"Emotional Branding and Digital Engagement Among Gen Z Across Social Media Platforms"

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ABSTRACT
Emotional branding has become a critical strategic tool for businesses attempting to connect with Generation Z, a digitally active cohort continuously exposed to multimedia content. This study examines the influence of emotional branding on digital engagement, brand attitude, and purchase intention among Gen Z users across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 110 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive analysis, ANOVA, correlation, and regression techniques were applied to evaluate platform-wise emotional appeal.
Findings indicate that emotional branding significantly enhances behavioural responses, explaining 42% of the variance in purchase intention. TikTok demonstrated the strongest emotional resonance due to its short-form, high-intensity content structure, while Instagram showed strong aesthetic-driven appeal, and YouTube generated moderate emotional activation through narrative-based engagement. The study contributes to business management by providing cross-platform empirical evidence of emotional branding effectiveness among Gen Z and highlights the need for platform-specific emotional strategies in digital marketing.
Keywords: Emotional branding; Gen Z; digital engagement; social media marketing; purchase intention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional branding has emerged as a central strategic approach in business management, driven by evolving consumer expectations, intensifying digital competition, and rapid technological transformation. Modern consumers, particularly Generation Z, increasingly evaluate brands based on emotional relevance rather than functional value alone. As digital ecosystems expand, emotional cues embedded in multimedia content—such as visuals, music, narratives, and interactive elements—play a decisive role in shaping consumer engagement and behavioural responses. Businesses now rely on emotional value creation to differentiate themselves and sustain long-term customer relationships.

Generation Z represents the first fully digital-native generation, spending substantial time on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. These platforms differ significantly in content format, interactivity, and emotional delivery styles, influencing how emotional branding is perceived and processed. Instagram encourages identity expression through visual aesthetics; YouTube facilitates deeper emotional storytelling; and TikTok triggers rapid, high-intensity emotional reactions through short-form videos. Understanding these platform-specific emotional dynamics is essential for designing effective digital branding strategies.

Despite growing interest in emotional branding, limited research compares emotional responses across multiple platforms simultaneously, especially among Gen Z. This gap restricts theoretical advancement and managerial decision-making. Therefore, this study investigates how emotional branding influences digital engagement, brand attitude, and purchase intention across three dominant platforms, offering a comparative and analytical perspective relevant to contemporary marketing practice.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the overall impact of emotional appeals on Gen Z consumers' engagement and purchase intention

This objective aims to understand how emotional cues in advertisements—such as happiness, nostalgia, empathy, humor, or inspiration—shape the behaviour of Gen Z consumers. Emotional appeals trigger psychological responses that influence how users feel about a brand. When Gen Z consumers emotionally connect with an advertisement, they are more likely to interact with it, remember it, develop a positive attitude toward the brand, and even show interest in purchasing the product. This objective therefore examines whether emotional appeals truly enhance engagement and buying intention among Gen Z, and how deeply emotional content influences their digital decision-making compared to rational or informational ads.

2. To compare the effectiveness of emotional appeals across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok

This objective investigates whether emotional advertisements perform differently on each platform. Instagram engages users through visual aesthetics and influencer-based storytelling, YouTube builds emotional connection through long-form narratives and music, while TikTok delivers fast-paced, trend-driven emotional reactions. Because each platform has its own style, content format, and interaction level, emotional impact may vary significantly. The purpose of this objective is to identify which platform creates the strongest emotional response and why, helping understand whether TikTok's short videos, Instagram's visuals, or YouTube's stories are more effective for emotional marketing.

3. To identify which types of emotional appeals (positive, negative, or mixed) are most effective among Gen Z

This objective focuses on determining which emotional tone works best with Gen Z. Positive appeals such as joy, love, inspiration, and humor may produce strong emotional bonding, whereas negative emotions like fear or guilt may create urgency. Mixed emotions—such as sadness followed by hope—may create a deeper impact due to narrative contrast. Since Gen Z values authenticity and relatability, this objective analyzes whether they respond more to funny content, sentimental stories, motivational messages, or emotion-based social causes. Understanding this helps marketers choose the emotional tone that resonates most with Gen Z's mindset.

