

## **Brand Awareness of New Brands among Youths- An Overview.**

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### **Abstract**

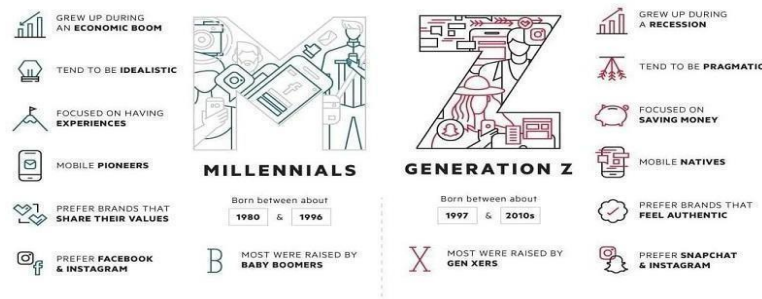
In developing countries like India, the youth population is drastically increasing and with it- is the growing consciousness, awareness, and interest in fashion brands. The results showed that Indian youth is most responsive to brands that utilize video, graphic, and influencer marketing. Furthermore, this group also values and shows great brand awareness towards brands that stand by a cause. New brands that engage and interact with this audience are also appreciated. Peer reviews are also crucial to this group and peer recommendations drive brand awareness and purchases.

The results showed that Gen Z primarily utilizes Instagram, and most brand awareness takes place on this platform as they are more receptive to ads on it. This generation also uses mobile devices for online shopping and browsing, signaling that new brands must pay close attention to developing mobile-friendly user interfaces. Generation Z in India is more open to modern western concepts like thrifting and gender-fluid fashion. However, this mindset shift is a relatively new phenomenon and is only present as firmly in some members of this group.

### **Introduction**

Brand awareness gives recognition and attention to brand names as it is an integral part of branding and marketing strategy. Brand awareness helps to improve the perception of a company's products/services, increases customer loyalty, creates substantial digital impact, helps emotionally connect customers to the company's values, and facilitates brand equity. (Kenton, 2020). This research attempts to analyse brand awareness of new brands in India's fashion and

apparel industry among Generation Z, as they are highly receptive to globalisation trends, constituting a vast majority, displaying unique buying patterns and awareness. (Law, 2020), inclined towards socially and environmentally sustainable decisions (Saumya Tewari, 2021). They account for 2.47 billion of the world's population and hold a spending power of 143 billion dollars of which 375 million are in India. Besides the quality and price of a fashion brand, youths gravitate towards brand selling as an experience (Khare & Rakesh S. 2010). The fashion industry in India is extremely fast-paced, competitive, and saturated, recording an annual CAGR of 14.4%. Furthermore, McKinsey's Fashion Scope projected that India's apparel market would be worth 59.3 billion USD in 2022. (Imran Amed et al., 2019)



**Figure 1.1.** *Characteristic Comparison between Millennials and Generation Z*

*Source-* <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2019/08/21/marketing-to-generation-z>

Fashion and apparel have become a means to express themselves, as they have high consumer involvement and showcase one's personality, besides adding to one's self-image, social status, and recognition among peers and society (Kapferer & Laurent 1985), (Kapferer and Laurent 2019), (Emmert et al 2021), (Kim, H.S 2005), (Radder L. & Huang W., 2008). With this backdrop, our study objectives are to analyze the significant drivers of brand awareness for new fashion brands in India amongst Generation Z and to examine the attitude of Gen Z towards new fashion trends.

### **Literature Review**

The Indian youth regards fashion as extremely important and rely on it to showcase their identity and to belong in the social scene. (Özkan, 2017). They perceive social responsibility as an essential factor in buying decisions. A Brand's purpose, message and personality play a crucial role. Hence, developing a brand image that highly resonates with the principles and virtues of Gen Z is recommended for new and purposeful brands (Fromm, J. 2013).

Gen Z pays attention to their fashion choices' social and environmental impact. The environmental impacts include the high production of greenhouse gases, which contributes to climate change and water wastage. The social consequences are severe too. Immense global competition in the fashion industry has led to poor working conditions and wages for many laborers in developing nations. Rapid consumption of fashion and clothing items and the need to deliver on short cycles stresses production resources, often resulting in industries that put profits ahead of human welfare. (Reichert & Drew, 2019).

