






# “Personality traits and brand awareness across digital touchpoints: Evidence from Generation Z consumers in Vietnam”

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# PERSONALITY TRAITS AND BRAND AWARENESS ACROSS DIGITAL TOUCHPOINTS: EVIDENCE FROM GENERATION Z CONSUMERS IN VIETNAM

## Abstract

In the context of Vietnam's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem, understanding how psychological differences shape brand cognition among Generation Z has become increasingly important. This study aims to examine the influence of the Big Five personality traits on brand awareness across major digital touchpoints, addressing the limited empirical evidence from emerging markets. A quantitative survey was conducted in January 2025 with 898 Gen Z consumers residing in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Using Cronbach's Alpha, Exploratory Factor Analysis, and multiple regression, the study assessed the reliability of measurement scales and the effects of personality traits on brand awareness indicators derived from Aaker's (1991) framework. The findings show that four personality traits – openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism – positively and significantly predict brand awareness on digital platforms ( $\beta = 0.171-0.250$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Conscientiousness exhibits the strongest impact ( $\beta = 0.250$ ), followed by neuroticism ( $\beta = 0.240$ ), extraversion ( $\beta = 0.224$ ), and openness ( $\beta = 0.171$ ). Agreeableness does not demonstrate adequate construct validity and is excluded from the final model. Additional analyses using ANOVA reveal significant differences in brand awareness across regions but not across genders. These results illustrate that personality-driven tendencies, such as exploratory behavior, systematic information processing, social interaction, and risk-avoidance, play a substantial role in determining how frequently and effectively young consumers encode brand cues in digital environments. The study concludes that integrating personality insights into digital brand communication strategies can enhance relevance, memorability, and consumer-brand alignment, especially within dynamic Gen Z segments.

## Keywords

personality, awareness, marketing, generation, consumers, Vietnam

## JEL Classification

M31, M37, D91, C83

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid digital transformation, consumers are increasingly exposed to brands through a wide range of digital touchpoints, including social media platforms, e-commerce marketplaces, mobile applications, and online communities. As online competition intensifies and users demand more personalized and interactive content, building and maintaining brand awareness has become an increasingly complex challenge. This issue is particularly salient for Generation Z, who represent one of the most active groups of digital content consumers today and are projected to become a dominant segment in both workforce composition and purchasing power in the near future (IE University, 2025). In Vietnam, where internet and smartphone adoption have surged, Generation Z plays a central role in shaping digital culture and consumption patterns, positioning them as a strategically important target group for digital brand-building efforts.



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Generation Z, often characterized as “digital natives,” places strong emphasis on self-expression and personal values (Nguyen et al., 2023). Such characteristics make their responses to brand communication less predictable and more sensitive to individual differences. As a result, traditional approaches relying primarily on socio-demographic indicators or observable online behaviors may be insufficient to fully capture how and why this cohort becomes aware of, pays attention to, or recalls specific brands across multiple digital touchpoints. This underscores the growing need to consider psychological dimensions—particularly personality traits—as possible determinants of brand awareness among young consumers.

Although prior studies have recognized the role of personality traits in various aspects of consumer behavior, empirical evidence specifically addressing their influence on brand awareness within digital environments remains limited. The scarcity of research becomes even more pronounced in emerging markets such as Vietnam, where digital ecosystems and youth consumption patterns evolve rapidly. These gaps highlight the importance of further examining the mechanisms by which personality traits shape brand awareness across digital touchpoints within the Vietnamese Generation Z context, as digital brand-building practices continue to expand and require more nuanced theoretical and practical insights.

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## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Personality is a key determinant of how consumers process information and behave in the marketplace. In marketing and consumer psychology, stable traits such as curiosity, sociability, self-discipline, and emotionality shape attention to marketing stimuli, brand beliefs, and long-term brand relationships. The Big Five model – openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism – has become the dominant framework for capturing these differences, supported by extensive validation research (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Building on this foundation, numerous studies link personality traits to consumer outcomes such as satisfaction, attitudes, loyalty, and engagement (Castillo, 2017; Kim et al., 2018). Extraversion and openness have been shown to increase hedonic value and brand affect, leading to stronger loyalty (Matz et al., 2017), while in digital environments, these traits predict social media use, content creation, and higher engagement (Liu & Campbell, 2017; Roos, 2023). Personality-targeted advertising has also been found to improve consumer responses (Matz et al., 2017). Furthermore, personality influences brand evangelism, trust, and willingness to pay, highlighting its broad impact on brand-related outcomes (Doss & Carstens, 2014; Damaschi et al., 2025). Collectively, this evidence suggests that personality-driven differences

in exploration, planning, and social interaction play an important role in shaping brand awareness across digital touchpoints.

