

HUMAN8

READY FOR

THE ZOOMERS?

Gen Z report: Asia edition

SHORT ON TIME? 5 REPORT TAKE-AWAYS

1

GEN Z x MENTAL WELL-BEING

With 48% feeling stressed, Gen Z is the most stressed-out generation in Asia. This 'it's OK to not be OK' generation expects brands to take on the role of coach, supporting them in prioritizing and discussing the topic of mental health.

2

GEN Z x FINANCE

Redefining how to make money, Zoomers are self-educating, with 50% following fin-fluencers for financial advice. Asian Gen Z is open to exploring new investment products with crypto/ digital currencies making up 20% of their portfolio. They want accessible and actionable advice from brands to support them in building financial resilience.

3

GEN Z x METAVERSE

Together with their Millennial allies, Gen Z in Asia is embracing and shaping the metaverse. In fact, 88% has already engaged in metaverse activities. This always-on generation wants brands to create exciting experiences by seamlessly integrating the online and offline worlds.

4

GEN Z x BRANDS

Having a strong focus on injustice, Gen Z wants brands to pursue social and environmental issues. 75% of Asian Gen Z is even willing to pay more for brands that try to have a positive impact on society. At the same time, they expect brands to provide a personalised, playful experience.

5

GEN Z x SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Gen Z is determined to create a better future, with socio-economical and environmental issues high on their agenda. And they expect the same from brands. One-off actions are a no-go; this generation wants to see an ongoing social impact.

REPORT NAVIGATION

**ARE YOU
READY FOR
THE
ZOOMERS?**

INTRODUCTION

**02
GEN Z x
FINANCE**

FROM FIN-FLUENCERS TO NFT ART

**REPORT
METHODOLOGY**

THE DATA BEHIND THE STORY

**03
GEN Z x
METaverse**

WHAT IS IT LIKE ON THE OTHER SIDE?

**01
GEN Z x
MENTAL
WELL-BEING**

STRESS, HAPPINESS & PANDEMIC

**04
GEN Z x
BRANDS**

EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS BRANDS

**05
GEN Z x
SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE**

UNCERTAINTY & INCLUSIVITY

ARE YOU READY FOR THE ZOOMERS?

Today, Gen Z is the world's largest generational cohort, accounting for one third of the global population. Also known as post-Millennials, the iGeneration, or Zoomers, they have the fastest-growing disposable income, which is expected to reach \$33 trillion over the next decade. No matter what you call this generation, your business's future is likely to depend on them.

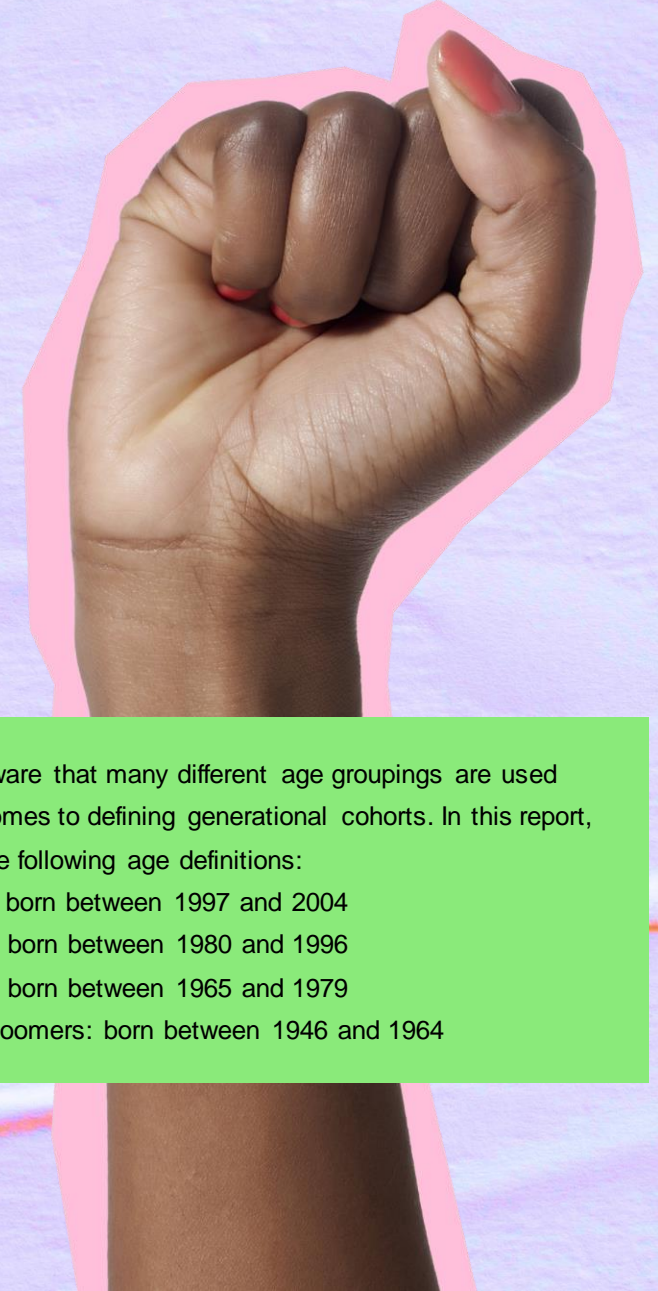
Who is Gen Z?