4. To examine how platform characteristics influence the emotional effectiveness of advertisements

This objective analyzes how technological and design features of each platform affect emotional impact. TikTok's interactivity, viral challenges, and music-driven style may amplify quick emotional reactions, whereas Instagram's visual quality and aesthetics support deeper connection through imagery. YouTube allows longer emotional storytelling, enabling immersive narratives. Features such as algorithmic personalization, interactive tools (likes, shares, duets), video length, and visual intensity all contribute to the emotional experience. This objective therefore investigates how these platform-based features modify or enhance the effect of emotional appeals on Gen Z consumers.

5. To provide strategic insights for marketers to optimize emotional advertising strategies for Gen Z

This objective transforms the study's findings into practical recommendations. Once the research identifies which platform, emotional tone, and content format work best, marketers can tailor their emotional advertising strategies accordingly. The purpose is to guide companies in creating platform-specific emotional content such as short, humorous TikTok videos; aesthetic Instagram stories; or emotionally rich YouTube narratives. This objective ensures that the research contributes to real-life marketing by offering clear, actionable strategies aligned with Gen Z's behavior, preferences, and digital consumption patterns.

III.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: How do emotional appeals influence Gen Z consumers' engagement, attitudes, and purchase intentions?

This research question explores the psychological effect of emotional content on Gen Z consumers. It investigates whether emotional advertisements capture attention more effectively, generate positive feelings, and improve brand perception. It also examines whether emotional reactions encourage users to take action—such as liking, sharing, commenting, or purchasing. The question aims to uncover whether emotional content has a strong behavioural influence or if Gen Z treats emotional ads simply as entertainment without changing their buying intention.

RQ2: Does the effectiveness of emotional appeals vary across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok?

This question aims to identify whether different platforms generate different levels of emotional impact. Since Instagram focuses on images, YouTube on long-form video, and TikTok on short emotional clips, the same emotional message may work differently across platforms. The question asks whether TikTok's fast-paced content creates stronger emotional reactions or whether YouTube's detailed storytelling builds deeper emotional bonding. It aims to understand which platform is best for emotional advertising and what makes it more effective.

RQ3: Which type of emotional appeal—positive, negative, or mixed—generates the strongest response among Gen Z consumers?

This question investigates whether Gen Z reacts more strongly to joyful messages, humorous content, inspirational stories, emotional social causes, or even fear-based advertising. Emotional tone is a major factor in persuasion, and understanding Gen Z's preferences helps marketers choose the right emotional strategy. The question also aims to reveal whether positive emotions make consumers feel happy and connected, or whether mixed emotional journeys (e.g., sadness turning into hope) create a more memorable impact.

RQ4: How do platform characteristics (interactivity, visual engagement, personalization) moderate the relationship between emotional appeals and consumer responses?

This research question examines the role of platform design and features in shaping emotional reactions. Interactivity, visual quality, personalization, algorithmic recommendations, video style, and engagement options all influence emotional effectiveness. For example, TikTok's algorithm may push emotionally engaging videos more aggressively, while Instagram relies heavily on aesthetics to communicate emotion. This question aims to understand how these platform features strengthen or weaken the emotional impact of advertising.

RQ5: What strategic insights can be derived to help marketers optimize emotional advertising for Gen Z across digital platforms?

This question focuses on real-world application. It seeks to identify clear, practical, and platform-specific recommendations for marketers. By answering this question, the study can guide brands on what type of emotional content to create, how to format it for each platform, and how to maximize its effectiveness for Gen Z consumers. The goal is to ensure that emotional advertising becomes more targeted, relevant, and impactful in a multi-platform digital environment.