Brand awareness is typically conceptualized as the strength of the brand node in memory and the consumer’s ability to recognize or recall a brand as a member of a given product category. Classic brand equity frameworks define awareness as consumers’ ability to identify a brand under different conditions and to retrieve it from memory, distinguishing between brand recognition (aided identification) and brand recall (unaided retrieval) (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Rossiter et al., 1991). Experimental work further shows that high-awareness brands are disproportionately chosen even when competing options are cheaper or objectively superior, suggesting that awareness operates as a simple but powerful choice heuristic (MacDonald & Sharp, 2000). Conceptually, awareness acts as an “anchor” to which further associations, such as quality, imagery, and user-type, are attached, providing the necessary entry point for the development of brand image and equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). In digital environments, this anchoring function is amplified across multiple touchpoints. Quantitative models and recent reviews show that exposure to brand content via social media, online display, search and other digital channels consistently exerts positive effects on brand awareness, which in turn supports engagement, purchase intention and word of mouth (Sugiat, 2025). Digital brand equity work similarly

emphasizes that metrics such as share of search, online visibility and interaction-based indicators reflect the centrality of awareness within broader digital brand performance (France et al., 2025). Mechanisms such as familiarity-liking, the signaling of brand substance and commitment, and inclusion in the consideration set are all mediated by awareness; on digital touchpoints, they are enacted through repeated exposures, algorithmically curated impressions and social interactions that make brands easier to see, remember and consider (Mammassis, 2025). These mechanisms provide a natural bridge to personality, because traits systematically shape how consumers explore, attend to and process brand-related information in digital contexts.

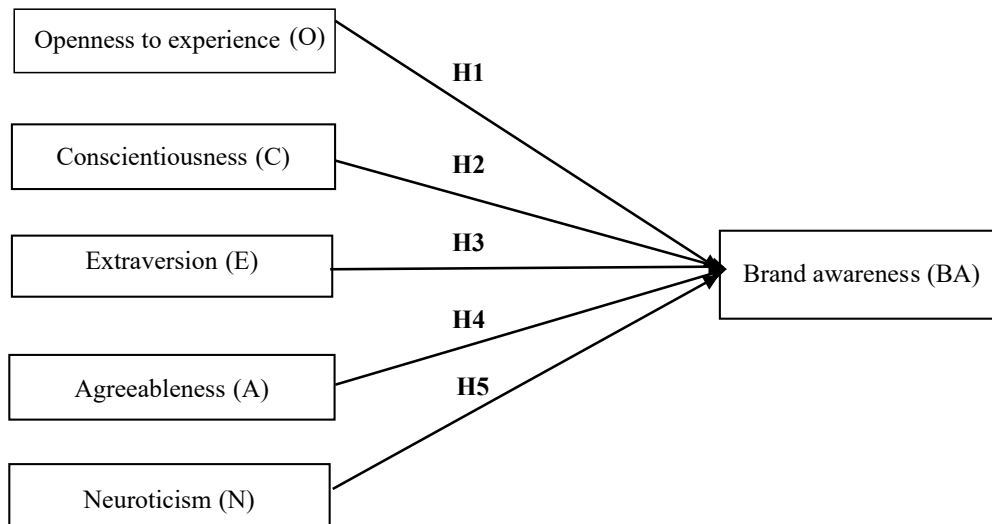
Openness to experience is expected to positively influence brand awareness. Consumers high in openness tend to be curious, imaginative, and variety-seeking, leading them to explore information and experiment with new products, platforms, and digital features. Prior meta-analytic evidence links openness to higher levels of online information-seeking, content exploration, and engagement with new functionalities (Liu & Campbell, 2017). In digital service contexts, openness also increases perceived ease of use and willingness to adopt innovative tools. Moreover, openness has been associated with greater product involvement and stronger brand loyalty, as these consumers enjoy learning about new offerings (Özhan et al., 2018). Such exploration across search, social media, and e-commerce touchpoints naturally expands the frequency and diversity of brand exposures, thereby enhancing both recognition and recall.

