality Versus Alignment with Personal Values and Emotional Connection

Consistent with the previous chapter, members of Gen-X tend to place a special focus on functionality, giving weight to practicality, reliability, and ease of use over emotional connections or alignment with personal values. Although emotional connections are of secondary importance, on special occasions, premium brands do retain a degree of significance, most often out of familiarity.

Gen-Y has a more diverse perspective. While some individuals prioritize personal alignment, others find a balance between emotional connections and functional qualities. One participant notably differed from the rest by focusing on price and availability pragmatically.

For members of Gen-Z, emotional connections and alignment with personal values are most important. These factors often take precedence over functionality. While product utility is still important, Gen-Z is more willing to overlook it if a brand resonates emotionally or reflects its values.

C.2 Brand Positioning

C.2.1 Key Distinguishers of Chocolate Brands

Gen-X differentiates the three main points driven by their rationality of their decision-making: price, quality, and consistency. They prefer chocolate brands that provide reliable products at reasonable prices and have a trusted reputation.

Gen-Y shows a broader range of influences reflecting both rational and emotional attributes. For some, emotional connections and nostalgia play a crucial role, while others focus on product design, sustainability, practicality, or affordability.

The key distinguishers of Gen-Z are innovation, social media relevance, and trend awareness. They see brand differentiation as essential to obtain their interest. Although some are very strict in these statements, others emphasize them but focus on tradition and nostalgia in their next statement, marking inconsistencies in this generation.

C.2.2 Defining the Ideal Chocolate Brand

Gen-X stays consistent with their great importance on a balance between price and quality, favoring brands that offer consistent, reliable products with great taste and functionality. For special occasions, they expect premium brands to provide a touch of luxury and emotional appeal.

In contrast, Gen-Y and Z are interested in the brand asset itself, meaning the importance of the brand's mission, vision, and purpose behind the product.

Both generations like authenticity, transparency, and personal alignment with the brand's values. They seek brands that balance quality with affordability.

Some participants gravitate toward innovative, trendy, and socially relevant brands, with active social media engagement. Others prefer brands that emphasize reliability and nostalgia. They particularly appreciate brands that challenge norms and foster strong emotional connections, creating a sense of loyalty and community.

C.2.3 Unique Qualities of Preferred Chocolate Brands

For Gen-X, their favorite brands are characterized by great taste and quality. Long-term trust and familiarity play crucial roles in their daily preferences, while packaging and occasion-specific fit enhance emotional connections, particularly during seasonal holidays.

Gen-Y enjoys the combination of emotional attachment and great taste. Combining nostalgic factors like family traditions with modern appeals like product design often create deeper emotional connections.

The same attributes count for Gen-Z. However, besides the modern approach of chocolate brands, they also value innovative offerings and a wide variety of flavors, including innovative limited editions. They appreciate chocolate brands that feel dynamic and engaging.

C.2.4 Touchpoints for Brands to Connect with Gen-X, Gen-Y & Gen-Z

Brands can effectively reach Gen-X with a good price-performance ratio through in-store promotions, point-of-sale displays, and traditional media such as TV and print advertising. This is especially important during the holidays when emotional and festive campaigns can create stronger emotional connections. Price promotions serve as an important touchpoint for this generation.

Gen-Y focuses on engagement through social media platforms, particularly Instagram. They appreciate authentic and transparent storytelling and innovative content connected to a clear commitment to vision, mission, and purpose. Although many in this generation respond to digital content, traditional media such as TV and posters still appeal to some.

This balanced approach is also important to Gen-Z. Their primary touchpoint is Social Media, with platforms like Instagram and TikTok being the most important. They are heavily influenced by partnerships with creators, interactive content, and trends, focussing on genuine and authentic content. Brands need to avoid overly polished content in order to gain trust. Some also appreciate visually appealing point-of-sale displays in stores and enjoy brands that encourage participation through challenges or trends.

C.2.5 The Role of Emotional and Rational Values in Shaping Brand Personality and Positioning

For Gen-X, emotional values are only important if the purchase is connected to a special occasion, like a holiday or as a present. Their primary focus lies in rational values, such as price and practicality.

An ideal brand for Gen-Y and Z combines both emotional and rational aspects. Emotional values like authenticity and nostalgia provide a powerful connection, and rational elements like quality and sustainability, as well as Innovation, underline their loyalty and trust.

C.2.6 Impact of Social and Personal Values on Brand Identity and Market Positioning

All generations agreed that social and personal values play a crucial role, with many referencing their traditions involving family gatherings, holidays, and similar experiences. Gen-X is more influenced by price and traditional values, while Gen-Y and Z prioritize personal alignment with the brand. This explains why younger generations provided more in-depth responses to this question. In contrast, older participants required further clarification and additional prompting to fully understand and respond to the question.

C.3 Brand Reputation

C.3.1 The Significance of Brand Reputation in Consumer Trust

Brand Reputation marks an impact on all generations.

Gen-X is more likely to buy from brands with a strong, well-established reputation as it gives them confidence in the product's quality and reliability. They build their trust on long-term consistency and familiarity.

Gen-Y and Gen-Z strongly focused on quality and consistency paired with modern approaches and ethical practices. However rational factors like price and availability or emotional factors like nostalgia can outweigh the initially mentioned factors, reflecting the inconsistency in both generations.

C.3.2 Brand Reputation Touchpoints

The most common way for Gen-X is through word of mouth, traditional media (especially TV ads), and personal experience. Social Media does not have any impact on them.

Very different from Gen-Y and Z. They rely most of their brand reputation on social media and word of mouth with friends and family. It should be noted that the generations mentioned only a portion of their original touchpoints in the brand perception section. Methods like point-of-sale displays, billboards, and price promotions were not mentioned.

C.3.3 Key Dimensions on Brand Reputation

For Gen-X, the reputation is influenced by the quality of the products. While factors such as brand values, sustainability, and customer experience play a role but are secondary, these attributes are essential for Gen-Y and Z.

For both generations, brands that combine ethical responsibility with high product standards and a genuine emotional connection tend to build the strongest reputations.

Another factor impacting Gen-Z is the brand's social media appeal and ability to align with trends.

Gen-Y and Z remained consistent in their definition of the ideal chocolate brand and its unique qualities.

However, Gen-X excluded the influence of long-term trust and familiarity, suggesting that they do not perceive this emotional connection actively in their brand perception. This is underlined by the statement in C 1.3, which indicates that rational connections as their primary focus.

D) Brand Advocacy

D.1 Trust in Brands

D.1.1 Building Brand Trust

Consistent product quality is the critical factor in building and maintaining trust in a brand for Gen-X. Personal experiences play a significant role in gaining or losing trust. While ethical practices are valued, they are secondary to product quality in everyday purchases.

Gen-Y's trust is shaped by consistency in product quality, transparent communication on their channels, and the brand's alignment with personal values.

Gen-X combines the views of Gen-X and Y. However, they also emphasize the impact of social media with authentic and informational content on their trust.

D.1.2 Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions

Gen-X seeks brands that provide good value for money while consistently delivering reliable products that have been known for a long time. Other than for Gen-Y and Z, packaging is secondary for this generation. It only comes into focus for premium purchases or gifts. Innovation is less critical for this group.

For the other two generations, these two aspects are the most influential factors for their purchasing behavior. They focus on other modern approaches like highlighting ethical practices or interesting brand appeal. This attitude often reduces their price sensibility as they are willing to pay a premium for brands that look Innovative and align with their values.

D.1.3 Essential Brand Attributes

Consistent with their statements on brand perception and brand positioning, Gen-X values brands that embody tradition, consistency, and reliability. Modern approaches are seen as positive but play a secondary role.

Gen-Y and Z have differing views. They expressly set focus on modern and unconventional companies that do something different. Unlike their statements on brand positioning, they value traditional brands, especially those with personal emotional connections, in combination with brand trust.

An essential factor for Gen-Z is innovation in product offerings, packaging, and marketing. They expect brands to stay relevant and engaging, mainly through approaches like social media and unique product design.

D.1.4 Effective Touchpoints for Building Brand Image/ Perception and Trust

Gen-X can be effectively approached by point-of-sale displays, traditional media (like TV ads), and personal product experience. To reinforce trust, they also set on word of mouth. Emotional TV ads during the holidays are primarily seen as trustworthy and prestigious.

Gen-Y and Z engage most through social media and word of mouth.

However, for some participants of Gen-Y, traditional media also plays a crucial role in gaining more credibility.

These touchpoints are consistent with those mentioned in the brand perception touchpoints.

D.2 Recommendation and Promotion

D.2.1 Willingness to Recommend Brands

All generations agree to recommend the brands they like if the brand meets the ideal brand attributes of each generation.

However, more participants from Gen-Y and Z stated that they would actively recommend chocolate brands independently.

D.2.2 Decision-Making Factors in Brand Choice

All generations agree that one of the most critical factors is product quality.

For Gen-X and Y, price is also a crucial role.

Gen-Z places a higher value on design, trendiness, and innovation and is willing to pay a premium for these qualities. As sustainability is secondary for Gen-X, it is more important for the other two generations. These statements are consistent with what has been found in the other sections.

D.2.3 Key Touchpoints for Encouraging Brand Recommendations and Referrals

The generations agree somehow. All generations are encouraged through word of mouth, in-store experiences (like point-of-sale displays), and product packaging, marking an inconsistency for Gen-X, which stated earlier that the product packaging would be secondary for them. Moreover this generation has the specialty of having the touchpoint through traditional media, and Gen-Y and Gen-Z have theirs through social media.

D.3 Brand Defence

D.3.1 Consumer Reactions to Brand Crises

The generations would react very differently from one another. All of them would reconsider their support firsthand.

However, Gen-X would remain neutral initially, waiting to see how the brand responds before making a final decision. Some participants said they would remain silent and continue using the product until the problem escalates.

Gen-Y participants would seek additional information and evaluate the brand's response before deciding. They expect the brand to show responsibility, honesty, and transparency. However, as well as in Gen-X, some participants might remain loyal unless the issue becomes particularly pressing.

Gen-Z has a firm opinion on how to deal with brands in a crisis. They are particularly sensitive to ethical issues and would immediately reconsider their support. Moreover, they would stop consuming the product until the brand handled the situation, with most expecting transparency, accountability, and concrete steps to address the problem by sharing their process on social media.

D.3.2 Impact of Brand Crises on Consumer Perception

Most Gen-X participants did not know if their preferred brand had a past crisis. This indicates that the generation is not judging based on past crises.

Gen-Y participants reacted differently. While some were minimally affected, others gained even more trust through the brand's transparent response.

For Gen-Z, brands that took corrective actions managed to regain some trust, but the crisis often impacted participant's overall perception of the brand.

D.3.3 Crucial Touchpoints for Brand Defense and Maintaining Customer Trust During a Crisis

The same touchpoints as for the average engagement are elemental for brands to communicate their crisis-solving.

Gen-X is reached through traditional media, and Gen-Y and Z are reached through social media. All generations valued in-store displays and promoted during the interviews that they would not seek problem-solving themselves. The brand must prove itself again.

Detailed tables of the derived independent variables of this chapter can be found in Appendix IV.

4.2 Projective Technique

A) Brand Image/ Perception

Similar to the interview results, Gen-X perceives their preferred chocolate brands as consistent and reliable. Surprisingly, most choose one brand for their daily or weekly consumption and one they only buy for special occasions or holidays. This fits the description that the regularly consumed brands are described as down-to-earth and family-friendly and the occasional as traditional and elegant. These brands were often associated with nostalgia and childhood memories, referring to a strong trust. For example, one participant described a prestigious occasional brand as feminine and elegant as a model, while the regularly consumed brand was seen as a farmer.

Gen-Y tends to have a more modern and experimental view of brands. While solid brands from their childhood and other memories are still seen as family-oriented and trustworthy, this generation places more emphasis on innovation and sustainability. They value brands that reflect modern ideals such as environmental awareness and transparency. However, they can be critical of brands perceived as too loud or flashy. For example, one participant found an innovative brand that likes to experiment with flavors to be too chaotic.