With the increase in purpose-driven marketing, consumers are also shifting towards more sustainable and eco-friendly fashion choices. This shift has led to the rise of slow fashion awareness and thrift stores. Thrifting is a relatively new concept in India and a niche area for country-specific research. The emergence of online thrift stores offers a solution, and therefore, this phenomenon is highly accepted by Gen Z. Earlier, people mainly purchased second-hand clothing to save money; however, nowadays, the drivers of purchase include ethical concerns as well as identity construction and expression (Herjanto, Scheller-Sampson & Erickson, 2019)

Gen Z is the target audience for this trend because they purchase to adapt to social trends. Environmental awareness and consumption reduction are current social trends, and the high-end brands sold in second-hand stores support this trend, are reasonably priced, and add to self-image. The Indian youth spend most of their time on social media; hence, these platforms have become end-to-end selling platforms. Therefore, the majority of these thrift stores are operating on Instagram. (Saxena, 2021). Peers play a vital role in influencing one's fashion choices, and they have a higher impact on females than on males. (Sun, Y. S., & Guo, S., 2013). In purchase decisions, youth prefer to share ideas with their peers for approval and review, as fashion expresses individuality, status, and symbol (Pearson et al., 2004). Thus, it is a choice heavily influenced by others, especially youngsters, since they are susceptible to fashion and self-image. (Grant & Stephen, 2005).

Many fashion brands are now curating their collections based on the concept of 'gender-bending' fashion. These portrayals of gender fluidity through fashion and celebrities inspire gender-fluid individuals to express and represent themselves by enhancing their appearance (Akdemir, 2018). In India, famous male celebrities among Gen Z have attended numerous award ceremonies in feminine clothing. (Jairath, J., & Daima, R, 2021). Generation Z considers authenticity, realism, and relatability important in their brands (Mediakix, 2017).

Content-revealing packaging and production processes stand to gain in building better brand awareness and trust (Wade, 2018). Peer opinions, reviews, and feedbacks strongly impact Gen Z (Artemova, A. 2018), and they are non-impulsive about buying decisions (Thomas et al., 2018).

Considering all these aspects, brands trying to build brand awareness among youth must ensure that their marketing and advertising efforts come across as honest and authentic. For new brands, it is imperative to ensure that testimonials and reviews are available and visible, nurturing social communities to facilitate the same.

Authenticity would lead to awareness of these brands and build their credibility. (Artemova, A. 2018). Gen Z's online network is more extensive numerically and geographically (McCrindle, 2012), spends more than six hours per week on social networking sites (Statista 2021); it is wise for brands to market and advertise their products on those platforms to optimize brand awareness. Social media communication channels have characteristics that allow for better opportunities for establishing brand awareness when targeting Generation Z. (Bäcklund & Martin, 2019), as their attention span stands at a mere 8 seconds, which explains the emergence of 15-10 seconds advertising messages (Kroll, S. 2016), most

prevalent on YouTube. (Garun,2016) (Finch,2015).Short attention span has led to gravitation towards visual content. Valentini et al. (2018) show that society is moving towards a visual culture, thus, brands seeking to build brand awareness must concentrate on creating short, highly visual content that grabs attention in few seconds.

Rose (2016), through Valentini et al. (2018), addresses why visuals have a more excellent value than text by explaining that images offer a more direct way of communicating and experiencing human relations than text-based communications. Analysis of the most popular social media channels used for marketing today reveals that these platforms primarily have image-based posts against text-only posts. Some social media platforms like Instagram are exclusively visual, allowing users to add text captions as a complimentary feature (Odina, A., &Koutelida, Z. (2020).

Furthermore, eye-tracking studies have revealed that images use more energy and attention to focus than anything else, making these ads highly compelling to advertisers. Thus, relying on visual ads seems like a profitable proposition for brands looking to increase their brand awareness, considering this medium receives the best engagement from the target audience (Donovan 2015).