Conscientious consumers tend to be organized, planful, and systematic in their information processing, and these tendencies are reflected in their digital behaviors. The research shows that conscientiousness improves recognition of banner ads containing clear product or promotional details, reflecting their focus on diagnostic cues that support efficient decision-making (Balaskas & Rigou, 2021). In personalized advertising, conscientious individuals display higher click-through and engagement intentions when targeting appears fair and goal-relevant (Saha et al., 2024). They also show stronger affective and cognitive loyalty and a greater willingness to pay for preferred brands,

suggesting greater effort in evaluating and committing to reliable options (Damaschi et al., 2025). In online shopping, conscientiousness predicts disciplined purchasing and structured post-purchase behaviors, such as reading reviews and monitoring brand communications (Huang & Yu, 2024). These planned search and evaluation patterns lead conscientious consumers to pay closer, more frequent attention to brand identifiers, enhancing brand awareness.

On the other hand, extraverts are sociable, energetic, and socially oriented, leading to intensive use of social media for communication and self-presentation (Liu & Campbell, 2017; Roos, 2023). Empirical evidence shows that extraversion strongly predicts engagement with brand pages – liking, commenting, and sharing – which in turn enhances electronic word-of-mouth and strengthens self-brand connections (Moiescu et al., 2025). Across online and offline contexts, extraverts also display higher hedonic value and brand affect, supporting attitudinal and purchase loyalty, as well as brand evangelism, where they actively promote favored brands (Doss & Carstens, 2014). Research further indicates a positive association between extraversion and brand performance metrics, including awareness, suggesting that extraverts both recognize well-known brands more easily and disseminate brand information more widely (Nooradi & Sadeghi, 2015). Through active conversation and content sharing, extraverts encounter brands frequently across digital touchpoints, thereby enhancing brand awareness.

Next, agreeable consumers are cooperative, empathetic, and motivated to maintain harmonious relationships, making them more receptive to recommendations and social norms. Research shows that agreeableness is associated with higher satisfaction and feelings of empowerment in service and retail settings, reflecting favorable responses to supportive interactions (Castillo, 2017). In relational branding contexts, agreeable individuals form stronger self- and communal-brand connections and exhibit higher purchase intentions, particularly when brands are anthropomorphized or embedded in social narratives (Schaefer et al., 2011). Agreeableness is also linked to greater customer loyalty, as agreeable consumers tend to tolerate minor service issues and stay with existing



**Figure 1.** Proposed model

providers (Castillo, 2017). Additionally, they rely heavily on social proof, paying close attention to brands endorsed by friends, family, or influencers. On digital platforms, where reviews and ratings are prominent, such interpersonal cues frequently draw attention to highly visible brands.

Finally, neurotic individuals tend to experience anxiety and negative emotions, making them more sensitive to potential losses and more vigilant in processing information. Although neuroticism is often linked to lower satisfaction and loyalty, research shows that neurotic consumers pay close attention to brand cues that reduce uncertainty. Studies report a positive association between neuroticism and brand awareness, with highly neurotic consumers being more aware of prominent brands in their category (Nooradi & Sadeghi, 2015). Experimental evidence further indicates stronger neural responses to trusted brands among neurotic individuals, suggesting that brand familiarity helps regulate anxiety (Schaefer et al., 2011). In digital commerce, they rely heavily on familiar brands and social influence—such as recommendations and well-known brand names—to reduce perceived risk. When trust is initially established offline, neurotic consumers are also more likely to transfer that trust to a brand's online channels, using familiarity as a coping mechanism in e-commerce interactions (Jeon et al., 2021).

Building on the foregoing discussion, the extant literature demonstrates that the Big Five frame-

work is a powerful lens for explaining variation in a wide range of brand-related outcomes, including attitudes, loyalty, purchase intention, engagement, and trust, particularly in digital environments. However, prior studies have rarely placed brand awareness itself at the center of the analysis, often treating it as an ancillary construct or as one component within broader brand-equity models rather than as a focal dependent variable. Evidence directly linking personality traits to brand recognition and recall, especially as they are formed and reinforced across multiple digital touchpoints such as search, social media, video platforms, and e-commerce interfaces, remains relatively limited. Moreover, existing work typically examines one or a subset of traits, or focuses on specific platforms or sectors, which constrains the ability to compare effects across traits within a coherent conceptual framework. As a result, there is still an incomplete understanding of how the five traits jointly shape the accumulation of brand awareness in contemporary digital journeys.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to evaluate the influence of each major characteristics in the Big Five model and brand awareness on digital touchpoints. Based on literature review and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed, leading to the development of the research model. The proposed conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