Born into a tech-enabled world, this digitally native generation is social-media-literate, always-on, and hyper-informed. Online platforms are their means to be in the know, to stay connected, and above all, they allow them to amplify their voice. With movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, this generation is not afraid to question authority and call out injustice. Growing up against the backdrop of social upheaval, climate change, and a global health crisis, this is a generation that struggles with mental well-being, but they don't hold back when talking about it. With many coming of age during the pandemic, the past two years put a mark on their lives and outlook on the future.

So, what characterizes these Zoomers, and how are they different from the generations before them? In this report, we shed a light on what makes Gen Z tick and what they expect from brands.

We are aware that many different age groupings are used when it comes to defining generational cohorts. In this report, we use the following age definitions:

- Gen Z: born between 1997 and 2004
- Gen Y: born between 1980 and 1996
- Gen X: born between 1965 and 1979
- Baby boomers: born between 1946 and 1964



REPORT METHODOLOGY

To gain insight into Gen Z's attitude and behaviour, and how this differs from previous generations, we ran a global proprietary quantitative research piece with the four largest generational cohorts - Gen Z, Gen Y, Gen X and baby boomers.

The focus of this report is on Asia, where we surveyed 9,109 consumers from eight markets (China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand) in June-July 2022: 3,558 Gen Z, 2,086 Gen Y, 1,951 Gen X and 1,514 baby boomers.

	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby boomers
Born between	1997 – 2004 *	1980 – 1996	1965 – 1979	1946 – 1964
China	994	405	392	310
Hong Kong SAR	204	384	286	126
Indonesia	398	235	221	147
Philippines	398	209	203	190
Singapore	400	209	200	191
South Korea	369	211	215	205
Taiwan	403	225	234	145
Thailand	392	208	200	200
TOTAL SAMPLE	3,558	2,086	1,951	1,514

* Taking into account ethical research guidelines, the survey focused on 18 years and older



01 GEN Z x MENTAL WELL-BEING

STRESS, HAPPINESS & PANDEMIC

GEN Z x MENTAL WELL-BEING

IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK

While everyone experiences a certain degree of stress, Gen Z is coming top in the charts for **most stressed-out generation**, with 48% saying they feel stressed (vs 42% Gen Y, 39% Gen X and 26% baby boomers).

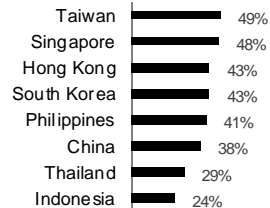
Mental well-being is becoming a hallmark of this generation, with **their biggest stressors** being **studies/ job (46%)** and **financial worries (44%)**. The latter being a stressor among all generations, which is not surprising given the pandemic recession. More than any other generation, Gen Z feels stressed about their **mental health (33%** vs 25% Gen Y, 18% Gen X and 14% baby boomers). While traditionally mental health has been a taboo in many Asian communities, Gen Z does not shy away from talking about their struggles. This 'it's ok to not be ok' generation is all about **dropping taboos and being open about their mental health**.

With social media being an inherent part of their lives, **comparing themselves to others (33%)** and **external expectations (22%)** only add to the stress equation. This results in a '**confidence crisis**' among Gen Z, with almost 1 in 2 indicating they often lack self-assurance.