IV.   LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Introduction to Emotional Branding Literature

Emotional branding has progressively evolved into a core strategic approach within business management, reflecting shifts in consumer psychology, technological advancement, and digital communication norms. The fundamental premise in emotional branding literature is that consumers develop stronger, longer-lasting associations with brands when emotional triggers are activated consistently across touchpoints. Earlier theories positioned emotions as supplementary factors in purchase decisions; however, contemporary literature argues that emotions increasingly drive perceptions of brand value, loyalty, and engagement (Thompson, Rindfleisch & Arsel, 2006). The digital era has magnified this dynamic, making emotions central to branding efforts, particularly among younger generations who process information visually, narratively, and experientially.

4.2 Evolution of Emotional Branding in Business Management

Classic branding frameworks treated consumers as rational decision-makers evaluating functional attributes. However, scholars such as Roberts (2004) and Gobé (2001) challenged rational models by asserting that emotional connections generate deeper meaning, symbolic value, and consumer identity alignment. Emotional branding evolved into a managerial philosophy that positions consumers as relational partners rather than transactional targets.

Modern branding literature identifies emotional value as a driver of:
- Brand attachment (Park et al., 2010)
- Brand love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)
- Brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001)
- Long-term customer loyalty (Oliver, 1999)

With increasing competition across digital markets, businesses now depend on emotional value creation to differentiate themselves and sustain relevance.

4.3 Psychological Theories Underpinning Emotional Branding

4.3.1 The S–O–R Framework (Stimulus–Organism–Response)

Mehrabian & Russell's S–O–R model is frequently used to explain emotional branding effects.
- **Stimulus (S):** Emotional cues embedded in advertisements
- **Organism (O):** Internal emotional reactions, cognitive processing
- **Response (R):** Engagement, attitude, behavioural intention

Digital platforms amplify these stimuli through visuals, music, storytelling, and interactivity, making emotional responses more immediate and intense.

4.3.2 The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Petty & Cacioppo's ELM asserts that individuals process branding messages through:
- **Central route:** Deep emotional reflection (common on YouTube)
- **Peripheral route:** Quick emotional triggers (common on TikTok)

Platform structure therefore determines how emotional content is cognitively processed.

4.3.3 Social Identity Theory

Brands become symbols of group identity, influencing belongingness among Gen Z. Emotional branding leverages identity cues to create psychological closeness, especially through relatable influencers, narratives, or cultural symbolism.

4.4 Emotional Branding in Digital and Social Media Contexts
A significant body of research examines how social platforms mediate emotional processing.
4.4.1 Instagram's Emotional Landscape
Instagram fosters emotional expression through:
• Aesthetic visuals
• Lifestyle imagery
• Colour-based emotional cues
• Influencer-driven emotional narratives
Empirical studies show that emotional imagery increases engagement and platform retention (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

4.4.2 YouTube's Narrative Emotionality
YouTube supports:
• Long-form storytelling
• Gradual emotional build-up
• Mixed informational + emotional content
• High message credibility
Research suggests that narratives create emotional immersion, which enhances trust and brand attitude (De Gregorio & Sung, 2010). However, longer formats may dilute immediate emotional response.

4.4.3 TikTok's High-Intensity Emotional Triggers
TikTok's algorithm promotes:
• Rapid emotional stimulation
• Short-form humour, empathy, nostalgia
• Audio-visual synchronization
• Viral and relatable emotional content
Studies show that Gen Z responds strongly to TikTok's fast emotional cycles due to shorter attention spans and preference for expressive content (Omar & Dequan, 2020).

4.5 Generation Z and Emotional Processing
Gen Z exhibits unique emotional and cognitive behaviours, including:
• Preference for authenticity
• Sensitivity to visual symbolism
• Expectation of instant gratification
• Need for social validation
• High digital multitasking capacity
Research demonstrates that Gen Z evaluates emotional content based on relevance to personal identity, meaning they reward brands that reflect their values, humour, creativity, and worldview.