Gen-Z has a strong preference for individuality, authenticity, and sustainability. Some brands are seen as playful and trendy, while others can be seen as outdated, unfashionable, or too loud. They prefer brands that are perceived as youthful and authentic. There is also a marked rejection of brands that appear too traditional or conservative. In a certain way, Gen-Y and Z are similar in these aspects. However, the demands are more pronounced in Gen-Z.

B) Associations with Professions and Social Roles

Gen-X distinguishes between the brands they regularly use and those that are safe for special occasions. While the first ones are often associated with professions in education or social fields, emphasizing reliability and care, the premium brands are linked with respected, stable careers in traditional industries.

Gen-Y and Gen-Z associated with the same brands that Gen-X chose for professions in education or social fields jobs, both professional but more creative, like marketing or media. Often, participants attributed professions linked to the digital or creative world. This indicates that through different touchpoints of each generation, the brands reflect different personalities.

C) Emotional Connection to Brands

Most Gen-X participants seemed surprised when asked about their emotional connection with a brand during the interviews. This reflects the observation of Chapter C.1.3. Most of them stated that they do not have any. However, with the projective technique, they stated that they especially value chocolate brands because of their childhood memories and the roles these brands played in their family history.

Gen-Y and Z could easily assign emotions to their favored brands, like young, dynamic, funny, and easy-to-handle people, reflecting their preference for engaging brands.

D) Preferences for Innovation and Tradition

As noted in the earlier analyses, Gen-X values tradition and consistency the most. They prefer brands that have established themselves long-term on the market. This can be seen through various descriptions of brands being old, family-friendly, and consistent.

Gen-Y expects innovations for their favored brands without abandoning traditions. They appreciate sustainability and transparency, seeing brands that combine a modern touch with established tradition as ideal. One participant mentioned a long-established brand being too chaotic because of their various flavors on the German market.

Gen-Z prefers innovation and expects brands to evolve continuously. Although some participants buy some brands out of tradition, most are open to new opportunities and offerings.

5 Main findings qualitative Methodology

Gen-X initially struggled with interviews and projective techniques but engaged once a comfortable atmosphere was established. They have little emotional connection to brands, often making purchases based on tradition and value, with traditional marketing methods like TV-Advertisement being more effective. In contrast, Gen-Y and Z are more critical and place significant importance on brands, influenced by social media and modern marketing initiatives. Product design and presentation matter to them. While they have emotional connections, tradition is less influential in their purchasing decisions.

Only minor inconsistencies were found in comparing the semi-structured interviews and projective techniques.

With regard to the research question and its Hypothesis, it can be said that:

H1: Brand Image/ Perception on brand trust

The responses remained consistent with the initial Hypothesis. For Gen-X, trust in a brand is built on proven and consistent product quality, resulting from many years of product experience. This can be reinforced by emotionalized TV-Advertising, especially during the holiday season. While Gen-X and Y value storytelling and emotionalized advertising, they rely on the authenticity and self-reflection of the brands in their daily doing. Their trust is based on a transparent corporate culture that the company itself communicates. Because this generation constantly scrutinizes existing structures, companies must offer ethical and moral added value that is in line with the personal values of the customers.

H2: Brand Image/ Perception on brand recommendation and promotion

Some inconsistencies were found. Overall, it is impossible to cluster Gen-X and Y in this context. Gen-Y shows a closer relationship with Gen-Z. In addition, Gen-X not only focuses on rational factors when recommending products but also considers other factors, such as product design.

H3: Brand Image/ Perception on brand defense

It was found that none of the generations would actively defend a brand. All would wait and observe the dynamics of the situation. Gen-X is a target group that needs to be targeted entirely on its own. They have different touch points and expectations from a brand than the other two generations.

The independent and dependent variables of this research can be identified in the table below.

Table 2: Independent & Dependent Variables Semi-structured Interviews

| Audience/ Target | Independent Variables (IV) | Final Independent Variables Qualitative Research | Dependent Variables (DV) |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| Gen-X Gen-Y Gen-Z | Brand Image/ Perception - Positioning - Reputation | Brand Image <u>Position</u> - Functional (e.g. good price-performance ratio) - Reliable (e.g. consistent product quality) - Emotional (e.g. emotional alignment with values of brand) <u>Reputation</u> - Traditional - Innovative - Conscious (e.g. Environmental / Ethical practices) | Brand Advocacy - Brand Trust - Brand Recommendation / Promotion - Brand Defense |

One could argue that brand touchpoints could also be considered as independent variables. However, this study interprets them as tools/ vehicles rather than variables, which is why they are fundamentally taken into account in the quantitative analysis but are not tested in relation to brand advocacy.

To validate and correct those insights, the results of the quantitative methodology reflecting a wider group are presented below.

6 Results and Analysis Quantitative Research

The following text utilizes abbreviations for the clusters, which can be referenced in the abbreviation list or Appendix X for the detailed clusters.

6.1. Generational Profiles – Demographics – Consumer Behavior

Q1: Year of Birth

A total of 169 valid responses were collected.

Among these, 56 responses (33.1%) were from Gen-X, 59 responses (34.9%) were from Gen-Y, and 54 responses (32.0%) were from Gen-Z. This demonstrates a balanced distribution across the generations.

Q2: Gender

The participant population consists of 69 men, 99 women, and one individual who chose not to disclose their gender.

Women are overrepresented across the different generations. Gen-X consists of 62.5% women, 35.7% men, Gen-Y 54.2% women and 45.8% men, and Gen-Z 59.3% women and 40.7% men. Additionally, one participant did not specify their gender and was categorized as part of Gen-X.

Q3: Frequency of consumption

Regarding chocolate consumption, the mode for the whole sample size is 2, which indicates a weekly consumption. 18.9% reported consuming chocolate daily, while 46.2% indicated a weekly consumption. The rest of the sample stated a monthly or rare consumption.

Broken down into the generations, the results remain largely consistent, with a mode of 2 across every generation. Gen-X and Gen-Z show similar consumption patterns, with 50.0% of Gen-X and 53.7% of Gen-Z. It appears that Gen-Y has a significantly broader distribution.

Q4: Familiarity with the german chocolate Market

(1=not familiar at all, 5=very familiar/expert)

The sample size has a mean of 3.21 (1.10 Std.Dev.).

Gen-X has a mean of 3.09 (1.10 Std.Dev.), Gen-Y 3.25 (1.10 Std.Dev.), and Gen-Z 3.28 (1.09 Std.Dev.), indicating a moderate familiarity. The result is consistent with the interviews, as indicated by the high standard deviation, demonstrating a significant response spread.

Q5: Probability to explore new offers

(1=very likely, 5 very unlikely)

"Very likely" to "somewhat likely" sums up to 61.5% of the population, indicating that most participants are open to exploring new offers.

Doing the same per generation, Gen-X reaches a value of 62.5%, Gen-Y 62.6%, and Gen-Z 59.2%, indicating the lowest probability out of the three to try new options.

6.1.1 Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies

The results are consistent. The sample shows a dominance of weekly consumption, and the generations show a moderate knowledge of the German chocolate market. The significant variation in the interview responses is reflected in the high standard deviation of this section.

6.2 Brand Image/ Perception

6.2.1 Positioning

Q6: Agreement of Statement

(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Cluster PR (4.11|0.60) with the sub-variable good taste (4.75|0.58) is the most important for Gen-X. This is followed by BL (3.82|0.86) with the sub-variable habit (4.09|0.86). AT (3.79|0.66) is in third place with sub-variable accessibility (3.432|0.72).

Gen-Y agrees with Gen-X on the first-place PR (4.33|0.60) with the sub-variable good taste (4.80|0.61). Then, they categorize AT (3.90|0.81) with the sub-variable habit (3.88|1.02). In third place, they rank DC (3.71|0.81) with the sub-variable seasonal products (3.97|0.83).

Gen-X agrees with Gen-Y and Z and places PR (4.21|0.65) with the sub-variable good taste (3.87|1.12) in first place. This is followed by aligning with Gen-X, placing BL (3.73|1.00) in

second with the same sub-variable habit (4.02|1.06), and AT (3.56|0.88) in third with accessibility (4.11|0.90).

Q7: Attribute| Q8: Uniqueness of favorite chocolate brand

PR is the most important cluster. This counts for Gen-X (cluster: Q7:62.50%, Q8:58.93%), Gen-Y (cluster mean: Q7:64.41%, Q8:56.50%) and Gen-Z (cluster: Q7:61.11%, Q8:56.80%). They also agree that the subvariable good taste is the most important attribute/ unique factor (subvariable: Gen-X:Q7:98.2%, Q8:94.6%, Gen-Y:Q7:98.3%, Q8:91.5%, Gen-Z:Q7:98.1%, Q8:88.9%).

Gen-X and Gen-Z also agree that BL is the second most important factor for Q7 (cluster: Gen-X:43.78%, Gen-Z:37.04%). In this cluster, Gen-X (subvariable:46.4%) prioritizes an emotional connection, while Gen-Z (subvariable:35.2%) focuses on habitual purchases.

For Gen-Y, the second important factor in Q7 is cluster AT (cluster:44.07%) with subvariable accessibility (subvariable:49.2%).

In Q8, all three generations agreed that BL was the second most important (cluster: Gen-X:40.18%, Gen-Y:33.90%, Gen-Z:26.85%). They also agree on the subvariable emotional connection (subvariable: Gen-X:42.9%, Gen-Y:35.6%, Gen-Z:31.5%).

For third place, the answers to Q7 are consistent. All generations agree on BP (cluster: Gen-X:39.29%, Gen-Y:38.98, Gen-Z:27.16%) with the subvariable value for money/ affordable price (subvariable: Gen-X:62.5%, Gen-Y:59.3%, Gen-Z:57.4%).

Question 8 differs from the third place of Q7 in that Gen-Y ranks third with subvariable brand presence (cluster:33.33%, subvariable:42.2%).

The other generations place BP as third, with the differing subvariable to Q7 tradition (subvariable Gen-X:31.55%, Gen-Z:20.99, subvariable: Gen-X:46.4%, Gen-Z:38.9%). This means they value a good price as a general attribute but choose their favorite brand from tradition.

Q9: Factors Influencing Purchasing Decision | Q11: Order of Importance for Selection

Table 3: Gen-X Q9|Q11

| | Q9 (multiple choice) | Q11 (1=most important,15=least important) |
|----|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. | good taste (87.5%) | good taste (mean:1.30) |

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|---|
| 2. | emotional connection (41.1%) | value for money (<i>mean:3.59</i>) |
| 3. | value for money (57.1%) | tradition (<i>mean:4.05</i>) |
| 4. | accessibility (42.9%) | emotional connection (<i>mean:5.68</i>) |
| 5. | seasonal products (37.7%) | habit (<i>mean:6.93</i>) |

Table 4: Gen-Y Q9|Q11

| | Q9 (multiple choice) | Q11 (1=most important,15=least important) |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. | good taste (89.5%) | good taste (<i>mean:1.22</i>) |
| 2. | accessibility (50.8%) | value for money (<i>mean:3.86</i>) |
| 3. | emotional connection (33.9%) | unique product design (<i>mean:6.31</i>) |
| 4. | value for money (50.8%) | wide variety of flavors (<i>mean:6.37</i>) |
| 5. | seasonal products (32.2%) | tradition (<i>mean:6.41</i>) |

Table 5: Gen-Z Q9|Q11

| | Q9 (multiple choice) | Q11 (1=most important,15=least important) |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | good taste (79.6%) | good taste (<i>mean:1.24</i>) |
| 2. | value for money (44.4%) | value for money (<i>mean:3.22</i>) |
| 3. | habit (18.5%) | tradition (<i>mean:6.09</i>) |
| 4. | accessibility (22.2%) | habit (<i>mean:6.19</i>) |
| 5. | seasonal products/ wide variety of flavors (13.0%, 13.0%) | emotional connection (<i>mean:6.20</i>) |

All generations largely prioritize the same factors, but they rank them with varying intensity. This applies to the order of preferences within generations across questions and in comparisons between generations. However, two variables stand out: "Unique Product Design," mentioned exclusively by Gen-Y and only in Q11, and "Variety of Flavors," cited by Gen-Y and Z but only in one of the two questions analyzed. This indicates that these two generations display significant response variability, resulting in a differentiated generational profile. It underscores the insights gained from the qualitative method.