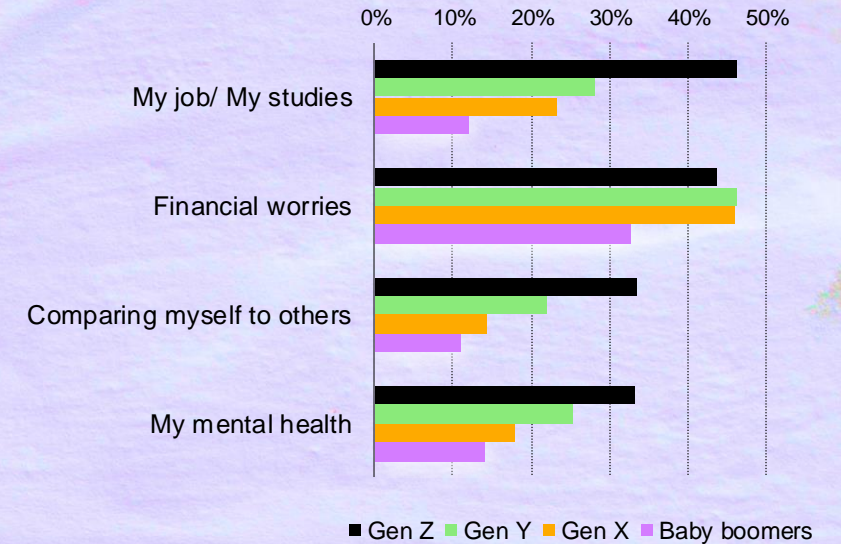
48%

OF GEN Z FEELS STRESSED

EXTENT OF GEN Z FEELING STRESSED



TOP SOURCES OF STRESS



INTELLECT x MENTAL HEALTH APP

Gen Z's focus on mental well-being can inspire brands to take on the role of life coach: supporting youngsters in prioritizing their mental health, and encouraging discussions around the topic.

Singapore-based start-up Intellect is a digital platform for mental wellness that connects people to therapists online. Launched in October 2019, the app skyrocketed during the pandemic, having now over 3 million users, and it includes Dell, Foodpanda and Singtel among its key corporate customers.



GEN Z x MENTAL WELL-BEING

EMBRACING THE GREAT PAUSE TO FAST-FORWARD

While the pandemic forced this post-Millennial generation to be home-schooled, attend prom virtually, graduate through Zoom or start their first job in a remote working context, Gen Z shows a **greater resilience and optimism in dealing with the pandemic** in comparison to the older generations. 34% feels the pandemic helped them learn a lot about themselves.

More than any other generation, they used this time to **start new hobbies** (32%). Like Millennials, Gen Z focus on **personal growth** (31%), and **learn new skills** (32%).



BYS x BREAK YOUR STIGMA

Beauty brand BYS (Be Yourself) Philippines decided to step up its efforts in mental-health awareness by launching a digital platform dedicated to mental-health support, labelled 'Break Your Stigma'. The brand's aim is to normalize talking about mental health the way we talk about skincare.

66%
OF GEN Z
**FEELS THE
PRESSURE
ON LOOKS**

SOCIAL MEDIA x MENTAL WELL-BEING

While social media is a space for Gen Z to connect, be creative and relax, it is often cited as a contributing factor to their mental-health struggles. The unrealistic depictions and filtered images put a lot of **pressure on looks for this generation (66%)**, more than for their older counterparts.

Together with their Millennial allies, Gen Z tries to counter the 'picture perfect' mentality and 52% of the Zoomers indicate they feel **comfortable to show their real, unfiltered self online**. Yet **60% still tries to show the best version of themselves online**, indicating how they are struggling with this move towards more 'realness'.





02
GEN Z x
FINANCE

FROM FIN-FLUENCERS TO NFT ART

GEN Z x FINANCE

REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE MONEY

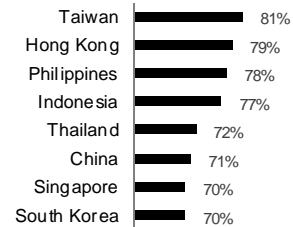
Growing up in the shadow of the 2008 financial crisis and against the backdrop of the COVID-19 recession, Gen Z wants to write their own money rules. **53% has a side hustle** (with almost 1 in 2 Gen Zers working full-time), and this goes beyond traditional babysitting. Flirting with TikTok and Douyin algorithms, this generation turns their social game into a business plan in no time. **61% would like to start their own business**, taking their future in their own hands. This eagerness for entrepreneurship is something they share with their Millennial counterparts.

But Gen Z also lets their money do the work. Even if their disposable income does not (yet) reach the heights of that of the older generations, they are eager to invest. In fact, similar to the baby boomers **74% of Gen Z have invested money** in the past year (vs 88% Gen Y and 82% Gen X). This even goes up to 81% amongst Taiwanese Gen Z.

