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### УСТОЙЧИВОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ: МЫСЛИТЬ ГЛОБАЛЬНО, ДЕЙСТВОВАТЬ ЛОКАЛЬНО – ПРИМЕР г. ИГХИУ, РУМЫНИЯ

*Устойчивое развитие подразумевает добросовестное использование ресурсов, так, чтобы будущие поколения смогли б удовлетворить свои потребности. Новая парадигма как раз в том, как экономическое развитие необходимо осуществлять. Международные договоры о смягчении последствий изменения климата, био-разнообразия и борьбы с бедностью и другие подобные вопросы были подписаны большинством государств. На местном уровне более конкретные проблемы появляются. Эта статья стремится представить формат документа, который может быть использован органами местного самоуправления, чтобы преодолеть препятствия. Интегрированная система менеджмента (ИСМ) стремится внести свой вклад в улучшение связи между местными заинтересованными сторонами, гражданами и местными органами власти, что, в конце концов, может привести к более устойчивому будущему. Для этого мы проанализировали первые шаги к реализации ИСМ в селе Игхиу округа Альба, на основе минимальных требований, разработанных в рамках проекта Шапр.*

*Ключевые слова: Устойчивое развитие, интегрированная система управления.*

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### СТАЛИЙ РОЗВИТОК: МИСЛИТИ ГЛОБАЛЬНО, ДІЯТИ ЛОКАЛЬНО – ПРИКЛАД м. ІГХІУ, РУМУНІЯ

*Сталий розвиток передбачає добросовісне використання ресурсів, так, щоб майбутні покоління змогли б задовольнити свої потреби. Нова парадигма якраз в тому, як економічний розвиток необхідно здійснити. Міжнародні договори про пом'якшення наслідків зміни клімату, біо-розмаїття і боротьби з бідністю та інші подібні питання були підписані більшістю держав. На місцевому рівні більш конкретні проблеми з'являються. Ця стаття прагне представити формат документа, який може бути використаний органами місцевого самоврядування, щоб подолати перешкоди. Інтегрована система менеджменту (ИСМ) прагне внести свій внесок у поліпшення зв'язку між місцевими зацікавленими сторонами, громадянами та місцевими органами влади, що, врешті-решт, може привести до більш сталого майбутнього. Для цього ми проаналізували перші кроки до реалізації ІСМ в селі Ігхиу округу Альба, на основі мінімальних вимог, розроблених в рамках проекту Шапр.*

*Ключові слова: Сталий розвиток, інтегрована система управління.*

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### HOW BRAND PERSONALITY INFLUENCES CONSUMER'S BRAND PREFERENCE

*The purpose of the present paper is to identify if the congruence of the consumers personality with the perceived brand personality increases their brand preferences. To achieve this purpose, the paper was structured in two parts; the first part contains a general literature review of the consumer behaviour theory and its influence factors and a more specific one regarding the consumer's and brand personality concepts. The second part describes the used research methodology for achieving the paper's purpose. The results of the underlying exploratory research confirmed the hypothesis that an overlapping of the consumers' personality and the brand personality they perceive is positively correlated with their brand preferences.*

*Keywords: Brand Personality, Consumer Behavior, Trait Theory, Consumer Personality.*

**Introduction.** The field of marketing can be perceived in various ways and direction. For the period when the marketing concept had its early beginnings, the idea that marketing represents all the activities that generate the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer (AMA, 1969) was considered a correct and complete definition. Once the commerce structure shifted to a more societal concept, marketing became known as "a societal process by which individuals and target groups obtain what they need and what they want through creating, offering and freely exchanging value caring products and services." (Kotler, Keller, 2008). Over the years, the marketing concept evolved through three forms, recognized by literature as marketing 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0. In other words, marketing has gradually changed its activities' focus from product / service to the consumer, in present being totally focused on the human spirit (Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiawan, 2010).

#### Literature Review.

**Consumer Behaviour – the Benchmark of Modern Marketing.** The motivations and aspirations of the consumers became more and more diverse, complex, with

a personal character, therefore making it hard for marketers to integrate these needs in certain categories without knowing the target group in detail.