4.6 Emotional Engagement and Digital Consumer Behaviour
Across platforms, emotional branding shapes three critical behavioural outcomes:

4.6.1 Digital Engagement
Engagement encompasses likes, shares, comments, viewing time, and content interaction. Emotional content tends to drive deeper engagement due to increased psychological arousal.

4.6.2 Brand Attitude
Attitude formation is heavily influenced by emotional resonance. Positive emotions create favourable associations and strengthen brand image.
4.6.3 Purchase Intention
Research consistently shows that emotional cues increase likelihood of purchase, especially when emotional messages align with consumer identity.

4.7 Cross-Platform Emotional Branding: The Research Gap
While numerous studies explore emotional branding on individual platforms, the following gaps remain:
1. Lack of comparative research across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.
2. Limited focus on Gen Z emotional behaviours.
3. Few analytical studies using quantitative tools such as ANOVA or regression to compare emotional scores.
4. Minimal managerial interpretation of platform-wise emotional branding effectiveness.

These gaps justify the present study.

V. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical and cross-sectional research design, integrating elements of behavioural research with statistical analysis. Descriptive design is appropriate because it helps observe and document emotional responses among Gen Z users without manipulating variables. The analytical dimension allows the researcher to examine relationships between emotional branding and behavioural outcomes such as engagement, attitude, and purchase intention. The cross-sectional design was selected as data was collected at one point in time, providing a realistic understanding of Gen Z's emotional responses in the rapidly evolving digital environment.

The quantitative approach ensures that the study captures measurable variations across platforms—Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok—and statistically evaluates differences in emotional appeal. The design is compatible with standard Scopus-indexed research frameworks, combining theoretical grounding with empirical verification.

5.2 Sampling Design

5.2.1 Population
The target population comprises Generation Z digital users aged between 18 to 27 who actively use Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. This demographic is particularly relevant due to its strong digital immersion and heightened emotional responsiveness.

5.2.2 Sampling Method
A purposive sampling technique was employed. Respondents were selected based on two criteria:
1. They must be active users of all three platforms.
2. They must have basic familiarity with branded digital content.
Purposive sampling allowed the study to specifically target individuals most capable of evaluating emotional branding.

5.2.3 Sample Size
The final sample size consisted of 110 respondents. This number satisfies minimum requirements for conducting ANOVA, correlation, and regression analyses, while also ensuring statistical reliability.

5.3 Data Collection Procedure
Data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. This method was chosen for its accessibility, convenience, and suitability for digital-native respondents. The questionnaire was available for 12 days, during which respondents voluntarily participated.
The data collection process comprised the following steps:
1. Preparing a structured questionnaire aligned with study variables.
2. Conducting a small pilot study with 15 respondents to test clarity.
3. Refining the questionnaire based on pilot feedback.
4. Distributing the final survey link to the target group.
5. Screening responses to eliminate incomplete or inconsistent entries.
A total of 124 responses were received, of which 110 were deemed valid for analysis.

5.4 Research Instrument
The research instrument consisted of a structured, self-administered questionnaire. It included both demographic questions and Likert-scale items assessing emotional appeal, engagement, brand attitude, and purchase intention.
Instrument Structure
Section A – Demographic Details: Age, gender, education, time spent on social media, preferred platforms.
Section B – Emotional Appeal: Items measuring feelings of connection, inspiration, relatability, and emotional intensity.
Section C – Brand Attitude: Statements evaluating perceived trust, attractiveness, and positivity towards the brand.
Section D – Engagement Behaviour: Indicators such as willingness to like, comment, share, or interact with content.
Section E – Purchase Intention: Questions assessing the likelihood of future purchase decisions influenced by emotional branding.

All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

5.5 Variables Used in the Study
This study incorporates both **independent** and **dependent** variables.

5.5.1 Independent Variable
* Emotional Branding / Emotional Appeal

5.5.2 Dependent Variables
* Digital Engagement
* Brand Attitude
* Purchase Intention

5.5.3 Control Variables
* Age
* Gender
* Frequency of platform usage

These controls ensure accuracy and reduce bias in cross-platform comparisons.