Within the "visual content "bandwidth, video is another recent trend that has been seeing immense popularity amongst Generation Z. In line with this; multiple social media platforms have made video sharing available on their platform. On most social networking sites - a video proves to be a precious format for content and increasescustomer engagement through likes, shares, comments, retweets, and other ways. (Artemova, A.2018). This receptiveness to video content perhaps comes from the fact that short, creative video ads stimulate more senses and evoke more emotion than an image or pure text ad, thereby catching attention better.

Brands using social media to build brand awareness must ensure that their content and ads reach the right audience. Social media platforms work on unique algorithms. Algorithms are mathematical rules that ascertain how and what content will be shown to a user. The algorithm ensures that content on the feed is relevant to the user - proved by examining user behavior. (Jones,2020) (Barnhart 2021).

Facebook, Instagram and google ads track user activity, demographics, behavior, and location, etc platforms to gauge users' interests and show personalized ads to them. (Facebook,2021) (WSI,2019) YouTube uses data from google ads settings to show relevant content. (Google,2020)Rather than just placing paid ads, brands should also focus on creating interactive content. Gen Z appreciates interactive content because it allows them to voice their opinion and enables brands to gain valuable insights. Interactive content may be in the form of polls or contests. User-generated content that brands share on their pages will drive engagement and awareness. Thus, interactive, and user-generated content is a valuable solution when focusing on raising brand awareness amongst Gen Z. (Contreras,2017)

This type of marketing helps to carry the brand's message to a larger market and comes under the umbrella of social media marketing.Research says that micro-influencers come with several potential customers who trusts a new brand because of the influencer (J Wielki · 2020).

Influencer marketing could boost the company's sales exponentially as the influencer does most of the work in building brand trust and awareness. However, there are a few crucial factors that one should keep in mind while selecting an influencer like personalization (Influencer must try the brand's product), brand fit (the brand must fit the influencer's style and niche) and target market (must be selected keeping in mind the target market).

50% of Instagram users follow at least one business (Mention, 2018), which means that Instagram is a social networking site. According to AlGhamdi and Reilly (2013), 83% marketers place high value on social applications because of their essential role in reaching and retaining customers. Two out of every three users on Instagram believe to get helps to start an interaction with a company. Such interaction facilitates consumers to find new brands and allow businesses to expand its customer base. Furthermore, 50% of users are more interested in a brand when they come across an advertisement of the brand on Instagram. (Instagram, 2021)

Research suggests that brands are becoming more interested in establishing their presence on social media, resulting in significant growth of marketing budgets directed towards the same. Some of the factors listed below explain the shift towards social media (Gilin 2007). Initially, brands avoided Snapchat, due to concerns about interacting with people. But this perception has changed as Snapchat has grown over time, introducing more media formats, filters (Ahmed, M., Khan, S., & Alzughabi, D. (2021). Today, Snapchat has over 186 million daily active users, more than 3 billion snaps sent daily, and users view over 10 billion videos daily on Snapchat (Oetting, n.d.). To reach their target audience, brands can use snap ads, discover, our story (Live), sponsored lenses, and geo-filters.

Studies have shown that the audience's attitude and perception towards a particular ad format in YouTube significantly affect attitudes and perception of advertisement, in turn have a strong influence on consumer brand attitude and awareness (Burns and Lutz, 2006) (Brown and Stayman, 1992). YouTube offers brands and advertisers six ad formats, each with different features and pricing. Skippable ads are most effective when marketing to all generations (Guttman, 2019). With the increase in mobile internet population, many companies are now moving towards developing mobile applications, as 69% of internet users prefer to look for products, reviews, etc., on their phones (E-marketer, 2019)

According to research, consumers prefer to make decisions related to purchases using m-commerce rather than any e-commerce platform (Maity, M., & Dass, M. 2014). According to a survey conducted by Fuentes & Svingstedt (2017), mobile phones help customers in social shopping by accessing and uniquely processing information. More companies will have to move towards developing mobile applications for their brands and upgrading to mobile and desktop-friendly user interfaces to provide a seamless shopping experience for their customers.