Studying the consumer behaviour requires a multidisciplinary approach of the economic, sociology, medicine, psychology, and statistics points of view. In this respect, consumer behaviour can be considered an evergreen element of human existence as consumer. The behaviour of the consumer coexists with other human behaviours which, due to its complexity, regularly generates new behaviours, like a root that gives rise to new offspring that are never the same. Consumer behaviour can be defined, in a comprehensive approach, as the totality of decisions made by the individual or group, directly related to the obtaining and use of goods and services in order to meet current and future needs, including decision-making processes that precede and determine these acts. (Catoiu, Teodorescu, 2004).

A pleased customer is one for which, beyond the rational preferences, exists an emotional affinity for a product or service, for a brand and not another, this

phenomenon creating loyalty (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong, Saunders, 2008). Not at all in the benefit of the companies, a recent study shows that under the influence of the economic crisis, 55% of consumers prefer a cost advantage over the advantages of owning a branded product (Kotler, Armstrong 2012). Therefore, it is clear that in these conditions, the efforts that companies will have to make to rise the loyalty of their customers through the brand characteristics should be greater.

Because perception is one factor with great effect in understanding a brand, the objective of any company is to reduce the differences that arise between the real customer perception about the company and the customer's perception desired by the company in regard with various aspects (products/services' quality, flexibility in service offerings, selling personnel quality, responsiveness to clients' suggestion, sincerity in informing the clients). To reduce these differences, companies should undergo a careful analysis of the client and hence its consumption behaviour.

#### **Observable Influences on Consumer Behaviour.**

Recently, the "global consumer" is a very often used concept, based on the idea that globalization gradually creates a type of consumer who will have approximately the same consumption characteristics worldwide and who would appreciate the same brands, the same ideas, the same public figures (Solomon, 2004).

In regard with the factors that have a direct influence on the consumer, these can be differentiated in two big categories: direct observable influences and deducted influences (which can be exogenous or endogenous). The first category deals with economic and demographical characteristics of the population (income, household structure and income, gender, age, education, lifestyle), but also factors which are specific for the company's marketing mix (product, price, placement and promotion). Last, but not least, the situational factors are also considered to have an important role in defining the consumption behaviour. We can define the situational influences as being all those factors specific to situations in time and space, resulting from factors beyond knowledge, but which have a demonstrable effect on the actual behaviour (Belk, 2004) and can influence consumers in three distinct moments: the moment of marketing communication, time of purchase or time of consumption.

Regarding the deductible influences, we can talk about endogenous and exogenous variables. The first subcategory, the endogenous factors are considered to be hard to assess and justify, varying from one product to another, from one consumer to another based on various psychographic traits. The set of endogenous variables comes as an internal psychological mechanism, customized for each individual, an objective and fair assessment of the influence of these variables being impossible. However, various research conducted in this area were able to infer the effects of endogenous influences and to give marketers some general theories on what is happening in the mind of the consumer.

The clients' point of view and their actual behaviour are influenced by the way they perceive an actual situation. In analysing a situation, for its assessment, three unconscious perceptual processes take place in the mind of the consumer: selective attention, selective distortion and selective memory (Catoiu, 2004), meaning that the individual will pay attention to only a party of what he sees, hears or, generally experiences, he will distort the information in a way that fits his needs, and he will remember only the aspects that are of interest for him.

The learning process is another factor with great influence on the consumer behaviour, meaning that the behaviour will change in time, based on the experience that the consumer gains through its life. The behavioural learning theory and cognitive learning theory set a difference between the result of different experiences of the individual in its posture of consumer and the mental process that are always set for problem solving (Solomon, 2004).

The personality of an individual, defined as "the totality of an individual psychological characteristics that determine how he responds to the environment" (Schiffman, Kanuk, Hansen, 2012), represents a multidimensional construct, always set for debates. Representing the focus of this article, this dimension will be further detailed.

Another part of the endogenous factors is represented by motivation, that *inner force* that determines people to behave as they do. No matter if we refer to biologic or learned motivation, the two-faced, mind-organism system proceed to meet different needs, whether utilitarian or hedonic, the behaviour of an individual being generated by the desire to relieve tension felt after identifying a need.