Q17: Importance of a Brand's Personality

(1=very important, 5=not important at all)

When examining the Std.Dev. across the three generational groups, a notable response spread is observed (*Std.Dev. Gen-X:1.36, Gen-Y:1.32, Gen-Z:1.23*), indicating a high level of disagreement.

With regards to the mean of each generation, Gen-Y values brand personality the most (*mean=2.68*), followed by Gen-Z (*mean=3.04*), and Gen-X (*mean=3.18*). This trend may be attributed to brand personality being less familiar to individuals from Gen-X from the qualitative interviews.

Q18: Importance Brand Personalities

Their favored brand personalities reflect the preferred attributes and factors influencing the different generations.

Gen-X prefers the Caregiver (*46.4%*), Regular (*44.6%*), and Lover (*41.1%*) personalities.

Gen-Y also resonates with Caregiver (*30.5%*) and Regular (*40.7%*) but assigns greater importance to Regular. The third preferred for Gen-Y is Creator (*37.33%*), which reflects this generation's curiosity and distinct way of thinking.

Gen-Z aligns with Regular and Caregiver as their top two choices, mirroring the order of Gen-X (*Caregiver:40.7% first, Regular:37.0% second*). Their third choice was the Master personality reflecting their Visionaire mindset due to their digital-first mindset.

Each generation's selection of brand personalities highlights their fundamental homogeneity while emphasizing that each generation also exhibits its unique characteristics.

6.2.2 Reputation

Q19: Importance Brand reputation

(1=not important, 5=very important)

All generations agree that Brand Reputation is an important factor.

Gen-X has a mean of 3.09 with a *Std.Dev. of 0.90*. Indicating different opinions chosen on the scale. The spread is even higher among Gen-Y (*Std.Dev. 1.08*) and Z (*Std.Dev. 1,00*). Gen-Y has the highest perception of brand reputation (*mean=3.29*), and Gen-Z is the middle of the two cohorts (*mean=3.02*).

Q20: Factors influencing Brand reputation

The generations agree on the primary cluster PR (*cluster: Gen-X:60.71%, Gen-Z:49.15%, Gen-Z:48.77%*) and secondary BP (*cluster: Gen-X:37.5, Gen-Y:34.46%, Gen-Z:27.16%*).

Taking a deeper look into PR, it becomes clear that good taste is the most important variable across the generations (*variable: Gen-X:89.3%, Gen-Y:72.9%, Gen-Z:75.9%*). For BP the dominant subvariable is tradition (*subvariable: Gen-X:62.5%, Gen-Y:49.2%, Gen-Z:37.0%*).

With regards to the third cluster, serious differences arise:

Gen-Z ranks BL (*cluster:33.04%*) third, paying special attention to the emotional connection (*subvariable:37.5%*).

Gen-Y ranks DC (*cluster:27.12%*) as third voting seasonal products (*subvariable:37.3%*) as the primary subvariable.

Gen-Z focuses on SRS (*cluster:20.68%*) as third, prioritizing climate support (*subvariable:29.6%*).

6.2.3 Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies

A.) Brand Positioning

Gen-X shows consistent price sensitivity and functionality in both interviews and surveys. However, the importance of emotional attributes in brand perception is notably higher in surveys than in interviews.

Gen-Y has remained consistent in its statements regarding value for money. Tradition, product design, and emotional connection also play a significant role. An inconsistency arises with

sustainability factors. In the interviews, this generation assigned high importance to mission, vision, and purpose. However, none of the survey questions ranked this cluster in the top three. Gen-Z shows the most inconsistencies, emphasizing design and emotional factors tied to sustainability in interviews but prioritizing value for money in surveys. Emotional purchases vary in importance, ranking high in some areas while falling behind price in others. Consistently, this generation values diverse flavors and prefers brands embodying tradition, familiarity, and vision.

B.) Brand Reputation

Gen-X values brand reputation primarily based on product quality, familiarity with the brand, and tradition.

Gen-Y emphasizes sustainability and ethical practices as key factors affecting brand reputation. This generation also consistently values quality, tradition, and emotional connections with brands.

Gen-Z also demonstrates consistent views, shaping their reputation perception through tradition, consistency, and a strong emphasis on sustainability.

6.3 Brand Execution

6.3.1 Brand Seasonal Products

Q12: Purchase of Seasonal Chocolate Products

The buying behavior for seasonal items differs among generations. Approximately 75% of Gen-X reports purchasing seasonal products. Gen-Y and Z exhibit similar tendencies; 66.1% of Gen-Y and 66.7% of Gen-Z indicate buying seasonal items. This data shows that Gen-X has the highest preference for seasonal products, although more than half of Gen-Y and Z respondents also prefer these items.

Questions Q13, Q14, Q15, and Q16 are designed as follow-ups based on the responses to Q12. The sample size of $n=117$ refers to participants who indicated purchasing seasonal products. This group is divided into three generations: Gen-X $n=42$, Gen-Y $n=39$, and Gen-Z $n=36$ participants.

Q13: Reason for buying products only seasonally

Gen-X and Gen-Z agree on PR (*cluster: Gen-X:58.78%, Gen-Z:37.96%*) being the most important cluster. Gen-Y ranks this cluster as secondary (*cluster: Gen-Y:43.59%*). Despite this inconsistency, all generations agree on the primary subvariable good taste (*subvariable: Gen-Y:86.7%, Gen-Y:66.7%, Gen Z:50.0%*).

Since Gen-Y ranked PR second, their first cluster is BL. Gen-X places this variable in the second place while Gen-Z ranks it third (*variable: Gen-X:55.95%, Gen-Y:55.13%, Gen-Z:26.39%*). The inconsistency is displayed in the subvariables as well. Gen-X and Z focus on emotional connection (*subvariable: Gen-X:61.9%, Gen-Z:30.6%*) and Gen-Y on habitual purchases (*subvariable: Gen-Y:56.4%*).

While Gen-X and Y agree on the third cluster, Gen-Z switches positions within the clusters. It ranks the one Gen-X and Y places third on the second position, BP (*cluster: Gen-X:33.33%, Gen-Y:29.91%, Gen-Z:28.70%*). Although the generations differ in ranking, they all agree that tradition is the most important subvariable (*subvariable: Gen-X:73.8%, Gen-Y:64.1%, Gen-Z:63.9%*).

Q14: Unique Product Design for seasonal Products

(1=very strongly, 5=not at all)

The design of seasonal products is significant across all generations.

For Gen-X, the average score is 2.38 (*Std.Dev. 0.96*), indicating a moderate influence of product design.

Gen-Y shows a lower average score of 1.92 (*Std.Dev. 0.96*), reflecting a greater emphasis on product design.

Gen-Z assessment is in between, with an average score of 2.19 (*Std.Dev 1.22.*). Suggesting a moderately strong influence.

The low Std.Dev. for Gen-X and Y indicate a consistent pattern in the participant's responses. In contrast, Gen-Z indicates more variability in their responses, suggesting that this generation has a broader range of opinions.

Q15: Purchase of the seasonal product off-season

(1=yes,definitely, 5=no,I would prefer another brand)

Gen-X participants report a mean score of 2.45 (*Std.Dev.* 0.77). This suggests that they tend to fluctuate between <Yes, maybe= and <No, I only prefer them for seasonal occasions.= The *Std.Dev.* indicates that they are relatively homogeneous.

Gen-Y shows a stronger preference for seasonal products during seasonal times, with a mean of 2.62. However, the *Std.Dev.* 1.02 indicates a wide variety in the responses.

Gen-Z is between the other two, with a mean score of 2.50 (*Std.Dev.* 0.97). This highlights that they lie between the two responses: <Yes, definitely= and <No, I prefer it only for seasonal occasions.=

Q16: Influence of personal Traditions and emotions on purchase of seasonal products

(1=*very strongly*, 5=*not at all*)

When examining the emotional influence on purchasing decisions for seasonal products, it can be observed that Gen-X experiences the highest impact, with a mean score of 1.83 (*Std.Dev.* 0.79). This generation consistently acknowledges the role of emotional factors in their buying decisions.

Gen-Y reports the lowest emotional influence among the three, with a mean of 2.05. The high standard deviation of 1.19 indicates a diverse range of responses.

Gen-Z is the middle ground. Their mean score is 2.0 (*Std.Dev.* 0.96). While their responses are somewhat more varied than Gen-X, they still indicate a notable and consistent emotional influence.

6.3.2 Brand Touchpoints

Q21: Brand Touchpoints

Gen-X prefers traditional methods, while Gen-Y and Z lean toward modern approaches.

For Gen-X, within the traditional cluster, the most important subcategories are television (69.6%), press (46.4%), and outdoor advertising (48.2%).

Gen-Y and Gen-Z prefer traditional methods such as television (*Gen-Y:61.0%*, *Gen-Z:38.9%*) and outdoor media (*Gen-Y:50.8%*, *Gen-Z:27.8%*). However, their primary focus is on modern applications.

Both Gen-Y and Gen-Z primarily value Social media (*Gen-Y:64.4%*, *Gen-Z:50.0%*), Websites/Apps (*Gen-Y:32.2%*, *Gen-Z:18.5%*), and Influencers/Gaming (*Gen-Y:30.0%*, *Gen-Z:25.9%*) as key touchpoints.

6.2.3 Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies

A.) Seasonal Products

Since this section was newly added due to the topic's relevance in the interviews, consistencies cannot be identified.

What can be observed is that Gen-X, who typically act more rationally, make emotional purchases for seasonal products. This insight is consistent with the interviews.

Gen-X and Gen-Z tend to purchase based on emotions, while Gen-Y buys out of habit. Sustainability aspects consistently play the least significant role in this context.

For all generations, design is particularly important. Gen-X also shows the highest tendency to purchase these items outside of the season.

B.) Touchpoints

Gen-X is consistent with television as the strongest touchpoint. Word of mouth, along with outdoor billboards, is very important.

Gen-Y and Z also remain consistent with social media as a significant touchpoint and television. Outdoor/POS are complementary. New additions include influencers and gaming.

6.4 Brand Advocacy

6.4.1 Trust

Q10 | Q24: Factors influencing trust

Combining Q10 and Q24 illustrates interesting insights. All generations agree on both questions that PR is the most important cluster influencing trust (*cluster: Gen-X Q10:60.12%, Q24: mean=3.45, Gen-Y: Q10:49.72%, Q24: mean=3.79, Gen-Z: Q10:45.68%, Q24: mean=3.59*).

This consistency is also reflected by the subvariable good taste being the most important (*subvariable: Gen-X Q10:91.1%, Q24: mean=4.23, Gen-Y: Q10:74.6%, Q24: mean=4.41, Gen-Z Q10:66.7%, Q24: mean=4.43*).

For Q10, Gen-X and Gen-Z agree that BP is the second most important variable (*cluster: Q10: Gen-X:34.52 %, Gen-Z:22.84%*). A deeper look into the cluster reveals tradition as the most important subvariable for the cohorts (*subvariable: Gen-X:58.9%, Gen-Z:33.3%*). For Q24,

Gen-Z attributes cluster BP as third-ranked with the value for money variable as most important (*cluster: Q24: Gen-Z:mean=2.99, subvariable=mean 3.48*).

Gen-Y places its second position of Q10 at the AT cluster, similar to the categorization of Q24 where Gen-X agrees with that cluster (*cluster: Q10: Gen-Y:35.59%, Q24: Gen-Y mean=3.45, Gen-X mean=3.07*).

