

**MARKETING  
IDENTITY:  
POWER(S)  
OF COMMUNICATION**

**MARKETING  
IDENTITY**

**THE POWER(S)  
OF COMMUNICATION**

**ÜCM FMK**

**Bianka Francistyová  
Lucia Furtáková  
Monika Prostináková Hossová  
(eds.)**

Faculty of Mass Media Communication  
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava

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Bianka Francistyová  
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**Editors:** PhDr. Bianka Francistyová, PhD.  
Mgr. Lucia Furtáková, PhD.  
Mgr. Monika Prostináková Hossová, PhD.

**Technical redaction:** PhDr. Bianka Francistyová, PhD.  
Mgr. Lucia Furtáková, PhD.  
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## **MARKETING IDENTITY: POWER(S) OF COMMUNICATION**

International Scientific Conference “Marketing and Media Identity: Power(s) of Communication”, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Voderady, Slovakia.

The international scientific conference held annually by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava has become a traditional event supported and attended by renowned mass media communication theorists and researchers as well as by media and marketing professionals. The aim of the conference is to discuss the latest knowledge and trends in the field of marketing communication and to create a space for sharing and disseminating up-to-date scientific knowledge and practical experience in the fields of marketing, media studies and communication sciences while outlining the importance of innovations and supporting the critical dialogue between scholars affiliated with academic institutions and professionals with practical experience. The annual international conference Marketing and Media Identity (formerly called New Trends in Marketing and re-named in 2013 to Marketing Identity and again re-named in 2022), which was held for the 18th time. The conference took place on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> November 2025 in Voderady. It was attended by more than 100 participants.

The main theme of the conference was concisely expressed by its subtitle: Power(s) of Communication. Marketing and Media Identity has always tried to react to the latest trends in marketing communication and media production.

More information on the Marketing and Media Identity conference, programme schedules, deadlines and photo galleries related to previous years are available at:

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# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND VALUES OF GENERATION Z UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF “GREENFLUENCE”

*Zdenka Musová – Petra Gundová – Filip Smutný*

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## **Abstract:**

Currently, influencer marketing plays a significant role in communicating various social issues, including environmental topics. Collaborating with some types of relevant influencers can be an effective way for businesses to spread environmental awareness while also motivating the public to adopt more socially responsible behavior. The aim of this paper is to analyze the impact of greenfluencers on the consumer behavior and values of Generation Z, based on the results of a questionnaire survey. A questionnaire survey is considered as the most appropriate data collection technique, because it allows for quick data collection and processing. Generation Z is considered the most environmentally conscious generation to date, and our primary research, conducted through a questionnaire survey, revealed that greenfluencer marketing has a positive impact on changing consumer mindset, but only to a certain extent. The results of research confirmed that collaboration with influencers can be an effective way to ensure the dissemination of environmental awareness and can also motivate consumers toward more socially responsible behavior. The responses from the questionnaire survey respondents indicated that authenticity is a key factor that increases trust among Generation Z respondents. The findings point to the fact that greenfluencer marketing has a significant impact on consumer purchasing behavior of Generation Z, especially in the case of ecological products. Respondents state that observing greenfluencers motivates them to make behavioral changes, such as switching to sustainable products, composting, or reducing fast fashion consumption.

## **Key words:**

Consumer Behavior. Environmental Issues. Greenfluence Marketing. Influence Marketing. Values.

## **1 Introduction**

Given that social media have become an integral part of everyday life, they play a crucial role in communication between companies and their customers. This fact is particularly important in the context of influencer marketing. As a consequence of continuous technological progress, influencer marketing has evolved into effective tool of online marketing and represents influential trend in contemporary marketing communication (Lagrée et al., 2018). Influencers represent a new type of independent third party who shape their audiences' opinions through blogs, tweets, posts, and other forms of social media (Zatwarnicka-Madura et al., 2022). Influencer recommendations can have a positive impact not only on their followers' purchase decisions, but also on their lifestyle, well-being, and community engagement (Thomas & Fowler, 2023; Hudders & Lou, 2023; Paredes et al., 2023; Ye et al., 2021). Within the framework of influencer marketing, we encounter a relatively new concept – the greenfluencer. A greenfluencer is an individual who leverages their reach, primarily on social media platforms, to raise awareness of environmental issues, ecology, and sustainable lifestyles. The rise of environmentally focused social media personalities, or greenfluencers, marks a significant step forward in promoting green living and environmentally friendly behaviors (Kapoor et al., 2023).