*H1: Openness to experience is positively associated with brand awareness.*

- H2: *Conscientiousness is positively associated with brand awareness.*
- H3: *Extraversion is positively associated with brand awareness.*
- H4: *Agreeableness is positively associated with brand awareness.*
- H5: *Neuroticism is positively associated with brand awareness.*

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Procedure

The study followed a structured procedure that began with developing the research model and hypotheses, constructing a questionnaire based on validated scales, and incorporating anonymity and informed-consent statements. After finalizing the instrument, data collection was conducted following established social-science survey practices (Dillman et al., 2014). The dataset was screened and analyzed using SPSS 20.0. Reliability was assessed via Cronbach’s Alpha, construct validity via Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and the research hypotheses were tested using multiple regression and ANOVA, in line with established methodological guidelines.

### 2.2. Participants

The survey targeted Gen Z adults (born 1997-2006) residing in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, two metropolitan areas chosen for their large Gen Z populations and central role in digital communication. Using a non-stratified random sampling approach, participants shared their views on the influence of personality on brand communication and their preferred digital touchpoints. Data were collected through questionnaires distribut-

ed both in person and via online platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, and Viber. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity, provided no personal identifiers, and received no incentives to minimize bias. Participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any time. The study adhered to institutional ethical standards and received formal approval. Over a three-week period in January 2025, 898 valid responses were obtained, providing a sufficiently large and representative sample for subsequent analyses in the research model.

### 2.3. Measures

The authors discussed adjusting the scale for the Big Five personality traits that may influence brand awareness, referring to and inheriting the research of Nguyen et al. (2023). The observed variables were adapted by the authors based on the Big Five Model foundation, in association with foundational knowledge about market and customer behavior in marketing. This approach ensures that the measurement reflects both personality constructs and their practical implications in consumer behavior. Besides, the observed variables of brand awareness were developed based on the 4 branches of brand awareness in Aaker’s (1991) Brand Equity Model (see Table 2), which allows for a comprehensive assessment of brand recognition. To measure the level of each observed variable, the authors employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), a widely used method in social science research for capturing respondents’ perceptions with sufficient sensitivity while maintaining simplicity in response.

### 2.4. Sample profile

The majority of the 898 survey participants were female, accounting for 76.7%. Meanwhile, males accounted for 22.8% and other genders accounted for the smallest proportion, at only 0.4%. In terms

**Table 1.** Sample descriptive statistics

Source: The authors’ compilation.

Criterion	Valid	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Place of residence	Hanoi	302	33.6	33.6
	Ho Chi Minh City	596	66.4	100.0
Gender	Female	689	76.7	76.7
	Male	205	22.8	99.6
	Others	4	0.4	100.0

of residential area, 596 participants currently reside in Ho Chi Minh City, equivalent to 66.4% of the total sample. In contrast, 302 people live in Hanoi, accounting for 33.6% (see Table 1).

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Reliability analysis

The reliability of the measurement scales was evaluated in SPSS 20.0 using Cronbach’s Alpha for each construct to ensure internal consistency. Item contributions were examined through Corrected Item-Total Correlation, allowing the removal of variables not aligning with their underlying concepts. Following Nunnally and Burnstein (1994),

items with correlations above 0.3 were accepted, and scales with Cronbach’s Alpha of at least 0.7 met reliability standards (Hair et al., 2010). All observed variables satisfied these criteria, confirming adequate reliability and meaningful contribution to the constructs.

#### 3.2. Validity analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to examine the latent structure and assess construct validity. The KMO value reached 0.955, and Bartlett’s test was significant ( $\chi^2 = 8356.055$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming the data’s suitability for factor analysis. The independent variables initially loaded onto five factors, explaining 62.205% of the variance.

**Table 2.** Adjusted measurements, reliability and validity analysis

Source: Aaker (1991).