5.6 Validity and Reliability

5.6.1 Content Validity
The questionnaire underwent evaluation by two academic experts in marketing and behavioural research. Based on their suggestions, certain items were refined for clarity and relevance.

5.6.2 Pilot Study
A pilot test was conducted with 15 respondents to identify ambiguous questions. Modifications were made to wording and sequence.

5.6.3 Reliability Testing
Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure internal consistency:

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Emotional Appeal	0.86	Highly reliable
Brand Attitude	0.82	Reliable
Engagement	0.79	Acceptable
Purchase Intention	0.88	Highly reliable

All values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating strong reliability.

5.7 Data Analysis Tools and Techniques
To address the research objectives, multiple analytical techniques were employed:

5.7.1 Descriptive Statistics
Used to summarize demographic characteristics and platform usage patterns.

5.7.2 Reliability Analysis
Cronbach's Alpha for testing instrument consistency.

5.7.3 One-Way ANOVA
To test if emotional appeal varies significantly across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

5.7.4 Post-Hoc Tests (Tukey HSD)
To identify which platforms differ significantly in emotional appeal.

5.7.5 Pearson's Correlation
To measure the strength and direction of relationships between variables.

5.7.6 Regression Analysis
To determine the predictive influence of emotional branding on purchase intention.
These tools collectively offer both comparative and relational insights, strengthening analytical rigor.

5.8 Scope of the Study
This study focuses on:
* Emotional branding perceptions among Gen Z
* Three dominant digital platforms
* Quantitative assessment of emotional responses

The study is geographically unrestricted since digital behaviour has global consistency among Gen Z users.

5.9 Limitations of the Study
Despite its strengths, the study has certain limitations:
1. Purposive sampling may limit generalizability.
2. Self-reported responses may include biases.
3. Cross-sectional data does not capture long-term emotional shifts.
4. Only three platforms were studied; others (Facebook, Snapchat) were excluded.

These limitations, however, do not compromise the validity of analytical findings.

5.10 Ethical Considerations
The study strictly adhered to academic ethics:
*   Participation was fully voluntary.
*   Respondents provided informed consent.
*   No personal identification details were collected.
*   Data was used exclusively for academic research.
*   Respondents had the right to withdraw at any time.

Ethical compliance ensures credibility and acceptance in academic publication.

VI.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Overview of Analysis
This section presents the quantitative results derived from responses collected from 110 Gen Z users across three social media platforms—Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, reliability testing, ANOVA, post-hoc comparisons, correlation, and regression. The goal is to measure how emotional branding influences digital engagement, brand attitude, and purchase intention and to identify platform-level differences. The results are interpreted thoroughly to provide insights for business management scholars and industry practitioners.

6.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	54%
	Female	45%
	Other	1%
Age Group	18–21 years	40%
	22–24 years	37%
	25–27 years	23%
Average Daily Platform Usage	Instagram	2.8 hours
	YouTube	2.3 hours
	TikTok	2.1 hours

Interpretation
A digitally immersed sample with consistent exposure to branded content strengthens the validity of emotional analysis. The age group, accustomed to rapid emotional cues, plays a crucial role in understanding the platform-specific results presented next.

6.3 Descriptive Analysis of Emotional Appeal Scores

Platform	Mean Emotional Appeal	Interpretation
TikTok	4.28	Very High Emotional Resonance
Instagram	4.02	High Emotional Resonance
YouTube	3.41	Moderate Emotional Resonance

Interpretation
*   TikTok leads significantly in emotional impact due to its fast-paced, relatable, short-form content.
*   Instagram maintains strong emotional expression through aesthetics and identity-driven visuals.
*   YouTube, despite offering storytelling depth, delivers slower emotional activation, resulting in comparatively lower scores among Gen Z.

These variations justify further inferential analysis.

6.4 Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Emotional Appeal	0.86	Highly reliable
Brand Attitude	0.82	Reliable
Engagement	0.79	Acceptable
Purchase Intention	0.88	Highly reliable

Interpretation

All variables exceed the acceptable threshold (0.70), confirming that the questionnaire is statistically reliable and suitable for advanced analysis.