This paper examines the influence of greenfluencers on the consumer behavior and values of Generation Z in the context of sustainability. The aim of the study is to present the results of a questionnaire survey focused on the impact of greenfluencers on the consumer behavior and sustainability-related values of Generation Z. The paper is structured into

several sections. Following a brief theoretical overview of the analyzed issue and key concepts in the second section, the third section outlines the research objectives, methods and analytical procedures. The fourth section presents the results obtained from the questionnaire survey. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the most important findings, highlights potential recommendations, and discusses the limitations of the conducted research.

Although influencer marketing represents only one of many tools within marketing communication for conveying information, narratives and messages, our interest lies in understanding the extent to which it is effective in the context of greenfluencing. This consideration served as the main motivation for the development of the present study.

## 2 Theoretical Background of the Examined Issue

Influencer marketing has become a key tool for connecting brands with their target audiences. It utilizes personalities active in the online environment whose ability to communicate, influence audience behavior and decision-making forms the base of this specific type of marketing. Although “celebrity” endorsements have long been common in traditional media such as television and magazines, influencer marketing has elevated this approach to a new level. In addition to traditional public figures from sports, music, or film, new personalities have emerged who are known exclusively through social media – so-called influencers.

According to Burešová (2022), the aim of influencer marketing is to promote brands and products through influencers who have a some range of followers on social media platforms. This form of marketing can be viewed as a variation of word-of-mouth (WOM) communication, where the influencer disseminates information about a brand through their channels in a subtle and non-intrusive manner. Since many individuals perceive their favorite influencers as close friends, the products they promote are often received with the same level of trust as recommendations from actual acquaintances. This specific characteristic distinguishes influencer marketing from other online marketing tools and represents its key advantage.

As Atherton (2022) states, an influencer is an individual who has built credibility within a particular business domain through social media. Due to their authenticity and extensive reach, influencers possess the ability to influence their followers to try or purchase various products and services. For brands, collaboration with influencers can be beneficial, as it enables them to reach new customers through a trusted intermediary. Therefore, influencer marketing is regarded as a sophisticated tool in terms of time, financial resources, form and effectiveness (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

Influencers can be categorized according to various criteria, one of which is the specific area they focus on. Recently, there has been a growing number of so-called greenfluencers, who promote sustainability and environmental awareness. Preliminary findings concerning greenfluencers indicate a beneficial impact of their endorsements on enhancing environmental consciousness and encouraging more sustainable behaviors – actions that minimize environmental impacts and contribute to the conservation of natural resources for future generation – among their audiences (Boerman et al., 2024; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2024), even in the case of virtual influencers (Gerrath et al., 2024).

Environmental communication currently plays a crucial role in raising awareness of ecological issues and promoting sustainable behavior. With growing challenges such as the climate crisis, environmental pollution and excessive consumption of natural resources, it is essential to effectively inform the public about opportunities for adopting sustainable lifestyles and behaviors. Jurin et al. (2010) define environmental communication as encompassing a wide range of communicative forms – from individual and group

communication to public, organizational and mass communication. Its primary goal is to create a space for discussing environmental topics, addressing ecological problems and reflecting on society's relationship with nature.

An increasing number of companies are incorporating environmental principles into their marketing strategies in response to the growing demand for sustainable products and services. Research indicates (Bartošová et al., 2025; Bartošová et al., 2024; Musová & Drugdová, 2021; Musová et al., 2021) that although consumers still primarily base their purchasing decisions on price and quality criteria, the ecological impact of individual products is becoming increasingly important to them as well. Consequently, companies are seeking ways to minimize their negative environmental footprint while maintaining competitiveness in the marketplace. The utilization of greenfluencers has thus become a significant tool for building a positive brand image and fostering customer loyalty among consumers who prioritize sustainable solutions.

### 3 Methodology

The aim of this paper is to present the results of a questionnaire survey focused on the impact of greenfluencers on the consumer behavior and values of Generation Z. In connection with the main objective the following research questions (RQ) have been set:

RQ1: What factors motivate Generation Z representatives to purchase environmentally friendly products?

We agree with Bartošová et al. (2024) that each consumer is specific and approaches the purchase of products in different ways. Consumer behavior is constantly evolving. It is rather complicated and determined by several factors. Consumers are often assumed to purchase a sustainable product primarily because of its inherent qualities, such as being made from high-quality or sustainable material. However, research (Musová et al., 2018) indicates that the impact of price on the decision to buy such products cannot be overlooked.