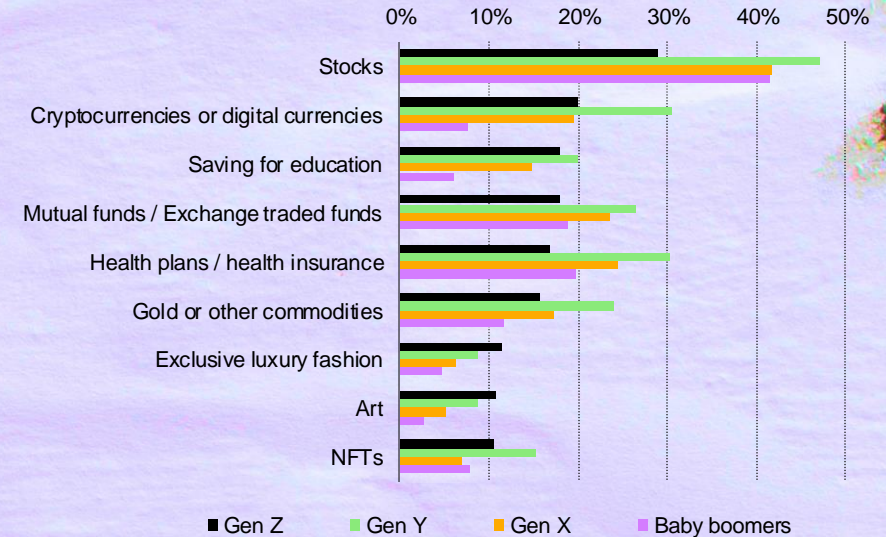
While more traditional products like stocks and education funds take a large share in their investment portfolio, Gen Z is taking the lead when it comes to investing in art (11%), and exclusive luxury fashion (11%). Millennials are frontrunners in **cryptocurrencies/ digital currencies and NFTs**, yet Gen Z also sees potential in these new investment products. 20% of Zoomers have invested in crypto/ digital currencies and another 10% in NFTs. **In fact, 35% of Gen Z believes NFTs will increasingly replace physical artwork, and 51% would even like to be paid or get an allowance in cryptocurrencies.**

74%
OF GEN Z
HAS
INVESTED
IN THE
PAST YEAR

INVESTED IN THE PAST YEAR



TOP INVESTMENT PRODUCTS



FINTECH FANS

Gen Z follows their Millennial counterparts in their enthusiasm around FinTech. 59% of the Zoomers are happy to do all their finances online, without physical interactions (65% Gen Y). Another 38% uses robo-advisors such as StashAway and Groww (45% Gen Y). 66% even hopes FinTech can provide their generation with ways to gain wealth (72% Gen Y).

GEN Z x FINANCE

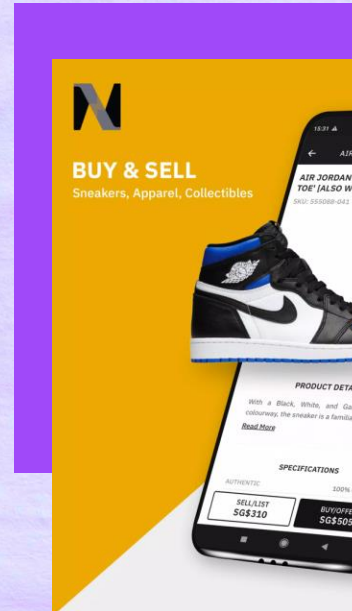
DIGITAL FUELLING FINANCIAL LITERACY

63% of Gen Z states their interest in financial planning and/or investing has increased in the last 2 year. Rather than following expensive business courses, they **self-educate online**, for example by following influencers on social media, aka fin-fluencers, for financial advice. As such, from a very young age, Zoomers build a **high level of financial literacy**.

THE RISE OF THE 'FIN-FLUENCER'

Gen Z increasingly consults social media such as Douyin and Tik Tok – or should we say **FinTok**, or **StockTok** – for financial education. While social media **empowers Gen Z** to take financial literacy in their own hands, following so-called 'fin-fluencers' also comes with a huge **risk of misinformation**. Without any financial background or legitimation, anyone can present themselves as an expert and trick Gen Z.

50%
OF GEN Z
**FOLLOWS
INFLUENCERS
FOR
FINANCIAL
ADVICE**



SNEAKERHEADS BOOST RESALE MARKET

One of Gen Z's new favourite asset classes are sneakers. During the pandemic, the sneaker resale market boomed, giving Gen Z a lucrative side hustle. Novelship, Asia's fastest growing marketplace for limited-edition sneakers, even announced that sellers on the platform can now opt to be paid in cryptocurrencies. Cowen Equity Research estimates that the sneaker market could be worth \$30 billion by 2030.

XU BY FIRST CHOICE x A CREDIT CARD FOR GEN Z

Gen Z expects brands to provide accessible and actionable advice to support them in building financial resilience.