Last, but not least, we can mention the consumer's attitude, as an endogenous factor, being considered "the consumer's predisposition to have a consistent favourable or unfavourable reaction to an object or class of objects" (Allport, 2004).

Whether we are talking about professional or personal development, man tends to aim for independence in decision-making, seeking to always be in control. However, this independence of each individual is a relative one, everybody being constantly influenced by various exogenous factors in adopting a certain type of behaviour. Identified either as individuals or groups of influence, either as social norms established by the society, the consumer is influenced during the purchase decision making by cultural and social factors.

The family is considered to have the most constant and strong influence on an individual. No matter if we talk about parents, husband or wife, or distant relatives, these are persons which whom the consumer is in a permanent contact. A visible aspect nowadays is the fact that women become professional involved as their husbands, this triggering a change in the financial roles of the family members. All the variations in the number of members of a family, structure, age, gender and stage of the family life cycle is (married, with / without children, divorced, etc.) directly influences the purchase behaviour and the consumption of the individual and household (Solomon, 2004).

The social groups, the reference groups and the social class to which the consumer belongs, or to which the consumer aims to belong, are also influences of external nature which may change the consumer behaviour.

Culture, as the total norms, beliefs and values learned, that trigger a particular behaviour of the inhabitants of a specific society, has an important role in forming a buying behaviour. "Consumers look through the context of their own culture and react to the environment based on their cultural framework which they associate with a specific experience. Each individual perceives the world through their own cultural lens" (Ueltschy, Krampf, 2001), meaning that the endogenous processes are also influenced by culture.

**Theoretical Aspects of Personality.** Personality can be defined as the reunion of internal psychophysical and external psychophysics features (Golu, 2007). According to Kluckhohn, Murray and Schneider, any man can be viewed and analysed from three different points of view, namely as all other people (to general rules) perceive him, as some people (group norms) perceive him and as he perceives

himself (idiosyncratic rules), thus the personality study is a complex, multifaceted procedure (Allport, Golu, 2007).

As Richard Meili appreciates "personality is final subject of psychology and therefore the most complex one", all the theories and concepts being somehow related to personality. Gordon Allport sets two directions for personality: from the external effect saying that personality is "the total amount of affect produced by an individual over society" while internally defining personality as the "the more or less durable organization of the character, temperament, intelligence and physique of an individual, this leading to a unique adaptation to the environment" (Allport, Zlate, 2007).

Historical notes and studies of personality appear since the time of Hippocrates, when he first defined the personality types, associating human characteristics with medical terms. Thus arose the sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic types of personality, which are still used nowadays. By the time, through practical approaches, various personality theories were developed, confirmed or denied by great psychologists like Sigmund Freud (through identity-based personality, ego and superego), Alfred Adler (personality theory that addresses the human from a holistic point of view) and Carl Jung (realized a condensed version of the features outlined by Hippocrates in extroverted and introverted) contributed to the writing of a history of personality psychology that seems to be infinite (Schiffman, Kanuk, 2012).

Both psychology and consumer behaviour research showed that the goods purchased by customers, when and how they are consumed or used, are influenced by different characteristics of personality. The research in psychology has led to many theories, this paper dealing in detail with the personality trait theory.

**The personality trait theory.** This theory appears as a deviation from the well-known Freudian and neo-Freudian theories and tends to minimize the qualitative study focusing mainly on empirical quantitative research or personality measurement in terms of specific psychological features called traits (any distinctive and relatively durable form and by which an individual is different from another) (Schiffman, Kanuk, 2012).

The tests which are based on a single trait analysis have been developed for consumer behaviour studies and they analyse traits such as innovativeness, materialism and consumer ethnocentrism. Other researchers added as being relevant for the field of consumer behaviour traits like need for knowledge, self-awareness and fragility (Solomon, 2004).