RQ2: Are Generation Z representatives altering their habits due to greenfluencer influence?

We assume that greenfluencing is effective and can change the habits and behavior of Generation Z, provided it is conveyed authentically and the greenfluencer represents genuine sustainability (Kapoor et al., 2023; Boerman et al., 2022).

To achieve this objective, we used two methods - secondary data content analysis and quantitative consumer survey. The previous section of this paper provided the theoretical foundation for further empirical investigation. Consequently, the primary method employed in the preparatory phase of the study was desk research, i.e., the analysis of relevant secondary data. Sources included academic books, online databases, conference proceedings, journals, publications and surveys in the field of sustainable fashion. The analyzed materials consisted mainly of scientific and review studies obtained from databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar and ResearchGate.

For data collection concerning the analyzed issue, a questionnaire survey was selected, as it was evaluated as the most efficient method for obtaining data from a larger sample in a relatively short period of time. At the same time, we acknowledge its main limitations, including low response rates and respondents' reluctance to participate. The questionnaire was created using Google Forms and was distributed electronically in March 2025. The preference for social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram) as the primary distribution channels was based on the assumption of a high level of online activity among the target Generation Z audience. The goal was to eliminate selection bias, which is why we employed simple random sampling as the method.

The survey consisted of 26 predominantly closed and structured questions, resulting in a total of 76 complete responses. The sample consisted of all Slovak residents from generation Z. Due to the electronic form of distribution, it was not possible to objectively determine the exact response rate. Several logical-cognitive scientific methods were employed in the study, including content analysis and synthesis, induction, deduction and comparison. The research findings were subsequently summarized to formulate conclusions related to the examined topic.

The sample of respondents consisted of members of Generation Z (individuals born between 1997 and 2012), with a specific focus on those who regularly follow greenfluencers and are interested in sustainable lifestyles. According to Dangmei and Singh (2016), Generation Z is the most ethnically diverse and technologically advanced generation. It is characterized by an informal, individualistic and direct communication style, with social media representing an inseparable part of its daily life. Generation Z is often described as a “do-it-yourself” generation, impatient, result-oriented and dependent on technology with a relatively short attention span. Compared to previous generations, it is perceived as less ambitious, highly individualistic, self-directed, materialistic and is often labeled as demanding and self-centered. Naturally, it is not possible to generalize all individuals within this cohort, as factors such as upbringing, personal values and moral orientation more accurately define individual character traits.

The analyzed sample consisted of 72.4% females and 27.6% males, with the largest proportion of respondents (43.4%) belonging to the 22-25 age category. More than half of the participants (51.3%) reported living in urban areas. In terms of educational attainment, the majority (56.6%) held a secondary education diploma, which aligns with the study’s focus on Generation Z representatives.

## 4 Results and Discussion

The subsequent section of the questionnaire examined the extent and patterns of social media use. Respondents were asked to indicate on which social media platforms they spent most of their free time, with multiple responses allowed. The findings revealed that Instagram was the most preferred platform (97.4%), followed by TikTok, used by 63.2% of respondents (48 individuals). Furthermore, 40.8% reported a preference for YouTube, 31.6% for Facebook, and 5.3% (4 respondents) for Twitter. The least frequently used platforms included Snapchat, Threads, and LinkedIn. A significant 88% of respondents reported spending between two and six hours per day on social media platforms. This finding suggests that social media represents an integral part of everyday life for members of Generation Z.

An additional key aspect of the survey aimed to determine whether respondents follow greenfluencers – influencers promoting environmentally friendly lifestyles. The responses were relatively balanced: 48.7% of respondents reported following greenfluencers, while 51.3% did not. Those who indicated that they do not follow greenfluencers were asked to specify their reasons. The most frequently cited reason was a preference for other types of influencers (41%). Additionally, 23.1% of respondents reported not knowing who greenfluencers are, 12.8% considered them untrustworthy, 17.9% stated a lack of interest in environmental topics, and 5.2% indicated other unspecified reasons.