'XU by First Choice' is a credit card targeted to the young and digital-savvy Gen Z. The benefits it offers range from 0% interest for online purchases for up to 6 months, monthly e-coupons that can be redeemed online, to a cash back of up to 18% for online shopping, accompanied with online purchase protection and spending alerts. The card makes it easy for younger generations to connect with new lifestyles online.



03
GEN Z x
METaverse
WHAT IS IT LIKE ON THE OTHER SIDE?

GEN Z x METaverse

CONQUERING THE METaverse

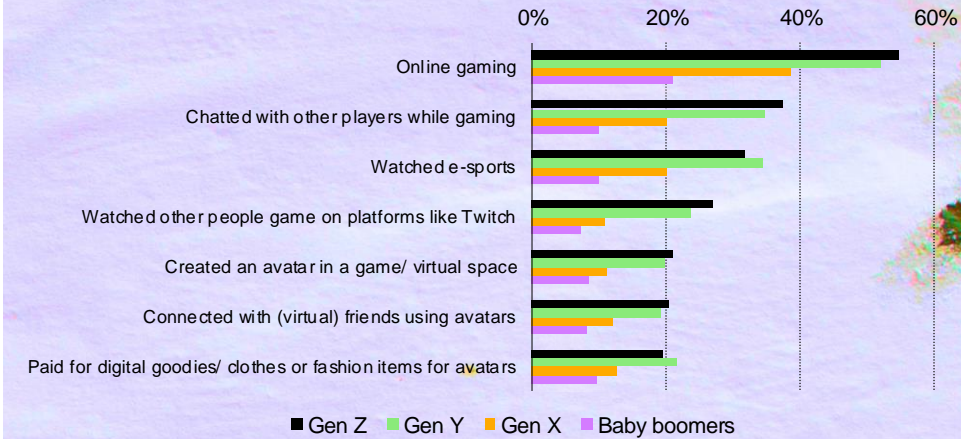
Seamlessly blending physical and digital worlds, Gen Zers are true digital natives. For this 'always-on' generation, social media plays a central role in their everyday lives. **47% even feels anxious if they (must) disconnect for a day.**

Being a **visual- and video-driven** generation, Instagram/ Xiaohongshu, Weibo, TikTok/ Douyin and YouTube/ Bilibili are the most popular platforms. While they turn to YouTube/ Bilibili for **entertainment and tutorials**, TikTok provides a creative outlet for **memes and viral content**. Together with Instagram, the latter is also used for **digital activism**. Youngsters in Indonesia, for instance, strategically used TikTok to protest against the controversial amendment of the labour law. Similarly, in Thailand and Myanmar, TikTok has helped amplify young protesters' voices. They are calling for democracy and demand the end of military dictatorships.

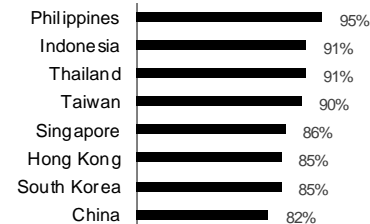
Next to these more traditional social-media platforms, Gen Z is thoroughly exploring the metaverse, from Fortnite and Axie Infinity to Zepeto, Soul, Enjin or GuildFi. Hanging out with friends in virtual worlds, creating an avatar and spending money on virtual outfits is nothing extraordinary to them.

88%
OF GEN Z HAS ENGAGED IN METaverse ACTIVITIES

PARTICIPATION IN METaverse ACTIVITIES



METaverse-ACTIVE



DOVE x NEW MOMS IN THE METaverse

With the first Gen Zers having kids of their own, this generation drives the parenting sector in unexpected directions. Dove Philippines, for example, created a virtual world called #RealMomsVillage. New moms are in for exciting activities, games, and treats that can assist them in their parenting journey. They can learn more about the metaverse, and engage with friends and family in ways they never did before. It's a virtual world that raises the fun quotient of parenting to a whole new level.

GEN Z x METaverse

ONLINE EXPERIENCES WITH AN OFFLINE TOUCH

Putting social interactions on hold, the pandemic has amplified Gen Z's time online. Gen Z goes online even more to **stay connected with the world and escape their everyday reality**.

For example, by watching a movie or a series with friends 'apart together', which is something 39% of this generation does regularly. But they also make new friends in this digital space that they deem more equal (57%). Another 57% states they have **online friends they have never met face-to-face**. Despite the friendships they build and maintain online, 68% of this generation says the pandemic made them realize the **importance of in-person interaction**, which is in line with the sentiment of the older generations. So, it's about combining online and offline interactions.