Lastly all generations agree on Q10 to be BL ranked third. In Q24, Gen-Z ranks that cluster second. (*cluster: Gen-X Q10=33.93%, Q24=mean=3.02, Gen-Y Q10=30.51, Q24=mean=2.97, Gen-Z Q10=19.44%, Q24=mean=3.41*). A deeper look into that cluster reveals that Gen-X and Y prioritize in Q10 an emotional connection (*subvariable Q10: Gen-X:35.7%, Gen-Y:33.9%*) and Gen-Z habit (*subvariable Gen-Z:20.4%*). Regarding Q24, the subvariable shifts from Gen-X to habit (*subvariable: Gen-X:mean=3.13*).

The inconsistencies reflected illustrate multiple factors influencing the trust of customers.

Q26: Continued trust during crisis

(1=extremely unlikely, 5=extremely likely)

Even though the generations state that trust is very important to them, it is likely to be questioned during a crisis.

This statement is underlined by means of Gen-X 2.98, Gen-Y 2.78, and Gen-Z 2.85, which indicate responses between rather unlikely and neither likely nor unlikely.

Q29: Confidence crisis handling

(1=extremely unlikely, 5=extremely likely)

The means of Gen-X (3.62), Gen-Y (3.34), and Gen-Z (3.52) indicate a moderate level of confidence. However, when considering the Std.Dev., it becomes evident that Gen-X exhibits the highest confidence and the most reliable responses (*Std.Dev=0.80*).

This is followed by Gen-Z (*Std.Dev. 0.95*). Gen-Y shows the least confidence and highest response variability (*Std.Dev 1.06*).

Q31: Reaction to a crisis

If their favorite brand faced a crisis due to non-sustainable resource procurement, 58.9% of Gen-X participants stated they would reduce their consumption, with 14.4% opting to stop immediately and 26.8% continuing as usual.

For Gen-Z, 51.9% would reduce their consumption, 18.5% would stop immediately, and 29.6% would maintain their habits.

In Gen-Y, 54.2% would reduce consumption, but only 15.3% would continue purchasing, while 30.5% would stop immediately, reflecting their strong focus on sustainability.

Q32: Probability of research in a crisis

(1=extremely unlikely, 5=extreme likely)

No generation shows a clear trend in their probability responses. All generations demonstrate a widespread in their Std.Dev. (*Std.Dev. Gen-X:1.2, Gen-Y:1.21, Gen-Z:1.30*).

Gen-Z displays the greatest inconsistency in their answers, while Gen-X and Y show similar variability. Examining the decimal places reveals that Gen-X (*mean=2.75*) has the lowest probability of being informed, while Gen-Y (*mean=2.80*) and Z (*mean=2.81*) are more likely to have a neutral attitude.

Q33: Factors to reduce consumption of favorite chocolate brand

Ranked first by all is HR (*cluster Gen-X:90.18%, Gen-Y:90.68%, Gen-Z:86.11%*), with the primary subvariable child labor (*subvariable Gen-X:94.6%, Gen-Y:96.6%, Gen-Z:90.7%*).

In second place is unanimous AW as a criterion, with 83.9% of Gen-Z, 83.1% of Gen-Y, and 79.6% of Gen-X selecting this variable.

Next, the EA (*cluster Gen-X:51.34, Gen-Y:44.92%, Gen-Z:32.41%*) cluster is significant for all, particularly the variable environmentally harmful procurement of raw materials (*subvariable Gen-X:67.9%, Gen-Y:72.9%, Gen-Z:59.3%*).

The CET cluster (*cluster Gen-X:43.30%, Gen-: 41.53%, Gen-Z:29.6%*) is ranked last. Within this cluster, discrimination is highlighted (*subvariable Gen-X:67.9%, Gen-Y:54.2%, Gen-Z:64.8%*).

6.4.2 Recommendation/Promotion

Q22: Recommendation to Friends and Family

(1=unlikely, 5=very likely)

Gen-Z has a mean value of 3.09, followed by Gen-X with a mean of 3.20 and Gen-Y 3.42. The last two generations tend towards more recommending, even if this can only be regarded as weak.

In addition to these neutral statements, the Std.Dev. must be emphasized, which shows a very high value for all generations and thus a very strong dispersion among the answers given (*Std.Dev. Gen-X 1.1, Gen-Y:1.3, Gen-Z:1.2*).

Q23: Active Recommendation

Significant differences exist in the active recommendation of products among the different generations. While 25,0 % of Gen-X report that they actively recommend products, the other two generations show a greater tendency to do so. 46.3% of Gen-Z participants indicate that they actively promote products, whereas 52.5% of Gen-Y are willing to recommend products. Although just under or above half of the participants from Gen-Y and Gen-Z actively promote products, a notable contrast with Gen-X can be observed.

Q25 | Q28: Factors influencing willingness to recommend | defend a brand

(1=no influence, 5=very big influence)

All generations agree on Q25 and Q28, the PR cluster being the most important one (*cluster: Gen-X:mean=3.15, Gen-Y:mean=5.58, Gen-Z:mean=3.45*).

Taking a deeper look reveals that good taste is ranked highest by all (*subvariable: Q25: Gen-X:mean=3.82, Gen-Y:mean=4.10, Gen-Z:mean=4.04 Q28: Gen-X:mean =3.89, Gen-Y:mean=3.76, Gen-Z:mean=3.70*).

Regarding the second place, no similarities between the generations can be observed. While Gen-X ranks SRS (*cluster Q25: Gen-X:mean=2.93, Q28: Gen-X:mean=3.06*) with subvariable promotion and support of climate (*subvariable: Q25: Gen-X: mean=3.21, Q28: Gen-X:mean=3.43*). second, Gen-Y choose AT (*cluster Q25: Gen-Y:mean=3.33, Q28: Gen-Y:mean=3.22*) with subvariable accessibility (*subvariable: Q25: Gen-Y:mean=3.44, Q28: Gen-Y:mean=3.32*) and Gen-Z BL (*cluster Gen-Z:mean=2.90*) with subvariable emotional connection (*subvariable: Gen-Z:mean=2.93*).

For Q28, Gen-Z ranks BL (*cluster Gen-Z:mean=2.75*) third with the subvariable habit (*subvariable Gen-Z:mean=2.80*).

Gen-Z differs between Q25 and Q28: It ranks in Q28 BP (*cluster Gen-Z:mean=2.78*) as second, with value for money being the most important variable (*subvariable Gen-Z:mean=3.09*).

Despite the different rankings of the second rank, the generations agree with the chosen clusters. Gen-Y ranks SRS third (*cluster Q25: Gen-Y:mean.=3.07, Q28: Gen-Y:mean=3.13*) with the subvariable transparency and honesty (*subvariable: Q25: Gen-Y:mean=3.49, Q28: Gen-Y:mean=3.56*).

Gen-X and Gen-Z rank AT third in Q25 (*cluster: Gen-Z:mean=2.91, Gen-Z:mean=2.80*), with the most important subvariable being accessibility (*subvariable: Gen-X:mean=3.36, Gen-Z:mean=2.96*). For Q28, only Gen-X ranks AT (*cluster: Gen-Y:mean=3.20*) third with the same subvariable as in Q25 (*subvariable: Gen-X:mean=2.90*) since Gen-Z places the third cluster to BL.

It must be noted that throughout the whole analysis, the Std.Dev. are very high implicing high differences in the factors influencing the willingness to recommend.

Q27: Probability to still recommend a brand to family and friends during a crisis

(1=extremely unlikely, 5=extremely likely)

All generations are similar in their willingness to recommend their chocolate brand during a crisis (*mean: Gen-X:2.50, Gen-Y:2.46, Gen-Z:2.50*). Based on the mean value, it can be deduced that they have a rather negative to neutral attitude. The standard deviations are also relatively equal, with Gen-Y showing the most response variability (*Std. Dev.: Gen-X:1.00, Gen-Y:1.10, Gen-Z:0.97*).

6.4.3 Defence

Q28: Factors influencing willingness to defend a brand during a crisis

The factors influencing the decision to defend a brand during a crisis are similar to those that affect the decision to recommend a brand in a crisis. Hence, the questions are clustered (see Q25).

Q30: Probability to defend brand during a crisis in public

(1 =not at all willing, 5=very willing)

Gen-X shows the highest willingness (*mean=2.61*) to defend their favorite brand even in a crisis, although there is considerable variability in their responses (*Std.Dev. 1.14*). Gen-Y shows the lowest willingness (*mean=2.25*) and even greater variability in their responses (*Std.Dev.*

1.17). Meanwhile, Gen-Z falls in between ($mean=2.44$) with the most heterogeneous responses (*Std.Dev. 1.18*).

6.4.4 Reference Qualitative / Quantitative Methodologies

A.) Trust

Gen-X consistently emphasizes that tradition, quality, and personal experiences are the primary factors contributing to their trust. A new insight reveals that this generation also places importance on sustainability practices as a source of trust.

Gen-Y and Z highlight the significance of consistency, tradition, habit, and especially transparent communication in building their trust.

The survey also uncovers that all generations exhibit a neutral stance regarding whether their favorite chocolate brand would effectively handle a crisis.

They are unlikely to seek information about how their brand manages consumption issues. The majority indicate that they would initially reduce their consumption in response to ethical concerns, with human rights violations being the greatest factor.

B.) Recommendation

Gen-X remains consistent in its interview feedback, recommending products based on their satisfaction with product quality. However, they do not actively promote these products. Notably, the SRS cluster ranks second for this generation, indicating a contradiction, as it places significantly more importance on this aspect than expressed in the interviews.

Gen-Y actively promotes products but contradicts the emphasis on sustainability mentioned in the interviews, as survey results show they rank lower than Gen-X in this category. Instead, they prioritize transparency and honesty, which aligns with their focus on trust.

Gen-Z shows inconsistency in its statements. In interviews, they recommend products based on design and trendiness, whereas survey responses indicate a shift towards valuing good taste, emotional connection, and accessibility.

C.) Defense

The methodologies show consistent patterns regarding brand defense among different generations. Among the three groups, Gen-X is most likely to defend a brand motivated by tradition and an authentic presentation.

Gen-Y shares similar reasons: tradition, authentic presentation, and sustainability. However, it is the least willing to defend a brand. Meanwhile, Gen-Z is influenced by a good price-performance ratio, taste, and habitual preferences.

7 Main findings quantitative Methodology

The findings of Chapter 5 are partially validated by quantitative analysis.

Gen-X primarily bases purchasing decisions on rational factors, with emotional influence being more significant for seasonal products (mean:1.83). Traditional media, such as television (69.6%), remains their main touchpoints, while sustainability is increasingly important, as 62.5% identify environmentally harmful practices as significant for reduced consumption.

Gen-Y and Gen-Z remained consistent with the interviews. However, it must be corrected that Gen-Z, contrary to the interviews, does not represent the most critical and diverse generation. Instead, Gen-Y takes this position. Gen-Z most often takes the middle ground to the other two generations and often resemble Gen-X more than Gen-Y, meaning they share more values with Gen-X (see Appendix XII). Quantitative analysis reveals that Gen-Z often shares more values with Gen-X, especially regarding tradition (Gen-X:62.5%, Gen-Z:63.9%) and value-for-money considerations (mean Gen-Z:3.22).

After completing the quantitative analysis, the following results can be determined in relation to the hypotheses:

H1: Brand Image/ Perception on Brand Trust

The hypothesis that *Brands that embody consistency and establishment are more likely to be trusted by Gen-X, while brands that demonstrate authenticity, transparency, and alignment with ethical values such as sustainability and responsibility are more valued by Gen-Y and Gen-Z* is supported and extended by the findings.

It was found that the generations can be clustered accordingly for the dimension of trust. Gen-X builds trust on consistency, with 60.12% highlighting PR as critical (Q10). Gen-Y and Z value transparency, shown by Gen-Y's 49.72% emphasis on PR and Gen-Z's 45.68%, supplemented by ethical practices (Q10). While Gen-X focusses on consistency the profiles of Gen-Y and Gen-Z blend traditions with a desire for transparency and ethical practices, highlighting their complex approaches to trust-building.