Another question related to the perception of greenfluencers sought to determine whether respondents believed that greenfluencers provide accurate information on environmental topics. A positive response was given by 56.8% of participants. Conversely, 43.2% of respondents were unsure about the truthfulness of the shared information, indicating a certain level of skepticism. Interestingly, none of the respondents selected the option suggesting that greenfluencers disseminate false information. The next section of the

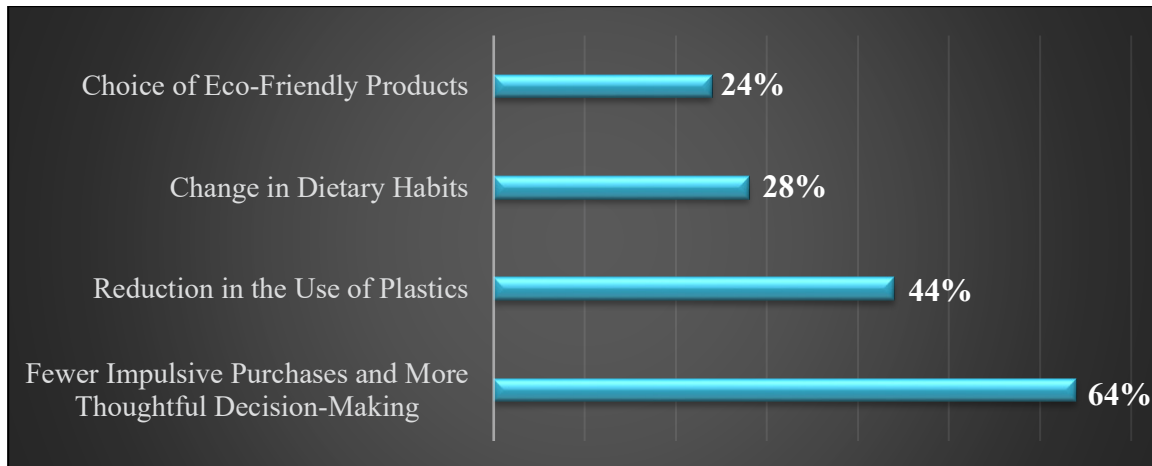
questionnaire focused on consumer behavior. Only respondents who reported following greenfluencers were asked to complete this part, as the answers of those who do not follow them might not accurately reflect real consumer experiences and could compromise the authenticity of the findings.

The first question in this section examined whether respondents had ever purchased a product or service based on a greenfluencer's recommendation. The responses were relatively balanced: 45.9% of respondents indicated that they had made such a purchase, most frequently involving vegan food products, cosmetics or items of sustainable fashion. The remaining 54.1% reported not having purchased any products recommended by greenfluencers. The most commonly cited reasons were a lack of opportunity and the high price of the promoted products. These findings suggest that for a certain segment of Generation Z followers, price remains a key factor influencing purchase decisions, even when sustainability-oriented recommendations are present.

The following question focused on identifying the factors that motivate respondents to purchase environmentally friendly products (RQ1). Respondents could select multiple options. The majority (89.2%) indicated that their motivation stems from personal beliefs, reflecting a strong individual commitment to ecological values and a responsible lifestyle. Additionally, 27% of respondents stated that product availability serves as a motivational factor, while 21.6% identified price as an incentive. The influence of social media influencers was mentioned by 10.8% of participants and social pressure ranked last, cited by only 2.7% of respondents. A substantial 67.6% of participants reported choosing eco-friendly products only when they are both necessary and affordable. This finding again suggests that price remains a decisive factor in purchasing decisions, even among consumers aware of the environmental implications of their choices. Furthermore, 24.3% of respondents indicated that they usually purchase eco-friendly products, 5.4% stated that they do not purchase such products at all, and only 2.7% reported purchasing them regularly.

Despite the growing social relevance of ecological topics, these results highlight, that actual consumer behavior often encounters barriers such as price, limited availability and established consumption habits. There appears to be a notable gap between consumers' declared attitudes and their real purchasing behavior. Based on the collected data, it can be inferred that Generation Z representatives currently approach eco-friendly consumption more pragmatically than systematically.

One of the areas to which the survey devoted particular attention was the issue of consumer values and attitudes. The research aimed to determine whether respondents had changed any of their habits under the influence of greenfluence (RQ2). A total of 62.2% of respondents reported, that they had modified their habits, while the remaining 37.8% indicated that their behavior had not changed as a result of greenfluencer influence. As illustrated in Figure 1, the most frequently mentioned behavioral change was the reduction of impulsive shopping and a greater emphasis on thoughtful, rational decision-making in consumer behavior, reported by 64% of respondents. This trend reflects an increasing awareness of the consequences of overconsumption and a growing effort to approach purchasing more responsibly. The second most common behavioral adjustment identified by respondents was a reduction in the use of plastics (44%), followed by changes in dietary habits (28%). These dietary changes primarily involved adopting vegetarian or vegan diets or showing greater interest in locally sourced and seasonal food products. The least frequently mentioned change was the preference for eco-friendly products, reported by 24% of participants.



