

Gen Z Vox Pop Series

Gen Z as Told by Gen Z

Volume I

Gen Z: IDENTITY & MINDSET

By Ipsos UU for TikTok METAP

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Image source: TikTok Brandspot



Background

*In recent years, Gen Z has been a growing topic of interest among **researchers and marketers trying to decode the next generation of consumers.***



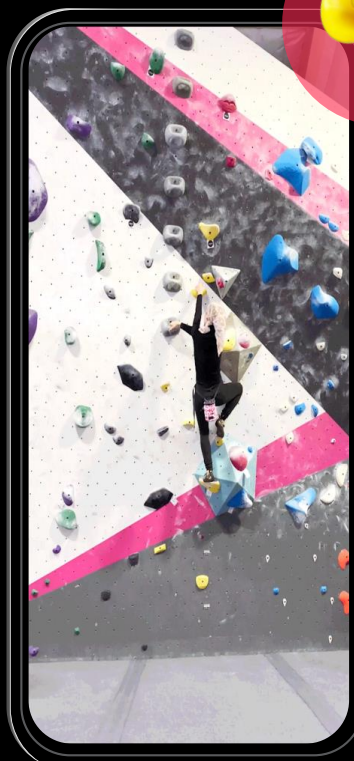
The good thing is, a lot has been said and written about Gen Z. This means that there's an abundance of literature and data that sheds light on their unique behaviors, values and expectations from brands. The bad thing is well... *a lot* has been said and written about Gen Z. And this means that navigating the Gen Z headlines to separate the truth from the stereotype has become increasingly challenging.

Introducing Vox Pops

No one knows Gen Z more than Gen Z-ers themselves, so we went straight to the source!

Ipsos and TikTok are partnering up to launch the Gen Z Vox Pop series, a unique research initiative that sources insights about Gen Z by Gen Z.

The series will uncover first-hand human insights across multiple volumes, each unpacking a key aspect of the vast Gen Z universe.



Methodology

We leveraged a proprietary IPSOS qualitative research tool to **access an on-demand panel of Gen Z consumers in real-time.**

Thanks to Ipsos' 'Always On Community' offering, we gathered feedback on a variety of Gen Z topics including their lifestyles, digital behaviors, shopping habits and more. To ensure the authenticity and richness of the shared output, panelists are encouraged to express themselves through visual formats – namely TikToks. Basically, to engage them on their terms... in their space!



20 Gen Zs on our community (spread across multiple nationalities)



All TikTok users split into heavy, medium usership

Heavy: Access TikTok at least 6-7 times a week;

Medium: Access TikTok at least 4-5 times a week

Actively create content and ready to create **content for us**

Gen Zs who are **heavily involved in online shopping** (at least more than half of their shopping is done online – for eg: of the last 5 shopping exercises, 3 were done online)

Open to **giving us access to their content** (following all GDPR protocols)

What's in it for brands?

*Gen Z, as a consumer segment, is top of mind with brands looking to **relevantly connect with the next-gen consumer***

As Gen Z come into their own, and as their purchasing power continues to grow, it is imperative that Gen Z become the core focus for every brand. While there is sufficient information about the "generation to watch," brands must get an accurate, first-hand understanding of what this audience *actually* needs and wants in order to authentically resonate with them.

What to expect in Volume 1?

A study of generations is always a complex one. And it's no different with Gen Z.



There are multiple layers to uncover, many nuances to make sense of and unique idiosyncrasies to showcase. In this volume, we aim to have a first look at our Gen Z consumer at a foundational level – Who are they? What is their mindset? This understanding will help lay the groundwork as we explore other aspects of Gen Z and their behaviors in that context throughout subsequent volumes – for eg: shopping /e-commerce, perceptions of sale moments, etc.

So, who is Gen Z?

There are so many definitions – or rather contradictions – about Gen Z is. We are here to uncover them.

Thinking about Gen Z, they...

Go with the flow	OR	Are go-getters	?
Are all about 'me'	OR	All about 'we'	?
Have the freedom to make their own choices	OR	the commitment to make informed decisions	?
Cultivate their authentic self	OR	Like to follow trends	?
Have no prejudices	OR	Have a strong POV	?

Let's take a closer look.

They go with the flow

From the outside, it might come across like that. Adopting a 'go with the flow' mentality, they seem to be fluid in their approach to life – almost passive – with no set path to follow. They are open to living in the moment, winging things and are more impulsive rather than planning to the T. But if you look closely, there is 'method to the madness'.



Play Video
Hussein, 24



Play Video
Arzu, 19

and

...are go-getters



Play Video
Stacy, 18



Play Video
Ahmed, 20

From a young age, they are forging their own path, with a focus on one goal: making it. They are quite clear with where their lives are headed, even if it means 'not having a plan' or 'figuring it out' along the way. Facing an uncertain future, they're taking matters into their own hands, tapping into their creativity to carve out opportunities for themselves – rather than wait on others to create opportunities for them.