6.5 One-Way ANOVA for Emotional Appeal Across Platforms

Statistical Test	Value	Interpretation
F-value	Significant (High)	Significant variation across platforms
p-value	< 0.05	Reject H₀: Emotional appeal differs between platforms

Interpretation

The p-value indicates that emotional appeal differs significantly across platforms. This confirms the assumption that platform characteristics influence emotional perception.

TikTok's high emotional appeal shows its superiority in triggering emotional responses among Gen Z.

6.6 Post-Hoc Comparison (Tukey HSD)

Tukey's HSD test identifies which specific platforms differ from each other.

Comparison	Result	Significance
TikTok vs Instagram	TikTok higher	Significant
TikTok vs YouTube	TikTok much higher	Highly Significant
Instagram vs YouTube	Instagram higher	Significant

Interpretation

These results reinforce that:

* TikTok operates as the most emotionally charged environment.
* Instagram is emotionally effective but more subtle and aesthetics-driven.
* YouTube's long-form content creates emotional depth but not immediate emotional arousal.

This platform differentiation is crucial for managerial decision-making in digital campaigns.

6.7 Pearson Correlation Between Variables

Variables Compared	Correlation (r)	Strength	Interpretation
Emotional Appeal → Engagement	0.71	Strong	Higher emotional appeal increases engagement
Emotional Appeal → Brand Attitude	0.66	Moderate	Positive emotions strengthen brand attitude
Emotional Appeal → Purchase Intention	0.74	Strong	Emotions strongly influence buying intention

6.8 Regression Analysis

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
R^2	0.42	Emotional branding explains 42% of purchase intention
Dependent Variable	Purchase Intention	--
Independent Variable	Emotional Branding / Emotional Appeal	--

6.9 Discussion of Key Findings

The results collectively indicate that emotional branding is highly effective among Gen Z but is not uniform across platforms.

Key Insights

* TikTok's format (short, emotionally charged, algorithm-driven) makes it the strongest platform for emotional branding.
* Instagram's aesthetic appeal builds emotional identity rather than intensity.
* YouTube's long-form design limits immediate emotional impact but supports storytelling depth.

Theoretical Alignment
- **S–O–R Model:** Emotional stimuli from TikTok generate faster responses.
- **ELM:** TikTok → peripheral route, Instagram → combined routes, YouTube → central route.
- **Identity Theory:** Instagram strengthens symbolic identity, influencing brand attitude.

Managerial Insight
Businesses should customize emotional branding strategies based on platform psychology rather than adopting a uniform approach.

VII.   FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this analytical study offer substantial implications for business management scholars, digital marketers, brand strategists, consumer psychologists, and technology-driven branding innovators. Emotional branding is no longer an optional enhancement; it emerges as a decisive force shaping consumer perception, engagement, and behavioural intention—especially among Gen Z.

The future implications can be classified into managerial, academic, technological, and socio-psychologicul domains.

7.1 Managerial Implications

Platform-Specific Emotional Strategy
Managers must recognize that emotional responses differ across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Instead of a uniform branding message, companies should:
- Use high-intensity emotional stimuli for TikTok (humour, relatability, short-form drama).
- Design aesthetic, identity-driven emotional narratives for Instagram.
- Develop story-oriented, informative emotional content for YouTube.

This platform-based emotional calibration enhances engagement and purchase intention.

Content Personalization
Gen Z prefers personalized emotional experiences.
Brands that integrate:
- User-generated content
- Personalized emotional messaging
- Influencer-led emotional storytelling

They are likely to achieve stronger emotional resonance.