**Figure 1:** Changes in consumer behavior under the influence of greenfluencers  
 Source: own processing, 2025

In the final part of the section on values and attitudes, respondents were asked about their attitude toward sustainability. The results indicate that the majority (91.9%) perceive sustainability as an important aspect, though not the sole factor influencing their decision-making. A smaller portion of respondents (5.4%) stated that sustainability represents a key principle that they consider in all areas of their actions, while 2.7% reported that sustainability is not among their priorities. The final section of the questionnaire addressed issues of credibility and marketing influence. Respondents were asked whether they believe that greenfluencers are genuinely environmentally oriented or whether their environmental focus is primarily part of a marketing strategy. The largest share of responses (67.1%) suggests that most respondents view greenfluencers as a heterogeneous group – some are considered authentic, while others appear to engage with ecological topics mainly for marketing purposes. Furthermore, 17.1% of respondents believed that most greenfluencers focus on environmental issues solely for marketing reasons, whereas only 3.9% expressed the view that greenfluencers are genuinely committed to environmental topics out of personal conviction. Overall, these findings indicate that public trust in greenfluencers is ambivalent, with a generally cautious or reserved attitude prevailing.

In terms of factors influencing the perceived credibility of greenfluencers, respondents most frequently emphasized expertise and experience in environmental issues (34.2%), as well as transparency and authenticity of activities (31.6%). These findings suggest that credibility is primarily associated with professional background and consistent behavior. A smaller proportion (19.7%) considered the actual use of eco-friendly products to be a decisive factor. In contrast, aspects such as popularity (9.2%) and brand collaborations (2.6%) played only a marginal role in the assessment of credibility. An additional 2.6% of respondents were unable to provide an answer to this question.

The study also examined whether respondents would prefer an eco-friendly product recommended by an influencer over a regular alternative. According to the findings, 67.1% of respondents stated that their decision would depend on the price, emphasizing the importance of price sensitivity within this consumer segment – even when the product is endorsed by an authority or a well-known personality. A quarter of respondents (25%) answered they do not, indicating that they would not consider a greenfluencer’s recommendation when they are choosing a product. Only 7.9% of participants reported that they would prioritize an eco-friendly product recommended by an influencer regardless of other factors. At the very end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to what extent greenfluencers influence their purchasing decisions. Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that they take greenfluencer recommendations into account, yet they also consider other factors such as price and product

quality. A smaller proportion (14.5%) stated that they are not influenced by such recommendations, while 3.9% reported that greenfluencers frequently motivate them to purchase eco-friendly products. The remaining respondents did not express an opinion on this question.

The topic of green marketing and its communication strategies has been the subject of numerous discussions and studies. According to Murin et al. (2015), regional differences in green consumer behavior are not limited to Central and Eastern Europe – similar variations can also be observed, for example, between the northern and southern regions of Slovakia. The authors emphasize that the level of education plays an important role in raising awareness of green marketing practices.

The findings of Kapoor et al. (2023) are consistent with the results of our research. These authors argue that greenfluencing is effective only when it is perceived as authentic and when the promoted message corresponds to the actual sustainability of the product. Similarly, Boerman et al. (2022) point out that the selection of influencers, along with their image and behavior, must be aligned with the environmental message, as this alignment represents a key factor in promoting pro-environmental behavior among Instagram users.

In a more recent study, Hartmann et al. (2025) introduced the concept of “inspirational green leadership”, describing the ability of greenfluencers to engage and motivate their followers toward sustainable behavior. Based on a survey among Australian Instagram users, the study distinguishes between two dimensions of greenfluencing: the promotion of a green lifestyle and environmental activism. The findings show that both dimensions positively influence followers’ intentions to engage in climate action with environmental activism having a stronger impact. Moreover, perceived inspirational green leadership mediates the relationship between greenfluencer activity and followers’ pro-environmental intentions, highlighting the importance of authenticity and credibility. These results confirm the potential of greenfluencers to foster meaningful environmental behavioral change, offering practical implications for influencers, brands and policymakers seeking to strengthen climate action strategies through social media engagement. We agree with Hartmann et al. (2025) that credibility plays a major role specifically in the green influencer marketing context because consumers are increasingly skeptical of green advertising claims and suspect greenwashing.