51%
**OF GEN Z
TRIES TO
LIMIT THEIR
SMART-
PHONE
USE**



THE COST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Our study has shown that, across generations, people are wary of the (long-term) consequences of publicly posted content on social media (64%). 69% even says social-media companies have too much power and influence. Yet, together with their Millennial counterparts, Gen Z is **willing to exchange certain personal data for free services, discounts or goodies** (47% Gen Z and 51% Gen Y).

But Gen Z is not naïve when it comes to **protecting their privacy**, with **54% using encrypted messaging apps**.

NIKE x MIXED-MEDIA EXPERIENCE

Gen Z embraces brands that are present in the metaverse, but also enjoy offline interactions. The future will be about creating exciting experiences that seamlessly integrate the online and offline worlds.

Nike opened the first-ever Nike Style concept store in the world in Seoul, featuring digital-physical spaces for consumers to create their personal style. QR codes in the store offer augmented reality experiences that are related to product innovation and the surrounding art installations. The store also features a content studio for local creatives, product experts and shoppers to create content on their social-media channels with customisable backdrops.



04 GEN Z x BRANDS

EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS BRANDS

GEN Z x BRANDS

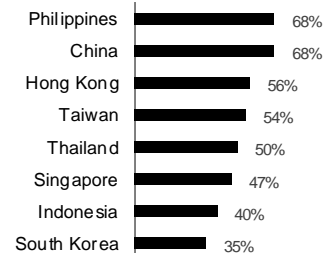
BRANDS THAT TAKE A STAND

When it comes to brand decisions, Gen Z pays attention to brand attributes that focus on sustainability and inclusion. This also translates into a willingness to pay more for brands that try to have a positive impact on society (75%), treat their employees and suppliers fairly (73%), or use inclusive practices (71%). Like Millennials, Gen Z is also willing to pay more than the older generational cohorts for brands that are female-owned (39%).

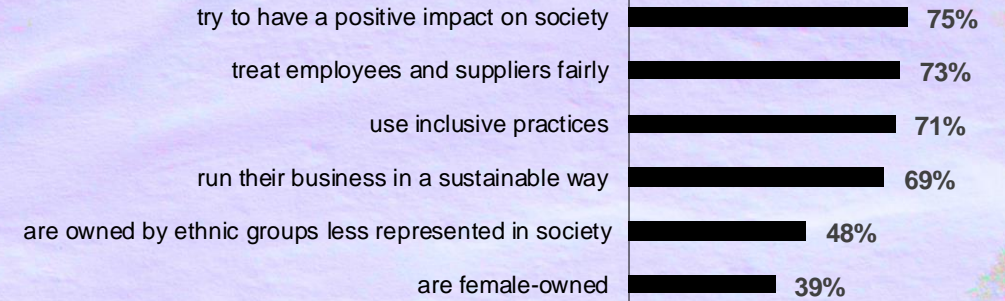
55% of Gen Z wants brands to challenge societal issues, which even rises to 68% in China and the Philippines. Similar to their Millennial counterparts, Gen Z expects brands to engage in open conversations about changes needed in society (68%). Another 20% believes brands should comment on news, social and political events.

55%
OF GEN Z
WANTS
BRANDS TO
CHALLENGE
SOCIAL
ISSUES

GEN Z WANTS BRANDS THAT TAKE A STAND



GEN Z's WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE FOR BRANDS THAT



SOCIALGIVER x MARRYING BUSINESS AND CHARITY

Through Socialgiver, a non-profit shopping platform, brands and customers can give back together. By buying via the platform, Thai consumers can support local businesses and social enterprises in giving back to society. Being a social enterprise, the brand aims to solve social or environmental problems, while also being able to generate profits to operate the business sustainably and create tangible social outcomes.



As Aliza Napativaumnuy, founder of Socialgiver Thailand, says: "It is such a great idea if every time when we are shopping, we can satisfy our need for buying a good product at a good price and good service from a very convenient platform, and also do some good."

GEN Z x BRANDS

DATA IN EXCHANGE FOR PERSONALIZATION

Gen Z's expectations towards brands go beyond sustainability efforts. Like Gen Y, when considering a purchase, they pay attention to **personalization and co-creation** (63%), and they look for brands that **understand them** (65%). Gen Z does realize this comes at a cost, and 89% is willing to **pay with their data for personalized experiences**.

ON A QUEST FOR HUMOUR AND PLAYFULNESS

In light of the pandemic, Gen Z also turned to brands for a spark of humour and playfulness to help them cope with their gloomy reality. 59% is even **willing to pay more for brands that have a sense of humour and playfulness**, which is also visible among Gen Y (59%).