On a closer analysis of the structure of traits that are under observation in the personality trait theory, we can identify common aspects with Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Gert Hofstede, 1984). The cultural dimension "individualism vs. collectivism" can be viewed as having an effect in the development idiocentric or allocentric personality. Based on the two facets that build up the notions of individualism and collectivism, different behavioural patterns were identified. Therefore, idiocentric persons tend to be satisfied in a higher proportion with their financial status and are more likely to spend time working. On the other hand, people with a social orientation, allocentric personality, place a greater attention on food content, spend more time in the kitchen and also prefer lyrical arts in a higher rate (Solomon, 2004). Also it was established that people with high levels of dogmatism are more responsive to promotional messages received from famous persons, while those with low dogmatism tend to be receptive to ads that highlight the novelty elements (Schiffman, Kanuk, Hansen, 2012). All these examples related to the idea that each individual tends to prefer goods (brands) whose

personality is assessed as being congruent with his own personality, certifies the great utility of the personality trait theory in modelling the brand personality until it coincides with the target group's personality set.

When we refer at a brand we refer at a name, term, sign, symbol, a drawing or a combination of these elements, aiming to identify the goods or services of a seller and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors (AMA) and as Kao is saying, "the most distinctive competence of professional marketers probably remains their ability to create, maintain, develop and protect the brand." (Kao, 2004).

Although the goods sold under various brand names are nothing more than products or services, consumers often tend to personify the brand image of goods, humanizing the brand, creating a whole concept of personality through which he defined it. Thus, some brands come to be associated with lifestyles, be characterized by attributes describing either virtues or defects.

Aaker described brand equity through four dimensions, namely: the brand seen as a product, the brand seen as an organization, the brand seen as an individual (brand personality) and the brand seen as a symbol (Kotler, Keller, 2008).

**Brand personality.** Brand personality can be defined as "that set of traits that individuals assign to a product or service as if these were people." (Schiffman, Kanuk, Hansen, 2012).

Jennifer L. Aaker developed research on brand personality, asking the respondents to treat certain brands as if they were people. Thus, based on attributes identified in the responses of each participant in the study, through the paper entitled "Dimensions of brand personality," Aaker developed a five features system, called "the brand personality scale", by which brands can be characterised, namely:

- Sincerity (down-to-earth, honest, wholesome, cheerful)
- Excitement (daring, spirited, imaginative, up-to-date)
- Competence (reliable, intelligent, successful)
- Sophistication (upper class, charming)
- Ruggedness (outdoorsy, tough) (Aaker, 1997)

Based on the concept of the "Big Five" personality, Aaker asked respondents (n = 631) to assign attributes to brands. The multitude of attributes associated with the brands were grouped, finally identifying the big five features categories, each of them being defined by other, more specific traits. The initial study did not prove the generalizability of the scale, but other studies such as Long-Yi Lin's paper – "The relationship between consumer's personality traits, the brand personality and loyalty towards the brand: an empirical study on toy buyers and video games", or other studies developed by Jennifer Aaker herself on other cultures, tested and retested the scale.

The direct relationship between brand personality and consumer's personality (ideal or real) is also a concept that underlies the relationship marketing studied by Blackston (1993, 1995) and Fournier (1998), which is based on the notion of self-congruence introduced by Dolichos (1969), and then studied by Martin and Bellizi (1982). The concept of self-congruence states that consumers' preferences are determined by the cognitive matching of individual's image of the brand and of himself. Johar and Sirgy suggest a two alternative routes approach of this concept, namely: (1) direct relationship between the value of the product and the person or (2) functional congruence defined as the relationship between product's utilitarian attributes and the individual (Azevedo, Pessoa, 2005).

**Research Methodology.** The purpose of every marketing research is to gather relevant information for solving a company's business problem. The purpose of the present marketing research is to identify how the association between the consumer's personality and the

perceived brand personality influences his brand preference. Based on this purpose, we develop the hypothesis that a high association between the consumer's personality and the perceived brand personality will determine high brand preferences.

The needed information is gathered from an external (the source origin is external relative to the researchers) and primary source (individuals were questioned and the data was firstly analyzed in the present research). Survey was used as research method and an offline questionnaire as data collecting instrument. The used questionnaire contains both closed and open-ended questions.

The research was based on two independent samples according to the respondents' nationality, romanian and turkish, respectively. Due to the fact that the research is an exploratory one, no statistical significant sample dimension was computed; thus, the used sample size was 20 respondents (10 romanian and 10 turkish respondents with their age varying between 20 and 25 years).