All the cited authors and the present research recognize that the term influencer marketing is not always viewed positively, often being criticized for promoting worthless, superficial, morally empty and questionable content and for being driven by profit-oriented motives. We share this view, however, based on the comparison of relevant studies and our own findings, we argue that this form of communication can serve a meaningful purpose. Like all marketing tools, it has the potential to contribute to the common good – or, conversely, to the opposite.

## 5 Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that collaboration with influencers can serve as an effective means of promoting environmental awareness and can also motivate consumers toward more socially responsible behavior. The findings from the questionnaire survey revealed that authenticity is a key factor enhancing trust among Generation Z respondents. Participants indicated, that they trust influencers who consistently act in accordance with the values they promote and who reject insincere or opportunistic environmental campaigns. For young audiences, it is crucial that greenfluencers demonstrate authenticity and transparency in the content they share.

Respondents also reported a positive behavioral influence from greenfluencers, noting that they have become more interested in environmental issues and have adopted certain

sustainable habits as a result. The findings suggest that greenfluencers do exert a measurable impact on their followers' behavior and also that their messages are reflected in real changes in consumer practices, albeit to a limited extent. The results further indicate that Instagram and TikTok are the primary social media platforms through which Generation Z respondents follow greenfluencers. Most participants spend several hours per day on these platforms, confirming its effectiveness in disseminating ecological content. Respondents emphasized that they trust most in authenticity and practical advice based on real-life experiences.

However, the study also revealed a degree of skepticism toward certain influencers. Some respondents expressed doubts about the motivations behind greenfluencer activities, particularly when product collaborations appear commercially driven or inconsistent with ecological values. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining perceived authenticity as a foundation of credibility and underline the delicate balance between marketing interests and genuine environmental engagement.

When making purchasing decisions regarding products promoted by greenfluencers, respondents identified sustainability, brand transparency and influencers' genuine experience with products as the most important factors. However, not all participants considered these factors strong enough to consistently influence their behavior. Some respondents admitted that, even when their values align with ecological principles, price and product availability often play a stronger role in purchase decisions.

The findings indicate that greenfluencer marketing can have a meaningful impact on consumer behavior, particularly regarding sustainable products. Respondents reported that following greenfluencers motivates them to adopt more sustainable practices, such as choosing eco-friendly products, composting or reducing fast fashion consumption. Marketing communication, as explored in this study, represents one of many tools capable of promoting and disseminating significant ideas and values, including environmentally conscious behavior.

We live in a period when climate change is increasingly tangible and likely represents a last opportunity to enact meaningful change. Actions guided by ecological and social responsibility not only benefit society and nature, but also positively shape individual values and contribute to the common good. Therefore, any decision leading to constructive change, including choices regarding marketing communication, can be regarded as beneficial.

The main limitations of this study include a small sample size and a non-representative sample, meaning that the findings cannot be generalized to all Slovak Generation Z consumers. Additionally, data collection via social media may have introduced a bias toward more environmentally conscious respondents. Despite some limitations, the study provides a foundation for future research, which could include larger, representative samples, in-depth statistical analyses and comparisons across Generations X, Y, and Z. Such research could further clarify the role of greenfluencers in shaping sustainable consumer behavior, inform strategies for more effective environmental marketing and founding out the answers on question, what makes really sense and what can genuinely shape mindset of consumers in positive and right way.

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### Contact Data:

prof. Ing. Zdenka Musová, PhD.  
 Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica  
 Faculty of Economics  
 Tajovského 10,  
 Banská Bystrica , 975 90, Slovak Republic  
 zdenka.musova@umb.sk  
 ORCID-ID: [0000-0002-1067-8291](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1067-8291)

Ing. Petra Gundová, PhD.  
 Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica  
 Faculty of Economics  
 Tajovského 10,  
 Banská Bystrica , 975 90, Slovak Republic  
 petra.gundova@umb.sk  
 ORCID-ID: [0000-0003-2335-0073](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2335-0073)

Ing. Filip Smutný, PhD.  
Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica  
Faculty of Economics  
Tajovského 10,  
Banská Bystrica, 975 90, Slovak Republic  
filip.smutny@umb.sk  
ORCID-ID: [0000-0001-8353-7644](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8353-7644)

## **MARKETING IDENTITY: HUMAN VS. ARTIFICIAL**

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