### **Methodology**

With this backdrop, our study objectives are to analyze the significant drivers of brand awareness for new fashion brands in India amongst Generation Z and to examine the attitude of Gen Z towards new fashion trends. The study is applied research using descriptive design. Non-probability judgmental sampling technique is followed. The sample frame was generation z (age

17-23). A structured Questionnaire using the Likert scale is used, and data is collected using google forms from 101 respondents from Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Pune. Descriptive statistics and one sample t-test are done to analyze the data. Pie charts and bar graphs add to the descriptive statistics.

### Data Analysis and Interpretations

#### Descriptive Analysis

Figure 2

Sex of Respondents

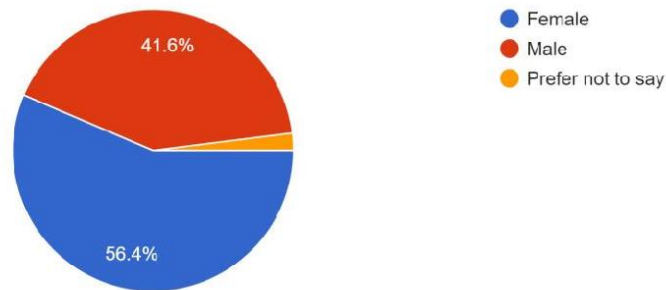
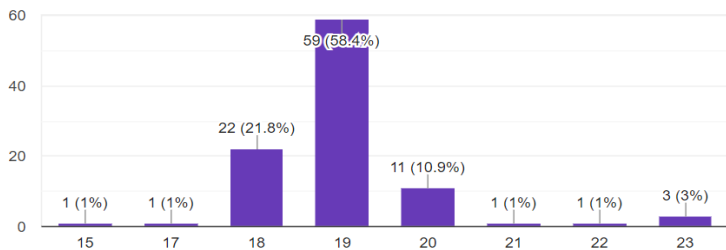


Figure 2 indicates that 56.4% of the respondents are males and 41.6% are females, and the remaining samples preferred not to indicate their sex.

Figure 3

Age of the Respondents



59 % of the respondents are in the age group of 19.

Figure 4

Education of Respondents

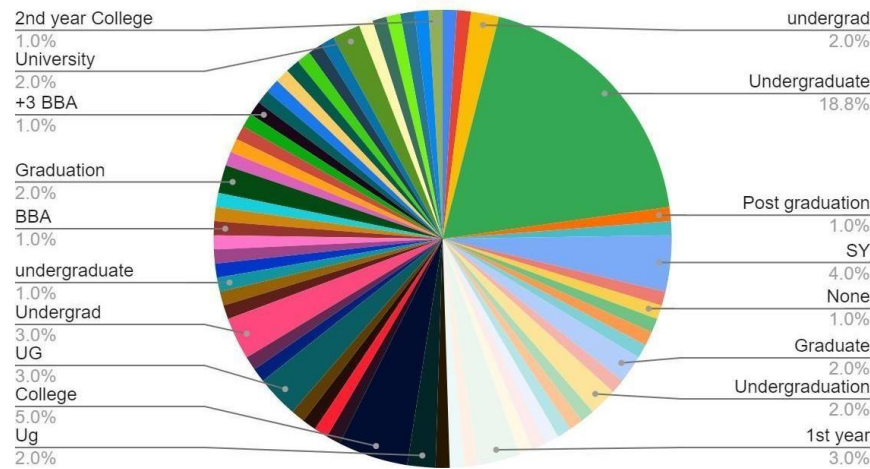


Figure 4 indicates the educational qualification of respondents, the majority are undergraduate students.

Table 1

T-Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attraction factors	101	2.03	.953	.095
Influencers	101	4.15	.753	.075
Devices used	101	1.45	.728	.072
Stimulators	101	1.91	.750	.075
Gender-fluid fashion	101	3.68	1.122	.112
Buying from thrift stores	101	3.35	1.300	.129
Celebrity	101	2.64	.626	.062