H2: Brand Image/ Perception on Brand Recommendation and Promotion

The hypothesis that *Brands that emphasize functional attributes, such as product quality and reliability, are more likely to be recommended by Gen-X and Gen-Y. In contrast, brands that*

align with personal values and social causes are more likely to receive active recommendations from Gen-Z is partially supported.

Gen-X is influenced by functional attributes, such as good taste (mean=3.15) and accessibility (mean=3.07), but emotional factors (mean=3.36) and habits (mean=3.13) also play a role in brand recommendations. However, only 25% of Gen-X actively recommends brands, unlike Gen-Y (52.5%) and Gen-Z (46.3%). Transparency and honesty scored high for Gen-X (mean=3.49 and mean=3.56), with good taste being particularly significant (mean=4.10). Gen-Z also values good taste (mean=4.04) and emotional connection (mean=2.93), but habit is less influential (mean=2.80). Both Gen-Y and Z can be clustered together for brand recommendations due to their shared emphasis on emotional connections and transparency, while Gen-X stands out for its focus on functional attributes and sustainability (mean=3.21).

H3: Brand Image/ Perception on Brand Defense

The hypothesis that *Brands that align with the ethical or social values of Gen-Z are more likely to receive public support from that group. Conversely, brands that focus more on product performance and brand history rather than social issues are less likely to be defended by Gen-X, and Gen-Y* is not supported.

None of the participants showed strong brand advocacy during a crisis. The mean willingness to defend a favorite chocolate brand was low: 2.61 for Gen-X, 2.25 for Gen-Y, and 2.44 for Gen-Z (on a scale of 1 to 5). High variability in responses (Std.Dev. Gen-X:1.14, Gen-Y:1.17, Gen-Z:1.18) indicates inconsistent attitudes within each group. When asked about recommending their favorite brand during a crisis, mean scores were also low: 2.50 for Gen-X, 2.46 for Gen-Y, and 2.50 for Gen-Z, reflecting a lack of active defense.

The final Table of the independent and dependent variables can be seen below, the clusters from Chapter 6 were incorporated into the IV to facilitate a comparison with the DV in Chapter 8. The analysis reveals that no new variable dimensions are needed. The variables from the qualitative analysis cover essential aspects and are well-supported by the quantitative analysis clusters.

Table 6: Final Independent & Dependent Variables

| Audience/ Target | Independent Variables (IV) | Final Variables Quantitative Research | Independent Qualitative/ Dependent Variables (DV) |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| Gen-X Gen-Y Gen-Z | Brand Image / Perception - Positioning - Reputation | <p>Brand Image</p> <p><i>Position</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Functional (e.g. good price-performance ratio) ➡ quantitative cluster: BP - Reliable (e.g. consistent product quality) ➡ quantitative cluster: PR - Emotional (e.g. emotional alignment with values of brand) ➡ quantitative cluster: BL <p><i>Reputation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional ➡ quantitative cluster: PR - Innovative ➡ quantitative cluster: DC - Conscious (e.g. Environmental / Ethical practices) ➡ quantitative cluster: SRS | <p>Brand Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brand Trust - Brand Recommendation / Promotion - Brand Defense |

8 Conclusions and Implications

This thesis investigated the influence of brand positioning and reputation on brand advocacy behaviors. To conclude the following outcome can be summarized:

1. While Gen-Y and Z initially appeared to cluster together based on qualitative analysis, this interpretation needs to be revised in light of the quantitative analysis. With a larger sample size, it is evident that Gen-X and Gen-Z are more complementary to each other than Gen-Y and Gen-Z, as they share more commonalities, whereas Gen-Y differs too significantly (see Appendix XII: Gen-X + Gen-Y same answers in 18 out of 33 Questions marking 54.55% of total).
2. Gen-Z often represent a middle ground between the other two generations (e.g. Q14: mean Gen-X:2.38, Gen-Z:2.19, Gen-Y:1.92, see ranking Appendix XI).
3. Gen-Z exhibited identical ranking orders for multiple clusters in several questions (Q8+Q9+Q13, Q10+Q20, Q25+Q28). In contrast, Gen-Y and Z showed consistent rankings only in two questions (Q9+Q10) (Q7+Q8), indicating the high variability among them.

This thesis investigated the research question, "*How do brand positioning and brand reputation influence brand advocacy behaviors (trust, recommendation, and defense) among Gen-X, Gen-Y and Gen-Z in the chocolate industry?*".

Having the outcomes of the H1 to H3 of Chapter 5 and 7 in mind and taking Appendix XIII into consideration where the impact of each independent variable on each dependent variable is listed it, can be said that:

In terms of brand positioning, all generations agree that the PR cluster (IV Reliable) is the most important factor for brand trust, recommendation/promotion, and defense (*Trust: Gen-X:60.12%;3.45, Gen-Y:49.72%;3.79, Gen-Z:45.68%;3.59, Recommendation/Promotion: Gen-X:3.15, Gen-Y:3.58, Gen-Z:3.45, Defense: Gen-X:3.20, Gen-Y:3.33, Gen-Z:3.19*). Indicating that fundamental attributes are equally valued across all generations.

When it comes to brand reputation, the factors that influence it, vary depending on the specific outcome being measured. For brand trust, both questions Q10 and Q24 consistently align with brand positioning, as all generations view the PR cluster (IV Traditional) as the most significant (*Trust: Gen-X:34.52%;2.89, Gen-Y:22.99%, Gen-Z:22.84%;2.99*). However, Gen-Y distinguishes itself in Q24 by placing a higher value on innovation and the cluster of Brand Diversity and Customizability (*Trust:2.96*). This indicates that while traditional attributes of

reliability and trust are universally valued, Gen-Y places additional emphasis on innovation and personalized brand experiences, reflecting their preference for dynamic and diverse brand offerings.

Regarding brand recommendation and promotion, there is a noticeable trend towards the IV Conscious, represented by SRS cluster, which all generations agree is the most important (Recommendation/ Promotion: Gen-X:2.93, Gen-Y:3.07, Gen-Z:2.74).

For brand defense, both Gen-X and Gen-Y consider IV Consciousness, represented by the SRS cluster, to be the most critical factor in defending a brand publicly (Defense: Gen-X:3.06, Gen-Y:3.13). Gen-Z recognizes the importance of Brand Positioning (IV Traditional) in this context (Defense: Gen-Z:2.78).

This suggests that social responsibility and sustainability are recognized as key drivers for brand advocacy and defense. Gen-Z focusses on traditional brand positioning in defending a brand.

To conclude with a global outcome it can be said, that the findings demonstrate that brand positioning and reputation have a significant impact on brand advocacy behaviors. It is the brands, through positioning strategies and the resulting reputation, that have substantial influence on customers brand advocacy. However, this is only true when companies tailor their brands to the unique needs and preferences of each generation.

While some universal attributes, such as reliability, tradition, and sustainability, resonate with Gen-X, Gen-Y, and Gen-Z, the findings highlight the need to address generational differences. Each generation has distinct priorities and behaviors:

- Gen-X prioritizes consistency and functional attributes, placing a strong emphasis on tradition and sustainability.
- Gen-Y seeks innovation, diversity, and emotional alignment, reflecting a dynamic and multifaceted approach.
- Gen-Z balances tradition with ethical considerations, bridging generational preferences while increasingly valuing emotional and social responsibility.

Understanding the unique values, preferences, and behaviors of each generation allows brands to create personalized experiences that resonate deeply. By fostering connections and consistently resonate to aspects that each generations value, companies can transform satisfied customers into loyal advocates.

9 Limitations

Given the broad scope of this study, several limitations emerged during the research and analysis stages. These limitations, outlined below, provide opportunities for improvement in future studies.

Literature Review:

The word count limitations limited the depth of the literature review.

While most sources were from recent journals, the global chocolate market was referenced due to the lack of German-specific studies. This broader focus limited the adaptation of the literature to the context of the German market. A more comprehensive review tailored to the German chocolate market would be important to gain more relevant insights.

Methodology:

During both methodologies, women were overrepresented. Future studies should aim for a more balanced sample to ensure greater generability.

Qualitative Methodology:

The interview structure was too detailed for the scope of this thesis. A comprehensive analysis of all variables would require significantly more words.

Quantitative Methodology:

The questionnaire was too long and required a substantial attention span. As a result, approximately 52 participants were excluded from the survey because they either dropped out or answered without sufficient focus. Possible solutions include:

1. shortening the questionnaire or
2. adding attention-check questions to ensure participants remain engaged.

Within the survey, the scales varied across questions: a response of "1" indicated the highest level for some and the lowest for others. While this keeps participants engaged, it complicates the analysis.

Sample challenges:

Gen-X showed a high cancellation rate and was hard to engage with. This is connected to the survey's length and the shorter attention spans for topics in which they are not fully invested (Singh & Dangemei, 2016). Tailoring survey design to better engage this cohort could reduce dropout rates.

As mentioned in the conclusion, Gen-Y and Z differ significantly in both qualitative and quantitative analyses. A larger number of interviews and surveys would be needed to validate and substantiate the results more effectively.

Data Analysis challenges:

With regard to the results presented above, only the top three clusters per generation were analyzed. The influence of the brands becomes more complex when looking at the overall result, creating the full profile of the generations.

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Appendix

| | |
|---|----|
| Appendix I: Semi-structured Interview Guide..... | 55 |
| Appendix II: Participants semi-structured Interviews | 57 |
| Appendix III: Inductive Categories Semi-structured Interviews | 57 |
| Appendix IV: Independent Variables Semi-structured Interviews | 58 |
| Appendix V: Projective Technique Guide..... | 59 |
| Appendix VI: Participants Projective Technique | 60 |
| Appendix VII: Categories Projective Technique | 61 |
| Appendix VIII: Survey Guide | 61 |
| Appendix IX: Data Cleansing | 74 |
| Appendix X: Cluster Answer variables | 75 |
| Appendix XI: Support graphics SPSS | 77 |
| Appendix XII: Commonalities between Gen-X + Gen-Z, Gen-Y + Gen-Z, Gen-X + Gen-Y | 81 |
| Appendix XIII: Influence IV on DV | 81 |

Appendix I: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Introduction and consent

Hello, my name is Hannah, and I am conducting research as part of my Master's thesis at the Católica School of Business and Economics. The focus of my study is to investigate how different generations - specifically Gen-X, Y, and Z - perceive the image, reputation, and positioning of brands operating in the chocolate industry in terms of brand advocacy. This includes how trust, recommendation, and promotion of these brands evolve over time.

Today, I would like to ask you some questions to better understand your perceptions and experiences with these brands. This interview is semi-structured, which means that I have some guiding questions, but I am also interested in hearing your thoughts and additions. The interview will last about 20 - 30 minutes, and I would like - with your permission - to record our conversation.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and you can decide not to answer questions, interrupt the interview, or withdraw your consent at any time. The information you provide will be treated confidentially, and any identifying data (such as your name or specific personal details) will be anonymized in the final report to protect your privacy.

The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only and could be included in my thesis.

Before we begin, I would like to make sure that you agree to the following:

1. do I authorize the recording of this interview?
2. are you aware that your participation is voluntary and that you can withdraw at any time without any negative consequences?
3. do you consent to your anonymized responses being used for research purposes?

If you agree, we can start the interview. Do you have any questions before we start?

1. Background information

- Can you please tell me a little about yourself (age, profession, current stage of life)?
- How often do you consume chocolate? (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, never)
- How would you rate your familiarity with the chocolate brands available in the German market?

While answering the following questions, please keep in mind the chocolate brands you regularly consume.

2. Brand Image/ Perception

- Brand awareness & preferences

- How do you get familiar with your preferred chocolate brands? (traditional media, digital media, events, direct marketing, POS?)
- In your opinion, how do your values and lifestyle influence your perception of brands?
- Do you value brands more for the functionality of their products or for their alignment with your personal values and an emotional connection?