AMOREPACIFIC x PERSONALIZED COSMETICS

Brands can win Gen Z's hearts by showing they understand what this generation cares about, providing a personalized playful experience, while pursuing social and environmental impact.

Amorepacific, South Korea's leading beauty and skincare company, attracts Gen Z consumers with its innovations around customized cosmetics. In the brand's flagship store in Seoul, for instance, consumers can get recommendations on customized lip colours via an AI-based mobile application. A pigment-dispensing system then manufactures the customized product instantly on-site. Another example is the brand's 'Base Picker' service which offers customized foundation and cushion products to customers. Based on the results from a skin-measuring program and a consultation with a makeup professional, a robot creates the customized products on the spot.

Next to these customized approaches, the brand also invests heavily in ESG, resulting in being listed in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) Korea for 10 consecutive years.





**05
GEN Z x
SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE**

UNCERTAINTY & INCLUSIVITY

GEN Z x SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

FIGHTING INJUSTICE THROUGH THE POWER OF CLICKS

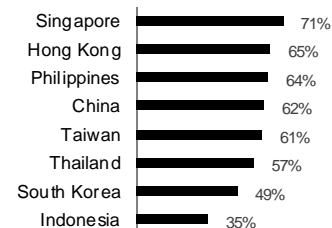
Gen Z shows **the highest levels of uncertainty about the future**, with more than 1 in 2 struggling with this feeling of uncertainty. This is not surprising, considering how the pandemic has caused a lot of turbulence in their journey towards adulthood.

We also see the impact of the pandemic on the top global issues this generation wants to tackle. The economic crisis, virus outbreaks and poverty are high on their list, as well as **environmental issues** and **social inequalities**. **Gender (stereotypes)** is another topic that is more present in the daily lives of Gen Z, unlike with older generations. 67% agrees there are still too many gender stereotypes, 62% states that gender identity is something that can change over time, and 50% personally knows someone who prefers to be addressed with gender-neutral pronouns.

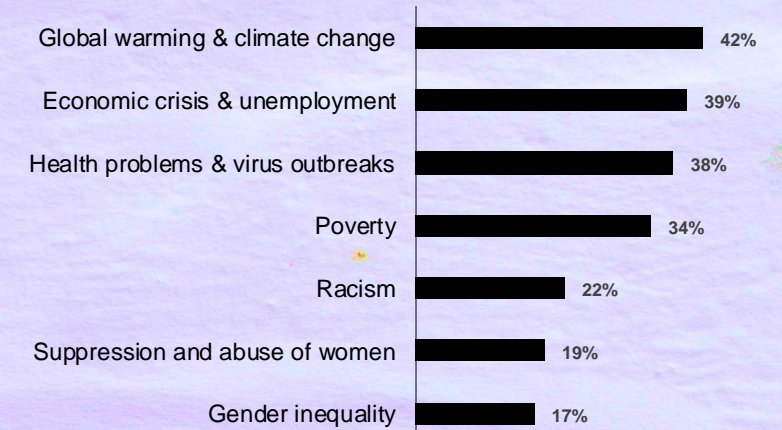
Nonetheless, it is a generation dedicated to creating a better future for the next generations. Together with their Millennial allies, they use **online channels to fight injustice**. 30% has already voiced their opinion on social media, compared to 33% in Gen Y, 25% among Gen X, and 19% of the baby boomers.

58%
OF GEN Z FEELS UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE FUTURE

UNCERTAIN ABOUT FUTURE



TOP GLOBAL ISSUES GEN Z WOULD TACKLE



TRANS REPRESENTATION

Gen Z is striving for gender liberation, and they value brands that acknowledge gender diversity and tear down gender stereotypes.

In 2015, Thailand's Apple Model Management became the first agency in the world to represent transgender models in addition to its cisgender male and female models. Since 2021, Apple Model Management L.A. officially opened its doors to exclusively represent transgender models.



GEN Z x SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

FIGHTING INJUSTICE THROUGH 'CLICK-TIVISM'

Social media makes it easy for Gen Z to use the collective power of their clicks to make their voices heard. While boomers protested with sit-ins and picket signs, Gen Z and Gen Y are clicking for change. In fact, 29% of the Zoomers follows accounts on social justice on social media, 30% voices their opinion on social issues on social media, and 12% participates in (online) protests.