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0

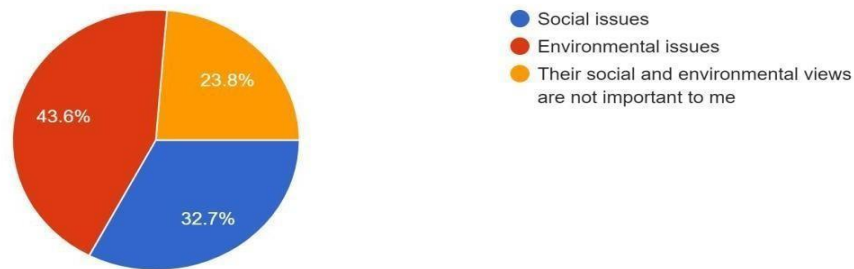
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Attraction factors	21.394	100	.000	2.030	1.84	2.22
Influencers	55.333	100	.000	4.149	4.00	4.30

Devices used	19.964	100	.000	1.446	1.30	1.59
Stimulators	25.617	100	.000	1.911	1.76	2.06
Gender-fluid fashion	32.994	100	.000	3.683	3.46	3.90
Buying from thrift stores	25.881	100	.000	3.347	3.09	3.60
Celebrity	42.451	100	.000	2.644	2.52	2.77

Student t-distribution test is used to understand the significant difference between the population mean and the sample mean. After checking for normality, one sample t-test is analyzed. Results of the one-sample t-distribution test for the factors tested, like attraction, influencers, devices used, stimulators, gender-fluid fashion, buying from thrift stores, and celebrity endorsements, indicate that they are significant. This means that there is no difference between the population mean and the sample mean.

Figure 9  
 Brand Purpose

My interest is more likely to be piqued by a fashion brand that stands by  
 101 responses



Brands standing for environmental causes are preferred by 43.6% of respondents.

Figure 10  
 Interest in Gender Fluid Fashion

Rate how interested you would be in wearing gender fluid fashion  
 101 responses

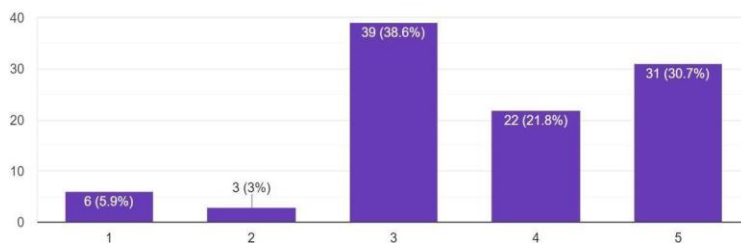




Figure 11

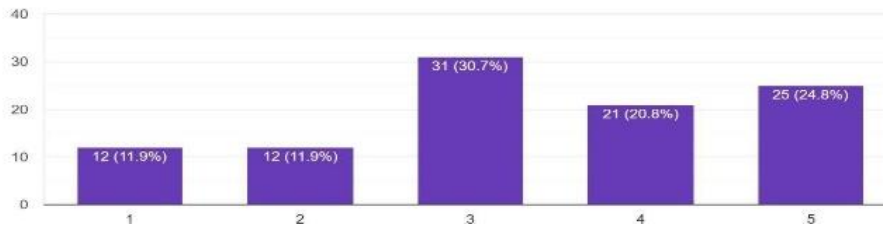
### Buying from Thrift stores

Gender-fluid fashion is preferred by 52.5% of respondents (rating 4&5), which shows that there is a shift from traditional mindset. However, 38.6% of the respondents are neutral about this fashion trend.

Thrifting and selling repurposed clothes has become fairly common in today's fashion industry.

How likely are you to buy apparel from a thrift store (online or offline)

101 responses



Thrifting is preferred by 45.6% of the respondents (rating 4&5) and 30.7% of the respondents are neutral about buying from thrift stores.

### Findings and Conclusions

From the analysis, we may conclude that multiple factors are essential in raising brand awareness for new fashion brands among Generation Z. Through this study, we found that it is essential to strategize a strong social media marketing strategy to produce qualitative advertising and promotional content. Qualitative content is not receiving visibility and is not stimulating brand awareness. Solely focusing on quantity won't pique interest and will also not lead to awareness. Thus, a balance of both is required. Awareness of digital marketing techniques is highly essential. Today's youth prefer brands that stand by causes and give back to society. Still, they are also moving towards a more progressive, sustainable fashion culture, as observed by their interest in gender-fluid fashion and thrifting. Having made this observation, it is worth noting that this is still a relatively new concept in India and is only gaining momentum now.

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