- Brand positioning

- What do you think distinguishes a brand today? What is particularly important to you?
- What does an ideal Brand look like for you?
- What distinguishes your favorite chocolate brand from other brands?
- How can brands better connect with people of your generation? (how do they reach you?)
- In your opinion, how do emotional and rational values impact a brand's personality and positioning? Can you give me an example of a brand where this is particularly evident?
- How do social and personal values influence your perception of a brand's identity and its position in the market? Is there a brand that uses these values effectively?

- Brand reputation

- How important is a brand's reputation to you? Can you give an example of a chocolate brand whose reputation you trust.
- How do you typically find out about a brand's reputation (e.g. word of mouth, social media, news)?
- What factors shape your opinion about a brand's reputation? Is it primarily influenced by the quality of their products, the services they offer, or other aspects such as customer experience, sustainability, or brand values?

3. Brand Advocacy

- Trust in brands

- What makes you trust a brand, have you had an experience where a brand has gained or lost your trust?
- What do you typically look for in a brand when making purchasing decisions? (Price, design, innovation, product/brand?)
- Are there certain areas (sustainability, Innovation, tradition, service...) that a brand should embody for you?
- Which touchpoints do you believe are most effective for building a positive perception and trust in a brand?

-Recommendation and promotion

- How likely are you to recommend brands to friends and family?

- What factors influence your decision is it about the products, services, innovation or sustainability, governance, leadership?
- Which touchpoints are, in your opinion, the most effective for promoting recommendations and referrals for a brand?

- Brand defense

- If a brand you trust was publicly criticized or faced a crisis, how would you react? Would you defend the brand at that moment, reconsider your support, or remain silent?
- Can you describe a moment when a brand you like experienced a crisis and how this influenced your opinion of the brand in retrospect?
- Which touchpoints are particularly important for defending a brand and maintaining customer trust during a crisis?

Concluding remarks

- Do you have any other comments or aspects that I haven't thought about?

Thank you very much for your honest answers and your time.

Appendix II: Participants semi-structured Interviews

Participants Gen-X

1. Female, 59 years old, works in a fashion store ; 2. Female, 59 years old, real estate agent; 3. Male, 59 years old, works in sales at a medium-sized company; 4. Male, 59 years old, works in sales at a medium-sized construction company; 5. Female, 56 years old, Lawyer specializing in inheritance law

Participants Gen-Y

1. Female, 33 years old, Brand Activation Manager; 2. Female, 27 years old, Graphic Designer; 3. Male, 28 years old, civil servant in city administration; 4. Female, 27, training to become a surgical technologist ; 5. Female, 30 years old, training to become a teacher

Participants Gen-Z

1. Female, 24 years old, training to become a midwife; 2. Female, 24 years old, intern brand activation; 3. Female 23, Junior Brand Activation Manager; 4. Female, 26 years old, works in a youth group for children with behavioral difficulties; 5. Female, 17 years old, goes to school

Appendix III: Inductive Categories Semi-structured Interviews

Predefined Categories written in **black** – newly acquired written in **green**

1. Brand familiarity

2. Consumer Behavior
 - Willingness to try
 - What must a brand embody?
 - Sustainability targets
 - What to look out for when making a purchase decision
 - Difference between buying myself a product or buying a gift
 - Brands as Status Symbols
3. Brand Endorsement
 - Crisis behavior
 - How to recreate the status from before the crisis
 - Recommendation to friends and family
 - What creates trust
4. Brand Reputation
 - Sustainability targets
 - Why do customers not pay enough attention to certifications, even though they claim to look for products that emphasize sustainability?
 - Factor shaping for brand reputation
 - Importance of Brand Reputation
 - Brand Touchpoints
 - Importance Brand Reputation
5. Brand Positioning
 - How to get in contact
 - Social Media
 - Differentiation points between brands
6. Brand Image/ Perception
 - Brand or Product in the foreground of a buying decision
 - Functional vs. Emotional Attributes
 - Design
 - How do values and lifestyle influence the perception of brands
 - Tradition because of family
 - Characteristic and value associations

Appendix IV: Independent Variables Semi-structured Interviews

Table 7: Brand Positioning - Semi-structured Interviews

| | |
|-------|--|
| Gen-X | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rational attributes/ positioning (functionality, practicality, reliability) - Price sensitive |
| Gen-Y | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rational attributes/ positioning (functionality, practicality, reliability) - Emotional attributes/ positioning (memories, habits, product design) - Ethical and Moral values (sustainability, healthcare) |
| Gen-Z | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotional attributes/ positioning (memories/ habits, product design) - Ethical and Moral values (sustainability, healthcare) |

Table 8: Brand Reputation - Semi-structured Interviews

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| Gen-X | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product Quality - Customer experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tradition - Price performance ratio |
| Gen-Y | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product Quality - Sustainability - Customer experience - Corporate values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation - Tradition - Transparent |
| Gen-Z | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Product Quality - Sustainability - Customer experience - Corporate values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation - Tradition - Transparent |

Appendix V: Projective Technique Guide

- Translated from German to English -

Hello, and thank you for participating in this cross-generational projective technique.

As part of my Master's thesis at the Católica School of Business and Economics, I am investigating how different generations (X, Y, and Z) perceive the image, reputation, and positioning of chocolate brands.

The projective technique will take about 5 to 10 minutes, and your answers will remain anonymous. They will only be used for research purposes and will be anonymized in my final report.

The aim of this exercise is to explore how you perceive chocolate brands by attributing human characteristics to them.

Please imagine that brands are people. Think about how a brand would behave, what personality it would have, and how it would fit into your life. This exercise is meant to be creative and playful - there are no right or wrong answers!

Choose a brand and describe its personality

1. Choose two brands from the chocolate industry: one that you feel a connection to or trust and one that you are indifferent to or dislike.

For example, you can choose one brand that you use frequently and another that you rarely or never use.

2. Imagine now each brand as a person and answer the following questions:
 - What would this brand look like as a person (age, style, gender, etc.)?
 - What kind of personality would they have (e.g. friendly, adventurous, sophisticated, or practical)?
 - What profession or role would this brand have in society (e.g. teacher, entrepreneur, artist)?
 - How would you feel when interacting with this person (e.g. inspired, confident, enthusiastic, or indifferent)?
 - How would this brand behave at a party (e.g., at the center of the party, silent observer, etc.)?

Appendix VI: Participants Projective Technique

Participants Gen-X

1. Female, 58 years old, lawyer; 2. Female, 58 years old, midwife; 3. Male, 59 years old, works in sales in an enterprise; 4. Male, 55 years old, works in retail trade; 5. Female, 53 years old, early retiree

Participants Gen-Y

1. Female, 33 years old, sales Manager; 2. Female, 32 years old, teacher; 3. Male, 33 years old, Electrician; 4. Female, 27 years old, studying to become a graphic designer; 5. Female, 30 years old, civil servant

Participants Gen-Z

1. Female, 24 years old, works in a Bank; 2. Female, 24 years old, intern in Controlling; 3. Female, 23 years old, junior Brand Activation Manager; 4. Female, 26 years old, kindergarten teacher ; 5. Female, 16 years old, goes to School

Appendix VII: Categories Projective Technique

Relevant text passages were sorted thematically according to the following categories, and the participants' statements were compared across generations:

1. Brand selection
2. Behavior of the brand at a party
3. Interaction with the brand
4. Profession/role of the brand in society
5. Personality of the brand

Appendix VIII: Survey Guide

- Translated from German to English -

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey!

As part of my Master's thesis at the Católica School of Business and Economics, I am investigating how different generations (X, Y, and Z) perceive the image, reputation, and positioning of chocolate brands.

The survey will take about 10 to 15 minutes, and your answers will remain anonymous. They will only be used for research purposes and will be anonymized in my final report. The survey is divided into nine sections. Once you have answered a section, you will not be able to return to it. I am interested in your spontaneous and intuitive answers.

Thank you for your support!

Qualifying Question

Q1: How old are you?

1. born before 1965
2. born between 1965-1980
3. born between 1981-1996
4. born between 1997-2012
5. born after 2012

Q2: What is your gender?

1. Male

2. Female
3. Non-binary/third gender
4. Not specified

General Question

Q3: How often do you consume chocolate?

1. Daily
2. Weekly
3. Monthly
4. Rarely
5. Never

Q4: On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your familiarity with the chocolate brands available on the German market?

(1 = not familiar at all, 5 = very familiar/expert)

Q5: How likely are you to explore new options when browsing the chocolate aisle?

1. Very likely
2. Likely
3. Rather likely
4. Unlikely
5. Very unlikely
6. I always choose my favorite/known brand

Brand Image/ Perception

Consider the chocolate brands you consume most often, and please answer the following questions:

Q6: On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you agree with the following statements?

(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

1. I appreciate consistent product quality when choosing chocolate.
2. Good taste is a decisive factor in my choice of chocolate.
3. Good value for money and affordable prices are important to me.
4. I have a strong appreciation for brands with a long tradition.
5. A unique product design increases my interest in certain chocolate brands.
6. I am attracted to brands that show innovation, such as the introduction of new product categories.
7. A wide range of flavors keeps me interested in a chocolate brand.

8. Emotional connections to brands, including personal memories, significantly influence my choice.
9. My buying habits often reflect familiarity, as I tend to stick with familiar brands.
10. Seasonal products, especially for occasions such as Easter and Christmas, play a significant role in my buying behavior.
11. The presence of a brand, e.g. visibility through advertising, social media, or point-of-sale material, influences my perception of chocolate brands.
12. I appreciate transparency and honesty from chocolate companies about their practices.
13. An authentic social media presence increases my trust in a brand.
14. Accessibility and availability of products are important factors in my purchasing decisions.
15. I appreciate brands that adapt quickly to changing trends and consumer demands.
16. I tend to support brands that prioritize health and well-being.
17. Brands that promote climate and environmental policies, such as fair trade, appeal to me.
18. I support brands that actively contribute to climate and environmental issues.
19. I consider market leaders to be more trustworthy and reliable in terms of product quality.
20. I prefer to buy from chocolate companies that support humanitarian causes.

Q7: Which characteristics are particularly important to you in your favorite chocolate brand? (multiple choice possible)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media

14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q8: What makes your favorite chocolate brand unique compared to other brands?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q9: Which of the following factors most influences your purchasing decision when choosing a chocolate brand?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q10: What makes you trust a chocolate brand?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)

9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q11: Please rank the following aspects in order of importance when choosing your chocolate brand.

(1 = most important, 15 = least important)

1. Good taste
2. Value for money / Affordable price
3. Tradition
4. Unique product design
5. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
6. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
7. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
8. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
9. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
10. Transparency and honesty of the company
11. Authentic appearance in social media
12. Mindfulness in relation to health and well-being
13. Commitment to education, culture, and art
14. Promotion of climate and environmental policy (e.g. fair trade)
15. Industry leader

Seasonal products

Q12: Do you have a chocolate brand that you only buy for seasonal occasions (e.g. Christmas, Easter)?

1. Yes, yes
2. No

Depending if no is chosen Q13 – Q16 are skipped:

Q13: Why do you only buy this brand of chocolate for seasonal occasions?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q14: To what extent does the design or packaging, such as festive themes for Christmas or Easter, influence your decision to buy seasonal chocolate brands?

1. Very strongly
2. Strongly
3. Moderately

4. Slightly
5. Not at all

Q15: Would you buy this brand of chocolate out of season if it was available all year round?

1. Yes, definitely
2. Yes, maybe
3. No, I only prefer it for seasonal occasions
4. No, I would prefer another brand

Q16: How strongly do traditions or personal memories influence your decision to buy this brand of chocolate only seasonally?

1. Very strongly
2. Strongly
3. Moderately
4. Slightly
5. Not at all

Brand Positioning

Q17: How important is the personality of a chocolate brand in your purchasing decision?