Measurement	Code	Description	Internal consistency	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
<b>Big Five personality traits</b>				
Openness (O)	O1	I am always ready to embrace a new brand	0.725	0.568
	O2	I always support changes in brand identity elements (name, logo, slogan, etc.)		0.554
	O3	I am excited to introduce a new brand to others		0.518
Conscientiousness (C)	C1	I always pay attention to changes in the brand I am using	0.766	0.523
	C2	I can always find reasonable explanations for others’ concerns about the brand I use		0.535
	C3	I am enthusiastic about sharing information about the brand I use with others		0.556
	C4	I am willing to defend the brand I have chosen		0.568
Extraversion (E)	C5	I am willing to give feedback to help improve the brand	0.845	0.493
	E1	I feel comfortable attracting others’ attention through the brand I use		0.547
	E2	I enjoy starting conversations with friends and acquaintances by talking about my favorite brand		0.699
	E3	I like meeting and sharing about the brand I trust with new acquaintances		0.685
	E4	I often talk about the brand I care about when chatting with friends		0.692
Agreeableness (A)	E5	The brand information I share often influences my friends and acquaintances	0.818	0.638
	A1	I am excited to find people who share the same brand interests as me		0.594
	A2	I often recommend brands that suit other people’s needs		0.641
	A3	Sharing brand experiences is my way of showing empathy and care for those around me		0.689
Neuroticism (N)	A4	I enjoy helping and contributing to others’ happiness by recommending the brand I trust	0.719	0.637
	N1	I always have faith in the brand I have experienced and am familiar with		0.452
	N2	I have no concerns about recommending a trusted brand to my friends		0.545
	N3	I always find ways to relieve stress when facing problems with a brand		0.633
	N4	I do not feel disappointed when a brand fails to meet my expectations		0.436

**Table 2 (cont.).** Adjusted measurements, reliability and validity analysis

Measurement	Code	Description	Internal consistency	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
<b>Brand Awareness (BA)</b>				
Anchor to which other associations can be attached	BA1	I always associate the brand with content on digital media channels.	0.821	0.620
Familiarity-liking	BA2	Brand personality comes to mind quickly when I view content on digital media channels.		0.677
Signal of substance/commitment	BA3	I can quickly recall identifying signs (names, symbols, slogans, colors...) when I view content on digital media channels.		0.666
Brand to be considered	BA4	I can distinguish well-known brands among brands communicated on digital media channels.		0.615

The rotated matrix revealed several items with substantial cross-loadings (A2, A3, E1, C2, C3), which were removed to improve internal consistency and discriminant validity. After refinement, A1 loaded clearly on the Extraversion factor, while N3 and N4 formed a distinct, theoretically coherent factor with strong loadings (0.695 and 0.862). Although this factor contained only two items, expert consultation supported retaining it as Neuroticism due to its conceptual relevance. Conversely, the factor comprising N1, N2, and A4 lacked conceptual coherence and was eliminated. As a result, the Agreeableness construct had no valid remaining items and was excluded, leaving four personality traits in the final measurement model.

KMO and Bartlett’s tests (KMO = 0.927;  $\chi^2 = 4,415.874$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) confirmed the data’s suitability

for factor analysis. The refined 13 observed variables loaded onto four factors, explaining 66.093% of the variance. All scales met reliability requirements, and except for C1, all factor loadings exceeded 0.5, indicating strong relationships with their respective latent constructs, consistent with Hair et al. (2010). These results confirm the reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model. Although Factor 3 contained only three items, it demonstrated acceptable internal consistency and remained theoretically meaningful.

### 3.3. Dependent variable

The KMO and Bartlett’s test of the dependent variable released a KMO index of 0.774, ranging between 0.5 and 1, indicating a good fit for EFA with actual data. The sig value below 0.001 claimed that

**Table 3.** Adjusted measurements, reliability and validity analysis

Source: The author’s compilation.

Item	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
E4	0.793				
E3	0.764				
E2	0.757				
E5	0.638				
A1	0.567				
N1		0.782			
N2		0.736			
A4		0.548			
O1			0.801		
O2			0.775		
O3			0.585		
C5				0.775	
C1				0.606	
C4				0.506	
N4					0.862
N3					0.695

the factors had strong linear correlations with the representative variables. Specifically, the 4 observed variables of the dependent variables were grouped into a single factor, with the eigenvalues greater than 1, ensuring the reasonableness of the adjustments. The extracted variance reached 65.202%, exceeding the required threshold of 50%, revealed that this factor could explain 65.202% of the data changes, reflecting a fairly high level of explanation.