In 2020, a picture of a student from Tsinghua University went viral as he was using his laptop while cycling. The 'involution' trend was born. Originally referring to a social concept where population growth does not result in productivity, today the term is broadly used to express a feeling of burn-out. The student on the bicycle was crowned as 'Tsinghua's Involved King', and the idea of involution began trending among China's youngest generations. On Chinese social-media platform Weibo, hashtags related to involution have been viewed more than 1 billion times, and the term got listed as one of the top 10 internet slang terms of 2020 by literary magazine Yaowen 咬文嚼字. With the rise of involution, being confronted with the rat race, Millennials and Gen Z are beginning to choose 'lying flat' — meant to reflect the resigned, unresisting and unbothered attitude that has been adopted by burnt-out workers. The term first appeared on the discussion forum Tieba on Chinese search engine Baidu, and gained traction on popular social-networking site Douban, with an increasing number of tired workers standing up to echo this lifestyle.



PONDER.ER x A FLUID FASHION BRAND

Gen Z challenges brands to demonstrate their ongoing social impact. Brands that try to jump the bandwagon with one-off actions risk being called out for green-washing or rainbow-washing.



Hong Kong-based fashion brand PONDER.ER is gender-fluid, launching collections with delicate silk organza jackets, cable-knit trench coats with jacquard panels, high-waisted knitted briefs, and semi-transparent trousers printed with classic Hong Kong iconography. By playing with different materials, the brand turns classic symbols of masculinity into fragile-looking pieces.

For PONDER.ER also, the pandemic has been a time to rethink, especially environmentally. This proposition prompted the brand to explore the use of sustainable materials in its latest collections.

IN-COMPANY PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

Looking for a fresh dose of inspiration on Gen Z for your company's marketing or innovation teams?

Starting from the insights from our 2022 global proprietary quantitative research, Joeri Van den Bergh's new keynote 'Are you OK, Zoomers?' highlights how Gen Z shapes future consumer behaviour and what this means for brands.

Available in different workshop and presentation formats, this new thought-provoking keynote spotlights five future-proof platforms for innovation, branding and marketing to the world's largest generational cohort.

So, are you ready for the Zoomers?

Email joeri.vandenbergh@wearehuman8.com for more information and bookings.



Joeri Van den Bergh is **Future Consumer Expert** at Human8 and has extensive experience of all aspects of **marketing to teens and young adults**. His clients include global customers such as eBay, Coca-Cola, Spotify, Danone, IKEA, Heineken, Converse, Nestlé, AXA and Unilever for whom he has provided advice on how to target the youth market. He is an **AMA-awarded global thought leader and marketing** author on the impact of NextGen on marketing, on business and on consumer trends.

HUMAN8

www.wearehuman8.com



Report authors and contributors:
Joeri Van den Bergh, Katia Pallini,
Sarah Van Oerle

Design: Hannes Willaert

IN-COMPANY PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

Looking for a fresh dose of inspiration on Gen Z for your company's marketing or innovation teams?

Starting from the insights from our 2022 global proprietary quantitative research, Joeri Van den Bergh's new keynote 'Are you OK, Zoomers?' highlights how Gen Z shapes future consumer behaviour and what this means for brands.

Available in different workshop and presentation formats, this new thought-provoking keynote spotlights five future-proof platforms for innovation, branding and marketing to the world's largest generational cohort.

So, are you ready for the Zoomers?

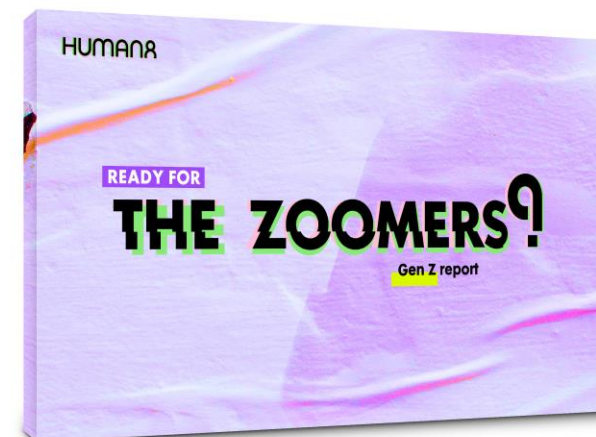
Email joeri.vandenbergh@wearehuman8.com for more information and bookings.



Joeri Van den Bergh is **Future Consumer Expert** at Human8 and has extensive experience of all aspects of **marketing to teens and young adults**. His clients include global customers such as eBay, Coca-Cola, Spotify, Danone, IKEA, Heineken, Converse, Nestlé, AXA and Unilever for whom he has provided advice on how to target the youth market. He is an **AMA-awarded global thought leader and marketing** author on the impact of NextGen on marketing, on business and on consumer trends.

HUMAN8

www.wearehuman8.com



Report authors and contributors:
Joeri Van den Bergh, Katia Pallini,
Sarah Van Oerle

Design: Hannes Willaert