Personality in the sense that a brand, with its advertisements, colors, and communication slogans, develops into a personality that can be classified (loud, shrill, reserved, etc.).

1. Very important
2. Important
3. Moderately important
4. Slightly important
5. Not at all important

Q18: Which of the following personalities are important to you in a chocolate brand?

(Please imagine the chocolate brand as a real person you interact with. Select the categories that you find most likable; this category can also contain one or two less relevant keywords).

(multiple choice possible)

1. Regular (Indifference, Stability, Routine, Discipline)
2. Caregiver (Safety, Protection, Honesty, Comfort)
3. Ruler (Leader, Power, Respect, Robust)
4. Master (Intelligence, Excellence, Vision, Trust)
5. Transformer (Wisdom, Experience, Charisma, Transformation)

6. Winner (Competence, Strength, Objectivity, Results)
7. Creator (Creativity, Differentiation, Innovation, Modernity)
8. Challenger (Personality, Challenge, Energy, Freedom)
9. Explorer (Agility, Rebellion, Independence, Discovery)
10. Lover (Dream, Intimacy, Affection, Passion)
11. Optimist (Spontaneity, Excitement, Vitality, Joy)
12. Innocent (Simple, Conservative, Romantic, Accessible)

Brand Reputation

Q19: How important is the reputation of a chocolate brand to you?

(1 = not important, 5 = very important)

1. Not important
2. Not very important
3. Important
4. Very important
5. Extremely important

Q20: Which of the following factors most influence your opinion about the reputation of a chocolate brand?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes

16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Brand Touchpoints

Q21: How do you typically gather information about a chocolate brand?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Television
2. Radio
3. Press
4. Outdoor advertising (billboards)
5. Website / App
6. Social networks
7. Videos / podcasts / blogs
8. Influencers / gaming
9. Sport / music
10. Education / Health
11. Culture / Art
12. Projects for the common good
13. Conferences / Summits
14. Ambassadors / Promoters
15. Call center / Telemarketing
16. Mailing / SMS
17. Brochures / Cards
18. Merchandising
19. Location
20. Environmental design / facilities
21. Storage / Information
22. Manager / Staff

Brand Loyalty and Recommendation

Q22: How likely are you to recommend a chocolate brand to friends and family?

(1 = unlikely, 5 = very likely)

1. Extremely unlikely
2. Rather unlikely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Rather likely
5. Extremely likely

Q23: Are you someone who actively recommends chocolate products or brands that you believe in?

1. Yes, I am
2. No, I am not

Trust and Admiration

Q24: Please rate how much the following factors influence your trust and admiration for your favorite chocolate brand.

(1 = no influence, 5 = very strong influence)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension into new product categories)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product expansion with new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Recommendation and Defense in a crisis

Q25: Please rate how much the following factors would influence your willingness to recommend your favorite chocolate brand if the brand were to face a crisis (e.g. product recall, environmental scandal).

(1 = no influence, 5 = very big influence)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension into new product categories)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product expansion with new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q26: To what extent would you continue to trust your favorite chocolate brand if it were faced with a public crisis (e.g. product recall, environmental scandal)?

1. Extremely unlikely
2. Rather unlikely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Rather likely
5. Extremely likely

Q27: How likely is it that you would still recommend your favorite chocolate brand to a friend or colleague if it was in crisis?

1. Extremely unlikely
2. Rather unlikely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Rather likely
5. very likely

Q28: Please rate how much the following factors would influence your willingness to defend your favorite chocolate brand if the brand were to face a crisis.

(e.g. product recall, environmental scandal)

(1 = no influence, 5 = very strong influence)

1. Consistent product quality
2. Good taste
3. Value for money / Affordable price
4. Tradition
5. Unique product design
6. Innovation (e.g. brand extension into new product categories)
7. Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product expansion with new flavors)
8. Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
9. Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>)
10. Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
11. Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
12. Transparency and honesty of the company
13. Authentic appearance on social media
14. Accessibility and availability
15. Adapts quickly to changes
16. Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
17. Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
18. Support for humanitarian causes
19. Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
20. Support for climate and environmental issues
21. Industry leader

Q29: How confident are you that your favorite chocolate brand would respond ethically and transparently to a crisis?

1. Extremely unlikely
2. Rather unlikely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Rather likely
5. Extremely likely

Q30: How willing would you be to support your favorite chocolate brand in public based on your confidence in its ability to handle a crisis?

(1 = not at all willing, 5 = very willing)

Q31: If your favorite chocolate brand was involved in a scandal related to unsustainable sourcing of raw materials, how would you react?

1. Reduce consumption
2. Continue to consume
3. Stop consuming immediately

Q32: How likely is it that you would investigate to find out if the allegations are true?

1. Extremely unlikely
2. Rather unlikely
3. Neither likely nor unlikely
4. Rather likely
5. Extremely likely

Q33: Under what circumstances would you reduce your consumption?

(multiple choice possible)

1. Child labor
2. Environmentally harmful procurement of raw materials
3. Cruelty to animals
4. Human rights violations
5. Unethical behavior of the company
6. Lack of transparency
7. High CO₂ footprint
8. Overproduction of plastic and waste
9. Non-compliance with fair trade standards
10. Discrimination
11. Misleading advertising

Appendix IX: Data Cleansing

1. The variable names of the individual questions, including the individual labels, were adapted.
2. The scale levels were named correctly. Nominal for categories that merely represent a label such as male or female, ordinal for ordered categories (1= very good, 5= very bad), and metric for values such as the rating on a scale from 1 to 5 (Bortz & Döring, 2006).

There is potential for discussion regarding the labeling of questions Q4, Q6, Q11, Q14, Q16, Q17, Q22, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q32. These questions utilize Likert scales, which can be labeled in various ways. A strict definition indicates that the response options have a clear order, but the distances between the points on the scale are subjective and cannot be quantified (Phillips, 1970). However, in some cases, Likert scales are labeled metrically to facilitate statistical analyses, such as mean value calculations. This approach assumes that the distances between the scale values are equal (Bortz & Döring, 2006).

Therefore, the aforementioned questions are considered as metric.

3. Unfinished or unqualified responses based on the finished and age variables were excluded from the analysis.
4. Missing cases were calculated using a newly calculated missing variable and sorted out.
5. The descriptive data analysis was used to check the measurement intervals and scan for anomalies.
6. Finally, the data set was scanned and cleansed for untrustworthy answers (e.g. participant always selected variable 4)
7. To ensure that only valid responses are included in the data set, responses under 6 minutes were excluded because it is unrealistic to complete the questionnaire attentively in less than this time.

Appendix X: Cluster Answer variables

Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q13, Q20, Q24, Q25, Q28:

1. Brand Positioning - following named BP (e.g. Tradition)
 - Value for money / Affordable price
 - Tradition
 - Industry leader
2. Brand Product Related Attributes - following named PR
 - Consistent product quality
 - Good taste
 - Unique product design

3. Brand Diversity and Customizability - following named DC (e.g. Innovation).
 - Innovation (e.g. brand extension - the brand introduces new product categories, e.g. Lindt makes gummy bears)
 - Wide variety of flavors (e.g. product extension - the brand offers new flavors)
 - Seasonal products (e.g. Easter, Christmas)
 - Adapts quickly to changes
4. Brand Social Responsibility and Sustainability - following named SRS (e.g. Promotion of climate).
 - Transparency and honesty of the company
 - Mindfulness in terms of health and well-being
 - Commitment to education, culture, and the arts
 - Support for humanitarian causes
 - Promotion of climate and environmental policies (e.g. fair trade)
 - Support for climate and environmental issues
5. The Brand Appearance and Touchpoints - in the following named AT (e.g. accessibility).
 - Brand presence (visibility through advertising and social media)
 - Authentic appearance on social media
 - Accessibility and availability
6. Brand Behavior and Loyalty - in the following named BL (e.g. emotional connection).
 - Emotional connection to the brand (e.g. memories)
 - Habit (e.g. purchase because <I always buy this brand=>

Q21:

1. Traditional Approaches - (e.g. television)
 - Television
 - Radio
 - Press
 - Outdoor advertising (billboards)
2. Modern Approaches - (e.g. Social Media)
 - Website / App
 - Social networks
 - Videos / podcasts / blogs
 - Influencers / gaming
 - Sport / music
 - Merchandising

Q33:

1. Human Related - named HR (e.g. child labor)
 - Child labor
 - Human rights violations
2. Animal welfare - named AW
 - Cruelty to animals
3. Environmental Aspects - named EA
 - Environmentally harmful procurement of raw materials
 - High CO₂ footprint
 - Overproduction of plastic and waste
 - Non-compliance with fair trade standards
4. Corporate Ethics and Transparency - named CET
 - Unethical behavior of the company
 - Lack of transparency
 - Discrimination
 - Misleading advertising

Appendix XI: Support graphics SPSS

Table 9: Q6

| | BP ^{mean} Std.Dev. | PR ^{mean} Std.Dev. | DC ^{mean} Std.Dev. | SRS ^{mean} Std.Dev. | AT ^{mean} Std.Dev. | BL ^{mean} Std.Dev. |
|--------------|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Gen-X | (4.) 3.62 0,75 | (1.) 4.11 0.60 | (6.) 3.37 0.89 | (5.) 3.54 0.96 | (3.) 3.79 0.66 | (2.) 3.82 0.86 |
| Gen-Y | (5.) 3.49 0.91 | (1.) 4.33 0.60 | (3.) 3.71 0.81 | (5.) 3.49 0.94 | (2.) 3.90 0.81 | (4.) 3.68 0.95 |
| Gen-Z | (4.) 3.43 0.69 | (1.) 4.21 0.65 | (6.) 3.22 0.83 | (5.) 3.29 1.11 | (3.) 3.56 0.88 | (2.) 3.73 1.00 |

Table 10: Q7

| | BP ^{mean} | PR ^{mean} | DC ^{mean} | SRS ^{mean} | AT ^{mean} | BL ^{mean} |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gen-X | (3.) 39.29 | (1.) 62.50 | (5.) 24.11 | (6.) 0,081 | (4.) 33.93 | (2.) 43.75 |
| Gen-Y | (3.) 38.98 | (1.) 64.41 | (5.) 33.90 | (6.) 0,085 | (2.) 44.07 | (4.) 38.14 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Gen-Z | (3.) 27.16 | (1.) 61.11 | (5.) 17.13 | (6.) 0,056 | (4.) 21.60 | (2.) 37.04 |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|

Table 11: Q8

| | BP^{mean} | PR^{mean} | DC^{mean} | SRS^{mean} | AT^{mean} | BL^{mean} |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gen-X | (3.) 31.55 | (1.) 58.93 | (5.) 17.86 | (6.) 13.99 | (4.) 27.98 | (2.) 40.18 |
| Gen-Y | (4.) 27.12 | (1.) 56.50 | (5.) 24.15 | (6.) 13.60 | (3.) 33.33 | (2.) 33.90 |
| Gen-Z | (3.) 20.99 | (1.) 56.80 | (5.) 9.26 | (6.) 6.48 | (4.) 12.35 | (2.) 26.85 |

Table 12: Q9

| | BP^{mean} | PR^{mean} | DC^{mean} | SRS^{mean} | AT^{mean} | BL^{mean} |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gen-X | (3.) 33.93 | (1.) 57.14 | (5.) 18.75 | (5.) 18.75 | (4.) 24.40 | (2.) 37.50 |
| Gen-Y | (4.) 29.94 | (1.) 54.24 | (5.) 21.61 | (6.) 11.86 | (2.) 34.46 | (3.) 32.20 |
| Gen-Z | (2.) 19.14 | (1.) 44.44 | (5.) 8.33 | (6.) 7.72 | (4.) 12.96 | (3.) 16.67 |