### 3.4. Hypothesis testing

The results of the regression analysis showed that all factors, including Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Conscientiousness (C) and Neuroticism (N), have a positive and statistically significant influence on Brand Awareness (BA) on digital channels. Specifically:

- All independent variables have positive standardized  $\beta$  coefficients (ranging from 0.171 to 0.250), reflecting a positive relationship with brand awareness.
- The Sig. values of all variables are less than 0.001, demonstrating that these relationships are statistically significant at the 99.9% confidence level.
- There is no serious problem of multicollinearity, as all VIF values are less than 5.

The following standardized regression method and final research model can be developed based on the results:

$$BA = 2.699 + 0.239O + 0.367N + 0.346C + 0.162E + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

**Table 4.** Hypothesis testing

Source: The authors' compilation.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	Multicollinearity statistics	
	B	Std. Error	$\beta$			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2.699	0.434		6.221	0.000		
O	0.239	0.041	0.171	5.794	0.000	0.649	1.542
N	0.367	0.044	0.240	8.383	0.000	0.690	1.450
C	0.346	0.046	0.250	7.599	0.000	0.522	1.914
E	0.162	0.025	0.224	6.441	0.000	0.466	2.144

### 3.5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The standard deviation of Brand Awareness in Hanoi is 2.74633, which is lower than 3.11088 in Ho Chi Minh City. Besides, females have a standard deviation of 2.98618, while the values of male and others are 3.15010 and 3.59398, respectively. Therefore, ANOVA test was used to check whether there is a difference in Brand Awareness between the two regions of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and/ or between genders.

Levene's test yielded a significance value of 0.007 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances between the two location groups. Therefore, the Welch ANOVA test was applied as an alternative. The Welch test produced a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming a statistically significant difference in the mean of Brand Awareness between participants from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (see Table 5).

**Table 5.** Levene and Welch test

Source: The authors' compilation.

Factor	Author	Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Location	Levene	7.208	1	896	0.007
	Welch	21.921	1	675.240	0.000
Gender	Levene	1.279	2	895	0.279
	Welch	0.510	2	7.975	0.619

With a Levene's test significance value of 0.279 ( $> 0.05$ ), the assumption of homogeneity of variances across gender groups was satisfied. Thus, the analysis proceeded with the standard ANOVA F-test. The test returned a significance value of 0.619 ( $> 0.05$ ), indicating that the difference in mean Brand Awareness between male, female and other gender respondents was not statistically significant (see Table 6). Therefore, gender does not appear to have a meaningful impact on individuals' awareness in this study.

**Table 6.** ANOVA F-test (gender)

Source: The authors' compilation.

Criterion	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	11.340	2	5.670	0.619	0.539
Within groups	8,198.149	895	9.160		
Total	8,209.489	897			

## 4. DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings provide strong empirical support for the significant role of personality traits in shaping digital brand awareness among Generation Z consumers.

Openness to experience shows a positive and significant effect on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.171$ ). Consumers high in openness – characterized by curiosity and exploratory tendencies – are more likely to engage with new platforms, formats, and content, leading to exposure to a broader range of brands (Liu & Campbell, 2017). This aligns with prior evidence linking openness to exploratory online behavior, ease of adopting innovative tools, and deeper product involvement (Özhan et al., 2018). As a result, open consumers more readily recognize and recall new or emerging brands, allowing awareness to serve as an anchor for further associations and increasing the likelihood that these brands enter their consideration set (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; MacDonald & Sharp, 2000).

Conscientiousness shows the strongest positive impact on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.250$ ). Conscientious consumers are disciplined and systematic, investing effort in searching, comparing, and evaluating brand options across digital touchpoints (Damaschi et al., 2025; Huang & Yu, 2024). Research links this trait to stronger loyalty, greater willingness to pay, and better recognition of informative advertising, indicating heightened attention to credible brand signals (Balaskas & Rigou, 2021; Saha et al., 2024). For these consumers, brand awareness functions as a reliability cue, making well-known brands easier to retrieve and more likely to be included in goal-directed decisions on search, comparison, and review platforms (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; MacDonald & Sharp, 2000).