The data obtained by applying the bilingual questionnaire was codified and centralized in a database, Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS V 20 were used in this sense. Specific data analysis techniques were performed in accordance with the number and type of the considered variables. Thus, by computing mean scores (in Microsoft Excel), the researchers have identified the personality of the respondents (group personality and according to their nationality) and the average brand preference rank. Moreover Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients were computed (IBM SPSS V20) for identifying different degrees of association.

Every respondent has evaluated his personality by rating Jennifer's Aaker 15 personality subdimensions on a 5 category Likert scale (1 – low level, 5 – high level). Initially, the 15 attributes (subdimensions) were used by

J.Aaker for measuring the brand personality. Every characteristic of the Big 5 personality traits (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Refinement, Ruggedness) is built on several subdimensions, thus, the mean scores of the Big 5 personality traits were computed by averaging the mean scores of the founding subdimensions. The mean scores of the Big 5 were obtained at group level and separately, according to the respondents' nationality.

The same procedure was applied for measuring the Big 5 personality traits of the following brands: BMW, Volkswagen, MTV, Discovery Channel, Coca-Cola and Pepsi. The reason behind choosing a pair of brands out of the same product category is to eliminate the utilitarian function of the product and to reveal the influence of brand personality on the consumer's brand preferences. Thus, mean scores were computed for all Big 5 personality traits, for every considered brand, both at group level and at sample level.

The next step in our analysis consisted in computing the difference between the mean score of every respondents' personality trait (respondents' own perceived personality through the Big 5) and the mean score of the same personality trait of the brand (brand personality perceived by the respondents through the Big 5). Differences were computed at group level (20) and at sample level (10 romanian and 10 turkish respondents). The obtained results express the relationship between the respondents' personality and the brand personality (as perceived by the respondents) for all of the 6 considered brands. To eliminate negatives values module values of the differences were considered further.

The following tabels contain the differences of the perceived personalities (respondents' personality and brands' personality) and the average brand rank (a measure of brand preference):

**Table 1. Differences of the perceived personalities and average brand rank (group level)**

Brand	DM (difference between the mean score of the respondents' personality and the mean score of the brand personality)	Mean Rank
BMW	0,0015	2,95
VOLKSWAGEN	0,2088	2,5
MTV	0,2594	2,3
DISCOVERY CHANNEL	0,3629	3,9
COCA-COLA	0,4003	4,6
PEPSI	0,5754	4,75

Source: Own computation

**Table 2. Differences of the perceived personalities and average brand rank (turkish sample)**

Turkish respondents	Brand	DM (difference between the mean score of the respondents' personality and the mean score of the brand personality)	Mean Rank
	BMW	0,0984	2,22
	VOLKSWAGEN	0,3935	2
	MTV	0,2651	4,77
	DISCOVERY CHANNEL	0,0777	3,22
	COCA – COLA	0,5022	4,22
	PEPSI	0,1591	4,55

Source: Own computation

**Table 3. Differences of the perceived personalities and average brand rank (romanian sample)**

Romanian respondents	Brand	DM (difference between the mean score of the respondents' personality and the mean score of the brand personality)	Mean Rank
	BMW	0,2991	2,72
	VOLKSWAGEN	0,1496	2,54
	MTV	0,8292	4,72
	DISCOVERY CHANNEL	0,0663	2,72
	COCA-COLA	0,2489	3,63
	PEPSI	0,5976	4,63

Source: Own computation

The table data was used as input data for the IBM SPSS V20 program. Correlation coefficients were computed between the DM values (table 1) and mean ranks at group level. Thus, at group level, a Pearson coefficient value of 0,757 (significance level of 0.081) and a Spearman coefficient value of 0,771 (significance level of 0.072) were obtained. Both values are considered statistical representative and confirm the hypothesis that a small difference between the respondent's own perceived personality and the perceived brand personality is correlated with a high brand rank (favourable brand preference). In other words, at group level, the respondents will prefer those brands which have a personality they consider close to their own.