They are 'All about Me'

Entitled and self-absorbed are some of the terms that are often (undeservingly, it seems) thrown at this generation. Instead, they are self-aware and ambitious – traits that are required to succeed in today's competitive landscape. Putting themselves first is a necessity and not a choice. And so, their priority is to become the best of version of themselves – rather than get caught up with how the world wants them to behave or to simply... be.



Play Video
Mohammad, 20



Play Video
Hamdan, 19

and

...'All about We'



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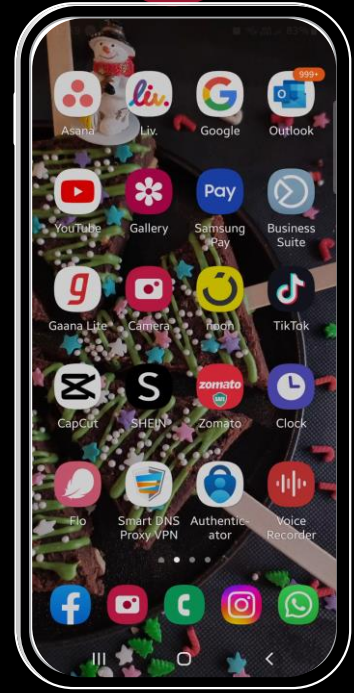
But 'me' does not exist in isolation. It is a culmination of everything that affects them – and that they affect. This broadens the definition of 'me' to 'we' to include the wider society that Gen Z operates in and the global world they assume is their playing field. With a deep awareness of the challenges that impact their future, they are not just mindful of "I" as an individual but of "I" as an integral piece of a broader ecosystem that they feel responsible for.

They have the freedom to make their own choices

When it comes to their interests, Gen Z see it as their right to operate in all shades of extremities, as they choose and as they please. As multi-hyphenates, they have the freedom to be or not to be, refusing to settle for a restricted version of their identity. They make their own choices, however long-lasting or fleeting they are, taking pride in the fact that they can be something today and something else tomorrow. This limitless existence helps them broaden their horizons through continuous experimentation.



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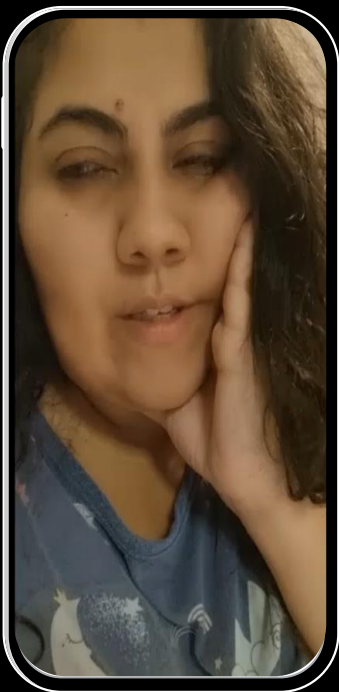


Play Video

Sneha, 25

and

...the commitment to make informed decisions



Play Video

Sneha, 25



Play Video

Mohammad, 20

But their choices are not made frivolously. Every decision is often well thought out in order to curate a 'self' that feels right to them. With access to today's tools, but also to trusted advisors in the form of digital creators, they curiously explore and study all dimensions of a topic (or a product), before they fully buy into it (or buy it). Studying their options enables them to take full ownership of their decisions, ensuring what they sign up for is worth their investment.

They cultivate their authentic self...

On one hand, and given the focus on 'me', Gen Z-ers embrace their uniqueness and take pride in being their true, real selves. Despite being image-conscious, they do not hesitate to show off their flaws and quirks – however unusual they may be. Cultivating a personal brand is top of mind and both the physical and digital spaces they live in are creative canvases to express that brand to the outside world.

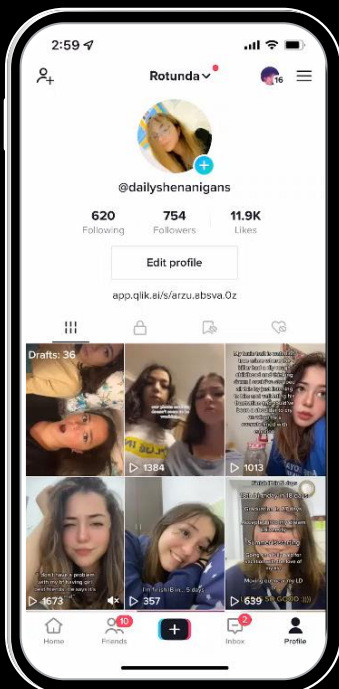


Play Video
Hamdan, 19

and

...Like to follow trends

On the other hand, they like to be 'current' and do keep track of what is trending around them. They do not have any qualms in adopting trends that work for them, and that make them feel like they belong to a broader community that's "in the know" – an insider club of sorts. But it's not just about emulating trends – it's about showcasing their own unique riffs on popular formats as way of leaving a part of 'you' behind.