Extraversion also shows a significant positive effect on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.224$ ). Extraverted consumers are socially oriented and highly active

on digital platforms, frequently engaging with brand pages, online communities, and user-generated content (Liu & Campbell, 2017; Roos, 2023). Prior research links extraversion to higher social media engagement, brand evangelism, and stronger emotional bonds with brands, all of which increase exposure and amplify electronic word-of-mouth (Doss & Carstens, 2014). Through repeated social and digital interactions, extraverts encounter brands more often, reinforcing familiarity-liking effects and making highly visible brands more salient and more likely to enter their consideration set across social, video, and messaging platforms (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

In contrast, agreeableness does not show a significant relationship with brand awareness and was therefore excluded from the final model due to limited conceptual validity. Although agreeable consumers are cooperative and responsive to interpersonal cues, prior research indicates that this trait is more closely linked to satisfaction, empowerment, and loyalty in relationship-intensive service contexts rather than to basic awareness formation (Castillo, 2017). Other studies also find that agreeableness does not consistently enhance trust or commitment in short, transactional interactions typical of digital touchpoints (Ciunova-Shuleska & Palamidovska-Sterjadovska, 2019). Thus, being harmony-seeking does not directly increase exposure to or encoding of brand cues online; instead, agreeableness may affect digital brand outcomes indirectly-through responsiveness to recommendations or satisfaction-rather than through heightened brand recognition or recall.

Neuroticism has a significant positive impact on brand awareness ( $\beta = 0.240$ ), making it the second strongest predictor. Because neurotic consumers experience higher anxiety and risk perception, they pay closer attention to cues that reduce uncertainty in digital environments (Jeon et al., 2021). Prior studies show that neurotic individuals

are more aware of prominent brands and display stronger neural responses to trusted brands, suggesting that familiarity serves as a coping mechanism in complex decisions (Nooradi & Sadeghi, 2015; Schaefer et al., 2011). For these consumers, brand awareness acts as both familiarity-liking cue and signal of reliability, leading them to prioritize highly visible and well-endorsed brands across digital touchpoints, especially when concerns about quality or security arise (Aaker, 1991; MacDonald & Sharp, 2000).

Collectively, these results provide clear empirical evidence that personality traits fundamentally shape how Generation Z consumers perceive and process brand information in digital environments. The differentiated effects across the Big Five traits show that brand awareness develops through distinct psychological tendencies governing exploration, attentional focus, social interaction, and risk evaluation, rather than through exposure alone. This suggests that digital brand awareness is driven by the cognitive and emotional mechanisms through which individuals attend to and encode brand cues.

The findings also reinforce theories of brand cognition by demonstrating that personality-informed processing styles influence both the frequency of brand cue exposure and the likelihood that these cues are stored in long-term memory. In this way, digital brand awareness acts as both a cognitive anchor and a behavioral guide that shapes subsequent judgments such as perceived value, preference formation, and inclusion in the consideration set. This underscores the importance of recognizing psychological heterogeneity in digital brand management.

From a practical perspective, the differentiated influences of personality traits offer actionable guidance for designing targeted digital communication strategies. Conscientious and neurotic consumers respond more strongly to structured, trustworthy, and information-rich messages, while open and extraverted consumers are better engaged through visually appealing, interactive, and socially driven content. Incorporating personality-sensitive segmentation into digital branding can therefore enhance relevance, increase message retention, and strengthen brand awareness across platforms.

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## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine how Big Five personality traits influence brand awareness among Generation Z consumers across major digital touchpoints in Vietnam. The findings demonstrate that four traits – openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism – significantly and positively predict digital brand awareness, with conscientiousness showing the strongest impact, followed by neuroticism, extraversion, and openness. Agreeableness, however, did not show adequate validity and was excluded from the final model. These results indicate that personality traits meaningfully shape the frequency, depth, and manner in which Gen Z consumers attend to and encode brand cues in online environments. Taken together, the study concludes that psychological characteristics provide a stronger explanatory foundation for digital brand awareness than demographic segmentation alone. The differentiated effects across traits highlight that curiosity, systematic information processing, social orientation, and risk sensitivity are key psychological pathways through which Gen Z consumers form awareness. Accordingly, firms can enhance the effectiveness of their digital branding efforts by tailoring communication strategies to personality-driven patterns of exploration, evaluation, and engagement.

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## AI ASSISTANCE

We would like to clarify that no artificial intelligence tools were used to generate, develop, or substantially modify any scholarly content of the article, including the theoretical framework, hypotheses, research design, data analysis, or interpretation of results.

At the final stage of manuscript preparation, limited language-support tools may have been used solely for general proofreading purposes, such as improving grammar, wording, and overall clarity of expression. This support did not involve the creation, revision, or modification of any academic arguments, interpretations, or conclusions.

All intellectual contributions, analytical decisions, and conclusions presented in the manuscript are entirely the work of the authors, who take full responsibility for its content.

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