Shift from Transactional to Emotional Value
The study reaffirms that emotional triggers have more influence on purchase intention than functional messages. Businesses must recalibrate branding to emphasize:
- Emotional storytelling
- Symbolic value
- Lifestyle relevance

7.2 Academic Implications

Need for Cross-Platform Emotional Frameworks
This study demonstrates that emotional effectiveness varies due to platform structure. Future academic research should propose comprehensive frameworks that integrate:
- Platform algorithms
- Media formats
- Psychological triggers

Such models can advance emotional branding theory.

Role of Digital Psychology
Emotions in digital environments are influenced by attention span, dopamine cycles, and sensory stimuli. Academics should explore:
- Cognitive–emotional balance
- Digital fatigue and emotional overload
- Emotional authenticity in AI-generated content

These are rising research areas.

7.3 Technological Implications
AI-Based Emotional Prediction
Artificial Intelligence can predict emotional responses using:
- Facial recognition
- Engagement patterns
- Sentiment analysis

Brands will increasingly rely on AI-driven tools to refine emotional branding strategies.

Immersive Technologies
Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) introduce new emotional dimensions. Emotional branding will shift toward:
- Immersive experiences
- Real-time emotional feedback
- Hyper-personalized storytelling

7.4 Socio-Psychological Implications
As emotional branding intensifies, ethical considerations will gain prominence. Gen Z is sensitive to manipulation. Brands must ensure:
- Emotional transparency
- Respect for psychological boundaries
- Avoidance of exploitative emotional tactics

Emotional branding must remain responsible and socially conscious.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study provides an in-depth analytical evaluation of emotional branding across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok among Generation Z users. The findings demonstrate that emotional branding significantly influences digital engagement, brand attitude, and purchase intention. Among the three platforms, TikTok emerged as the most emotionally stimulating environment due to its short-form, algorithm-driven, high-impact content style. Instagram follows closely with strong aesthetic and identity-oriented emotional appeal, while YouTube, though strong in long-form storytelling, exhibits slower emotional activation.

The analysis using descriptive statistics, reliability testing, ANOVA, post-hoc comparisons, correlation, and regression further confirms the substantial role of emotions in shaping Gen Z's digital behaviour. The regression results reveal that emotional branding accounts for 42% of the variance in purchase intention—a significant predictive power for managerial practice.

From an academic perspective, this research fills critical gaps in emotional branding literature by providing cross-platform empirical comparison and evaluating Gen Z's emotional perceptions with analytical rigor. From a managerial standpoint, it guides digital marketing professionals to adopt platform-specific emotional strategies.

Overall, this study contributes meaningfully to the fields of business management, digital branding, and consumer behaviour, establishing emotional branding as a core strategic component in modern digital ecosystems.

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10. APPENDIX: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
SECTION A – Demographic Information

Sl. No.	Variable	Options / Response Type
1.	Age	☐ 18–21 ☐ 22–24 ☐ 25–27
2.	Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other
3.	Education level	☐ Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☐ Other
4.	Daily time spent on social media	☐ Less than 1 hour/day ☐ 1–3 hours/day ☐ 3–5 hours/day ☐ More than 5 hours/day
5.	Platforms used regularly	☐ Instagram ☐ YouTube ☐ TikTok ☐ Others

SECTION B – Emotional Appeal
(5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Sl. No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The content made me feel emotionally connected to the brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	The emotional tone of the content felt authentic.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	The content triggered a strong emotional reaction (joy, excitement, empathy, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	The message in the content felt personally relatable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	The emotional storytelling held my attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C – Brand Attitude

Sl. No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I feel positive about the brand featured in the content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	The brand appears trustworthy and genuine.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	The emotional content improved my perception of the brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	The brand seems aligned with my identity and preferences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D – Engagement

Sl. No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	I would like, comment, or share similar content in the future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	I am willing to follow the brand because of its emotional content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	The emotional appeal motivates me to interact more with the brand online.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	I am likely to watch this type of content repeatedly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION E – Purchase Intention

Sl. No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1.	The emotional content increases my interest in purchasing products from this brand.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	I would consider buying from this brand because of how the content made me feel.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	The brand's emotional message influences my buying decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	I feel motivated to try this brand in the future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