Play Video
Arzu, 19



Play Video
Hussein, 24

They have no prejudice...

Unlike earlier generations, Gen Z is a blank slate. As digital natives, they have been exposed to cultures and concepts at the click of a button and have hence developed their unbiased thoughts about the topics that matter to them. Having not been conditioned by society to think or behave in a traditional way, these open-minded individuals are not just tolerant but rather, welcoming of individual idiosyncrasies and unconventional experiences, and are therefore quick to respect differences as much as they guard their individuality.



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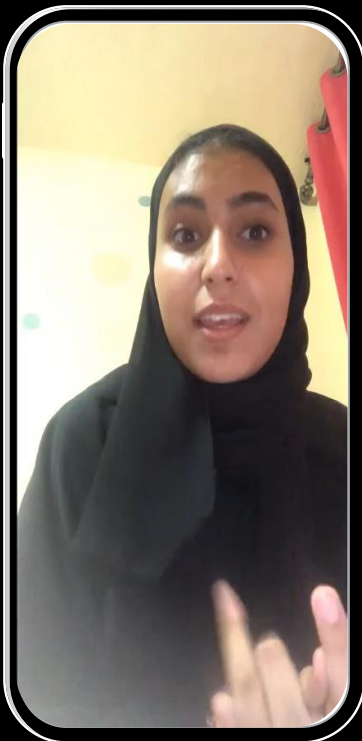
and

...have a strong POV

While there are not attached to pre-set notions, this tolerance has its limits, especially when met with situations in which their value set is breached. Known for always having a point of view, they've developed a strong belief system inspired by their own life experiences. These guiding principles enable them to navigate this complex reality and make informed choices that impact their life in the short and long term.



Play Video
Arzu, 19



Play Video
Leen, 19

The Gen Z Spectrum

So... Is Gen Z this? Is Gen Z that? Or is Gen Z thriving in *the endless possibilities of the spectrum in between?*

As demonstrated by these five dimensions, constraining Gen Z to one end of the polarity over the other has proven to be impractical, and to an extent, unfeasible.



While emphasizing this duality in thought and behavior can typically cue confusion, this is not the case with Gen Z. In fact, it signals a generation with a unique sensibility to continuously adapt, evolve and grow. As a generation that values freedom, flexibility and authenticity, it's not an either/or but rather a wide playing field that exists across the polar ends of the spectrum.

GEN Z: A SPECTRUM OF IDENTITIES AND MINDSETS

Go with the flow	AND	Are go-getters
Are all about 'me'	AND	All about 'we'
Have the freedom to make their own choices	AND	The commitment to make informed decisions
Cultivate their authentic self	AND	Like to follow trends
Have no prejudices	AND	Have a strong POV

The Role of Digital

The digital space allow Gen Z to explore and activate the *limitless possibilities that lie across this spectrum*



It's no secret that the digital sphere is their home and that they are the experts here. In fact, the online world has empowered Gen Z to creatively and freely move to and from these opposing polarities of their universe, unravelling the many levels and layers that can be found in the middle.

It is also in this world where brands are connecting with this audience.

At first glance, the picture seems rosy for brands looking to foster connections with this generation. After all, these are digital natives, and so, reaching them through digital mediums is the way to go.

But the reality is far more complex. While brands might be able to 'reach' Gen Z-ers, relevant engagement is not guaranteed. **Remember, this is not a gullible audience, and they are not afraid to put brands on a pedestal or to run them out of town.** This is an audience who is very clear with what they want, how they want it and have all the resources handy to get to what they want.

So, what now?

This is where TikTok Wins!

TikTok is at the heart of this spectrum. *Why do we say that?*



We see a clear overlap of the TikTok features with the ever-evolving aspects of Gen Z identities and mindset. This is why it is the platform of choice for Gen Z users and beyond.



TIKTOK CATERS TO THE WIDE SPECTRUM OF GEN Z IDENTITIES & MINDSETS

Go with **the flow**

A platform that pushes content for you and a search engine that pulls out content you need

Are **go-getters**

Are all about **'me'**

A destination to enable the self as while giving back to the greater community

All about **'we'**

Have the **freedom** to make their own choices

A playground for fostering old/new interests, packed with inputs to make the right choices

The **commitment** to make informed decisions

Cultivate their **authentic self**

A canvas to express uniqueness while participating in the collective fun

Like to **follow trends**

Have **no prejudices**

A diverse and welcoming platform for influential voices to share their viewpoints

Have a **strong POV**

Stay tuned for Volume II

While we have a hook on who Gen Z are, what is more *relevant is how their traits translate to their actions and behaviors.*



In the next volume, we will be zooming into their shopping and e-commerce habits – what sets them apart, how they go about it, what kind of content do they engage with, what types of format they gravitate towards, what this expect from brands.