Table 13: Q10

| | BP^{mean} | PR^{mean} | DC^{mean} | SRS^{mean} | AT^{mean} | BL^{mean} |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gen-X | (2.) 34.52 | (1.) 60.12 | (5.) 19.20 | (6.) 18.15 | (4.) 28.57 | (3.) 33.93 |
| Gen-Y | (4.) 25.99 | (1.) 49.72 | (5.) 21.19 | (6.) 20.34 | (2.) 35.59 | (3.) 30.51 |
| Gen-Z | (2.) 22.84 | (1.) 45.68 | (5.) 8.80 | (4.) 11.73 | (6.) 1.11 | (3.) 19.44 |

Table 14: Q11

| | Gen-X^{mean} | Gen-Y^{mean} | Gen-Z^{mean} |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Good taste | (1.) 1.30 | (1.) 1.22 | (1.) 1.24 |
| Value for money / Affordable price | (2.) 3.59 | (2.) 3.86 | (2.) 3.22 |
| Tradition | (3.) 4.05 | (5.) 6.41 | (3.) 6.09 |
| Unique product design | | (3.) 6.31 | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Wide variety of flavors | | (4.) 6.37 | |
| Emotional connection to the brand | (4.) 5.68 | | (5.) 6.20 |
| Habit | (5.) 6.93 | | (4.) 6.19 |

Table 15: Q13

| | BP^{mean} | PR^{mean} | DC^{mean} | SRS^{mean} | AT^{mean} | BL^{mean} |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gen-X | (3.) 33.33 | (1.) 58.73 | (5.) 19.05 | (6.) 4.76 | (4.) 29.37 | (2.) 55.95 |
| Gen-Y | (3.) 29.91 | (2.) 43.59 | (5.) 19.23 | (6.) 5.56 | (4.) 29.06 | (1.) 55.13 |
| Gen-Z | (2.) 28.70 | (1.) 37.96 | (4.) 10.42 | (6.) 3.24 | (5.) 10.19 | (3.) 26.39 |

Table 16: Q18

| Variable | Gen-X | Gen-Y | Gen-Z |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Regular | (2.) 44.6 | (1.) 40.7 | (2.) 37.0 |
| Caregiver | (1.) 46.4 | (3.) 30.5 | (1.) 40.7 |
| Master | | | (3.) 27.8 |
| Creator | | (2.) 37.3 | |
| Lover | (3.) 41.1 | | |

Table 17: Q20

| | BP^{mean} | PR^{mean} | DC^{mean} | SRS^{mean} | AT^{mean} | BL^{mean} |
|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gen-X | (2.) 37.50 | (1.) 60.71 | (5.) 19.64 | (6.) 18.45 | (4.) 28.57 | (3.) 33.04 |
| Gen-Y | (2.) 34.46 | (1.) 49.15 | (3.) 27.12 | (4.) 24.30 | (2.) 34.46 | (5.) 19.49 |
| Gen-Z | (2.) 27.16 | (1.) 48.77 | (4.) 16.20 | (3.) 20.68 | (5.) 19.14 | (6.) 15.74 |

Table 18: Q21

| | Traditional^{mean} | Modern^{mean} |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Gen-X | (1.) 16.29 | (2.) 12.80 |
| Gen-Y | (2.) 13.67 | (1.) 27.40 |
| Gen-Z | (2.) 8.91 | (1.) 18.83 |

Table 19: Q24

| | BP ^{mean} Std.Dev. | PR ^{mean} Std.Dev. | DC ^{mean} Std.Dev. | SRS ^{mean} Std.Dev. | AT ^{mean} Std.Dev. | BL ^{mean} Std.Dev. |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Gen-X | (4.) 2.89 0.74 | (1.) 3.45 0.63 | (6.) 2.56 0.74 | (5.) 2.86 0.84 | (2.) 3.07 0.75 | (3.) 3.02 0.88 |
| Gen-Y | (6.) 2.79 0.87 | (1.) 3.79 0.62 | (4.) 2.96 0.86 | (5.) 2.89 0.95 | (2.) 3.45 0.83 | (3.) 2.97 0.93 |
| Gen-Z | (3.) 2.99 0.66 | (1.) 3.59 0.58 | (6.) 2.64 0.65 | (5.) 2.79 1.03 | (4.) 2.91 0.77 | (2.) 3.41 0.81 |

Table 20: Q25

| | BP ^{mean} Std.Dev. | PR ^{mean} Std.Dev. | DC ^{mean} Std.Dev. | SRS ^{mean} Std.Dev. | AT ^{mean} Std.Dev. | BL ^{mean} Std.Dev. |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Gen-X | (5.) 2,71 0.74 | (1.) 3.15 0.75 | (6.) 2.55 0.82 | (2.) 2.93 0.87 | (3.) 2.91 0.92 | (4.) 2.87 1.08 |
| Gen-Y | (5.) 2.79 0.84 | (1.) 3.58 0.82 | (4.) 2.93 0.94 | (3.) 3.07 0.98 | (2.) 3.33 1.05 | (6.) 2.67 1.04 |
| Gen-Z | (5.) 2.73 0.89 | (1.) 3.45 0.81 | (6.) 2.51 0.75 | (4.) 2.74 1.05 | (3.) 2.80 1.02 | (2.) 2.90 1.04 |

Table 21: Q28

| | BP ^{mean} Std.Dev. | PR ^{mean} Std.Dev. | DC ^{mean} Std.Dev. | SRS ^{mean} Std.Dev. | AT ^{mean} Std.Dev. | BL ^{mean} Std.Dev. |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| Gen-X | (5.) 2.79 0.79 | (1.) 3.20 0.85 | (6.) 2.53 0.91 | (2.) 3.06 0.88 | (3.) 2.90 0.91 | (4.) 2.88 1.14 |
| Gen-Y | (6.) 2.61 0.92 | (1.) 3.33 0.97 | (4.) 2.94 1.01 | (3.) 3.13 1.02 | (2.) 3.22 1.03 | (5.) 2.68 1.09 |
| Gen-Z | (2.) 2.78 0.87 | (1.) 3.19 0.89 | (6.) 2.35 0.85 | (4.) 2.73 1.19 | (5.) 2.56 1.09 | (3.) 2.75 1.16 |

Table 22: Q33

| | HR ^{mean} | AW ^{mean} | EA ^{mean} | CET ^{mean} |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Gen-X | (1.) 90.18 | (2.) 83.9 | (3.) 51.34 | (4.) 43.30 |
| Gen-Y | (1.) 90.68 | (2.) 83.1 | (3.) 44.92 | (4.) 41.53 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Gen-Z | (1.) 86.11 | (2.) 79.6 | (3.) 32.41 | (4.) 29.6 |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|

Appendix XII: Commonalities between Gen-X + Gen-Z, Gen-Y + Gen-Z, Gen-X + Gen-Y

Q1 + Q2 not qualified for this analysis, Q20 + Q25 + Q31 no commonalities detected

Table 23: Commonalities generations (I)

| Question | Commonalities |
|----------|---------------|
| Q3 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q4 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |
| Q5 | Gen-X + Gen-Y |
| Q6 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q7 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q8 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q9 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q10 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q11 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q12 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |
| Q13 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q14 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q15 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q16 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |

Table 24: Commonalities generations (II)

| Question | Commonalities |
|----------|-----------------------|
| Q17 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q18 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q19 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q21 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |
| Q22 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q23 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |
| Q24 | Gen-X + Gen-Y |
| Q26 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |
| Q27 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q28 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q29 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q30 | Gen-X + Gen-Z |
| Q32 | Gen-Y + Gen-Z |
| Q33 | Gen-X + Gen-Y + Gen-Z |

Table 25: Commonality frequencies among generations

| Generation | Frequencies |
|---------------|-------------|
| Gen-X + Gen-Z | 18 |
| Gen-Y + Gen-Z | 7 |
| Gen-X + Gen-Y | 3 |

Appendix XIII: Influence IV on DV

Table 26: Influence IV Brand Positioning on DV Brand Trust (Q10 | Q24)

| IV | Subvariable Cluster | DV | Quantitative Impact |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Brand Positioning | Functional BP | Brand Trust | Gen-X: 34.52% Gen-X: 2.89 |
| | | | Gen-Y: 25.99% Gen-Y: 2.79 |

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | | | Gen-Z: 22.84% | Gen-Z 2.99 |
| | Reliable PR | Brand Trust | Gen-X: 60.12 % | Gen-X: 3.45 |
| | | | Gen-Y: 49.72% | Gen-Y: 3.79 |
| | | | Gen-Z: 45.68% | Gen-Z: 3.59 |
| | Emotional BL | Brand Trust | Gen-X: 33.93% | Gen-X: 3.02 |
| | | | Gen-Y: 30.51% | Gen-Y: 2.97 |
| | | | Gen-Z: 19.44% | Gen-Z: 3.41 |

Table 27: Influence IV Brand Positioning on DV Brand Recommendation/ Promotion (Q25)

| IV | Subvariable Cluster | DV | Quantitative Impact |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Brand Positioning | Functional BP | Brand Recommendation/ Promotion | Gen-X: 2.71 Gen-Y: 2.79 Gen-Z: 2.73 |
| | Reliable PR | Brand Recommendation/ Promotion | Gen-X: 3.15 Gen-Y: 3.58 Gen-Z: 3.45 |
| | Emotional BL | Brand Recommendation/ Promotion | Gen-X: 2.87 Gen-Y: 2.67 Gen-Z: 2.90 |

Table 28: Influence IV Brand Positioning on DV Brand Defense (Q28)

| IV | Subvariable Cluster | DV | Quantitative Impact |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--|
| Brand Positioning | Functional BP | Brand Defense | Gen-X: 2.79 Gen-Y: 2.61 Gen-Z: 2.78 |
| | Reliable PR | Brand Defense | Gen-X: 3.20 Gen-Y: 3.33 Gen-Z: 3.19 |
| | Emotional BL | Brand Defense | Gen-X: 2.88 Gen-Y: 2.68 Gen-Z: 2.75 |

Table 29: Influence IV Brand Reputation on DV Brand Trust (Q10 | Q24)

| IV | Subvariable Cluster | DV | Quantitative Impact |
|----|-----------------------|----|---------------------|
|----|-----------------------|----|---------------------|

| | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Brand Reputation | Traditional BP | Brand Trust | Gen-X: 34.52% Gen-Y: 25.99% Gen-Z: 22.84% | Gen-X: 2.89 Gen-Y: 2.79 Gen-Z: 2.99 |
| | Innovative DC | Brand Trust | Gen-X:19.20% Gen-Y: 21.19% Gen-Z: 8.80% | Gen-X: 2.56 Gen-Y: 2.96 Gen-Z: 2.79 |
| | Conscious SRS | Brand Trust | Gen-X: 18.15% Gen-Y: 20.34% Gen-X: 11.73% | Gen-X: 2.86 Gen-Y: 2.89 Gen-Z: 2.79 |

Table 30: Influence IV Brand Reputation on DV Brand Recommendation/ Promotion (Q25)

| IV | Subvariable Cluster | DV | Quantitative Impact |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Brand Reputation | Traditional BP | Brand Recommendation/ Promotion | Gen-X: 2.71 Gen-Y: 2.79 Gen-Z: 2.73 |
| | Innovative DC | Brand Recommendation/ Promotion | Gen-X: 2.55 Gen-Y: 2.93 Gen-Z: 2.51 |
| | Conscious SRS | Brand Recommendation/ Promotion | Gen-X: 2.93 Gen-Y: 3.07 Gen-Z: 2.74 |

Table 31: Influence IV Brand Reputation on DV Brand Defense (Q28)

| IV | Subvariable Cluster | DV | Quantitative Impact |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---|
| Brand Reputation | Traditional BP | Brand Defense | Gen-X: 2.79 Gen-Y: 2.61 Gen-Z: 2.78 |
| | Innovative DC | Brand Defense | Gen-X: 2.53 Gen-Y: 2.94 Gen-Z: 2.35 |
| | Conscious SRS | Brand Defense | Gen-X: 3.06 Gen-Y: 3.13 Gen-Z: 2.73 |