



Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales

ICADE

**PLATFORM-SPECIFIC BRAND
COMMUNICATION ON
INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK: A
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
PRINGLES AND DORITOS AMONG
INTERNATIONAL GENERATION Z
CONSUMERS**

Autor: Casilda Trevijano Ruiz Caro

Director: Antonio Tena Blázquez

MADRID | Junio 2026

ABSTRACT

This Final Degree Project examines how snack brands adapt their communication to the distinct logics of Instagram and TikTok, taking Pringles and Doritos as a comparative case among international Generation Z consumers. Drawing on the literature on social media marketing, consumer-brand relationships, platform affordances, and Gen Z consumption, the study combines a structured content analysis of both brands' organic posts during February 2026 with an online survey of consumers aged 18 to 24. It aims to describe and compare the content strategies each brand deploys on each platform, to measure how that content performs through a standardized engagement metric, and to assess how young consumers perceive brand personality, authenticity, engagement, and loyalty. By pairing what the brands publish with how the audience responds, the project clarifies how platform logic, brand communication, and consumer perception interact in the snack sector, and what this implies for fast-moving consumer goods brands communicating with Generation Z across platforms.

KEYWORDS: social media marketing, Instagram, TikTok, Generation Z, consumer engagement, Pringles, Doritos.

RESUMEN

Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado examina cómo las marcas de snacks adaptan su comunicación a las lógicas propias de Instagram y TikTok, tomando a Pringles y Doritos como caso comparativo entre consumidores internacionales de la Generación Z. A partir de la literatura sobre marketing en redes sociales, relaciones marca-consumidor, affordances de plataforma y consumo de la Generación Z, el estudio combina un análisis de contenido estructurado de las publicaciones orgánicas de ambas marcas durante febrero de 2026 con una encuesta online a consumidores de entre 18 y 24 años. Sus objetivos son describir y comparar las estrategias de contenido que cada marca despliega en cada plataforma, medir su rendimiento mediante una métrica de engagement estandarizada y evaluar cómo perciben los jóvenes la personalidad de marca, la autenticidad, el engagement y la lealtad. Al combinar lo que publican las marcas con la respuesta de la audiencia, el trabajo esclarece cómo interactúan la lógica de plataforma, la comunicación de marca y la percepción del consumidor en el sector de los snacks, y qué implica esto para las marcas de gran consumo que se comunican con la Generación Z en distintas plataformas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: marketing en redes sociales, Instagram, TikTok, Generación Z, engagement del consumidor, Pringles, Doritos.

Index

1. Introduction.....	8
1.1. Background and Motivation	8
1.2. Research Problem and Justification	9
1.3. Research Question and Objectives	9
1.4. Working Hypotheses.....	10
1.5. Scope and Delimitations	10
1.6. Research Approach.....	11
1.7. Structure of the Dissertation.....	11
2. State of the Art.....	13
2.1. Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing	13
2.2. Consumer-Brand Relationships in the Digital Era	13
2.3. Generation Z as Digital Consumers	15
2.4. Platform Affordances and Engagement Across TikTok and Instagram	16
2.5. Food and Snack Brands on Social Media	17
2.6. Synthesis and Research Gap	18
3. Methodology.....	20
3.1. Research Design	20
3.2. Quantitative Content Analysis of Brand Posts.....	20
3.3. Quantitative Survey of Generation Z Consumers.....	23
3.4. Integration of the Two Strands	25
3.5. Ethical Considerations	26
3.6. Limitations of the Research Design	26
4. Results	28
4.1. Content analysis findings	28
4.2. Survey findings	35

4.3. Hypothesis testing	39
4.4. Summary of findings	44
5. Discussion and Conclusions.....	46
5.1. Discussion of findings	46
5.2. Theoretical implications.....	48
5.3. Managerial implications	49
5.4. Limitations and future research	50
5.5. Conclusions	51
7. References	54
8. Annex.....	57

Figure 1	Number of posts by brand and platform	29
Figure 2	Distribution of posts by format — Pringles.....	30
Figure 3	Distribution of posts by format — Doritos.	30
Figure 4.	Distribution of posts by content type — Pringles.....	31
Figure 5	Distribution of posts by content type — Doritos.	32
Figure 6	Event tie-in distribution per brand.....	34
Figure 7	Average likes and comments by brand and platform.....	35
Figure 8	Instagram Users.....	37
Figure 9	Tiktok Users.....	37
Figure 10	Pringles – Brand personality.....	38
Figure 11	Doritos – Brand personality.	38
Figure 12	Brand personality comparison.....	40
Figure 13	Pringles authenticity and loyalty.	41
Figure 14	Doritos authenticity and loyalty.....	42
Figure 15	Pringles engagement and loyalty.	43
Figure 16	Doritos engagement and loyalty.....	44