The same analysis techniques were applied separately on the two samples (romanian and turkish respondents, table 2 and 3). Quite different Pearson coefficient values were obtained for the turkish sample (0,128 with a significance level of Sig.=0,807) and the romanian one (0,905 with a significance level of Sig.=0,013). Similar findings have resulted for the Spearman coefficient (0,086 with Sig. = 0,872 for the turkish sample and 0,812 with Sig.=0,05 for the romanian one). By analyzing these values, we can conclude that our research hypothesis is confirmed for the romanian sample. The hypothesis can be neither confirmed, nor infirmed for the turkish sample because the resultated correlation values are not statistical significant.

The research purpose of the paper has been achieved, thus, we can affirm that a congruence of the consumer's personality with the perceived brand personality raises the consumer's brand preference.

**Conclusions & Discussion.** The purpose of the present article was to identify if a match between the consumer's personality and the perceived brand personality influences in a favourable manner the consumer's preference regarding the considered brand. The mentioned purpose is based on the personality trait theory and on J.Aaker's brand personality. Data was collected through an offline questionnaire applied on two independent samples (according to the respondents' nationality – Romanian and Turkish, respectively). After applying specific data analysis techniques, the results confirm the research purpose and hypothesis only for the Romanian sample (the obtained results were not statistical significant for the Turkish sample). Thus, we can affirm that a congruence of the consumer's personality with the perceived brand personality increases the consumer's brand preference.

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#### КАК ИНДИВИДУАЛЬНОСТЬ БРЕНДА ВЛИЯЕТ НА ПРЕДПОЧТЕНИЯ ПОТРЕБИТЕЛЯ

*Целью работы является сравнить личности потребителей с воспринимаемой индивидуальностью бренда и как это увеличивает потребительское бренд-предпочтение. Для достижения этой цели, статья в первой части содержит общий обзор литературы по теории поведения потребителей и факторов его влияния, конкретную концепцию о потребительских предпочтениях и индивидуальности бренда. Вторая часть описывает используемую методологию исследования для достижения цели статьи. Результаты основного исследования подтвердили гипотезу, что пересечение личности потребителей и индивидуальности бренда потребители воспринимают положительно, что высоко коррелирует с их бренд предпочтениями.*

*Ключевые слова: индивидуальность бренда, потребительское поведение, теория черт, потребительские личности.*

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#### ЯК ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНІСТЬ БРЕНДА ВПЛИВАЄ НА ПЕРЕВАГИ СПОЖИВАЧІВ

*Метою роботи є порівняти особистості споживачів з сприймаємою індивідуальністю бренду і як це збільшує споживчі бренд-преваги. Для досягнення цієї мети, стаття в першій частині містить загальний огляд літератури з теорії поведінки споживачів і факторів впливу, конкретну концепцію про споживчі переваги і індивідуальності бренду. Друга частина описує використовувану методологію дослідження для досягнення мети статті. Результати основного дослідження підтвердили гіпотезу, що перетин особистості споживачів та індивідуальності бренду споживачі сприймають позитивно, що високо корелює з їх бренд вподобаннями.*

*Ключові слова: індивідуальність бренду, споживча поведінка, теорія рис, споживчі особистості.*

The present research has several limitations. Firstly, the research is exploratory in nature, therefore the results cannot be considered acceptable at a population level. Secondly, the *match* between the respondents' personality and the perceived brand personality was computed through differences of some mean scores, a common variation based method would be more accurate. Thirdly, an isomorphic (one-to-one) relationship has been considered in studying the complex consumer behavior (personality *match* and brand preference); other influence variables like culture, family, motivation should be further integrated in the model of studying brand preferences.

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**ANNOTATION AND REFERENCES (IN LATIN):  
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**NEXT GENERATIONS OF CONSUMERS – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BRANDS**

*Young people are a heterogeneous public, characterized by a lack of patience and attention, eager to learn more about things but without reaching a level of depth, always connected and always running, hungry for goods, but lacking money. The young are also the most desirable audience for brands, in terms of long-term loyalty but also the most difficult to deal with and to be convinced.*

*Thus, the present study aims to define the characteristics of the generation Z that includes people born between the mid-1990s and 2010, in comparison with its previous generations: Baby Boomers, X, Y and some proposals on how brands might make themselves useful for this audience.*

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