Table 1 Coding scheme for the content analysis of brand posts.	22
Table 2 Structure of the Gen Z survey	25
Table 3 Number of posts analysed by brand and platform.	28
Table 4 Distribution of posts by format.	29
Table 5 Distribution of posts by content type.	31
Table 6 Share of posts using each creative resource.	32
Table 7 Distribution of posts by event tie-in.	33
Table 8 Engagement descriptives by brand and platform.	34
Table 9 Demographic profile of the survey sample (n = 106).	36
Table 10 Brand personality means and standard deviations (1–5 Likert scale).	39
Table 11 Paired-samples t-test of brand personality dimensions (n = 106).	40
Table 12 Engagement comparison between collaboration and non-collaboration posts.	42
Table 13 Correlations supporting the engagement-as-bridge logic.	43
Table 14 Summary of hypothesis testing.	45

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Motivation

Scroll through Instagram and TikTok for a few minutes, and you'll often find the same snack brand greeting you in two very different ways. On Instagram, it might be a clean, eye-catching product photo. On TikTok, that same brand may be participating in a trend or using a format whose relevance is often short-lived. Over the last decade, social media has shifted from a secondary channel for consumer brands to one of the main places where younger audiences encounter them. Instagram and TikTok are now where Generation Z discovers products, forms opinions, and decides whether a brand is worth paying attention to, usually through a filter of humour, trends, and user-generated content rather than the brand itself.

For global Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies, and especially for snack brands, this shift is not a minor adjustment. The old logic of mass advertising has not disappeared, but it now coexists with a very different demand: content that adapts to each platform, remains culturally relevant, and is engaging enough to compete for the limited attention of Generation Z users. A brand that ignores this tends to look out of place, while a brand that gets it right can reach enormous audiences at a fraction of the cost of traditional media.

Two of the clearest examples of this are Pringles, owned by Kellanova, and Doritos, owned by PepsiCo. They sell a similar product to a largely overlapping audience, yet they have built noticeably different personalities online. Pringles tends to rely on humour, character-driven narratives, and its long-standing mascot, Mr. P, while more recent campaigns have expanded this approach through characters such as Pringleleo. Doritos has traditionally positioned itself as bolder and more disruptive, frequently linking its communication to popular culture and major events such as the Super Bowl. That contrast is exactly what makes them worth studying side by side: the same category, a similar target audience, and two different ways of communicating with the same consumers. In addition, both brands maintain active and comparable presences on Instagram and TikTok, making them particularly suitable for a cross-platform comparison.

My interest in this topic is partly academic and partly personal. As a Business Administration student at ICADE and a member of Generation Z myself, I have used

Instagram and TikTok daily for years, and I have noticed firsthand how a single brand can sound like two different companies depending on which app I open. I wanted to understand the strategy behind those choices and whether the audiences these brands target respond to them as intended by marketers. That question is where this dissertation begins.

1.2. Research Problem and Justification

Research on social media marketing has grown quickly, but several gaps still motivate this study. First, although TikTok research is expanding rapidly, much of the literature is still less developed than studies focused on Instagram and Facebook, particularly in comparative platform analysis. Second, Generation Z has been widely studied, but a significant portion of this research predates the dominance of short-form video platforms and often focuses on industries such as fashion and retail rather than FMCG contexts. Third, within the snack and fast-food category, much of the existing work tends to focus on single campaigns or single-platform analyses, with limited attention to cross-brand and cross-platform comparisons.

Pringles and Doritos on Instagram and TikTok provide a useful case to address these gaps. Both brands operate globally and target younger audiences, including Generation Z, while maintaining highly active presences on both platforms. However, their communication strategies differ across platforms. Studying them together allows for an examination of platform affordances, brand personality, and audience perception in a context that is comparable yet sufficiently rich. The findings are not only academically relevant but also address a practical challenge in FMCG marketing: how to maintain consistent brand identity while adapting content to platforms with different logics and engagement styles.

1.3. Research Question and Objectives

The study is guided by one central research question: how do Pringles and Doritos adapt their content strategies across Instagram and TikTok, and how does this affect engagement and brand perception among Generation Z consumers aged 18–24?

To operationalise this question, it is divided into three sub-questions. The first (SRQ1) is descriptive: what content strategies do Pringles and Doritos employ on each

platform, and what engagement outcomes do these strategies generate? The second (SRQ2) is explanatory: how do Generation Z consumers perceive brand personality, authenticity, and engagement value across the two platforms? The third (SRQ3) explores implications: what do the findings suggest for FMCG brands seeking to communicate with Generation Z in a cross-platform environment?

From these questions, four objectives are derived. The first is to describe and compare the content strategies that Pringles and Doritos deploy on Instagram and TikTok over a defined observation period. The second is to measure and compare content performance across platforms using a standardized set of engagement indicators to ensure comparability between metrics. The third is to assess how Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 24 perceive the brand personality, authenticity, engagement, and loyalty associated with each brand across both platforms. The fourth is to derive theoretical and managerial implications for platform-specific brand communication in the snack food sector.

1.4. Working Hypotheses

Five hypotheses, grounded in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, guide the empirical analysis. H1 proposes that engagement patterns and content strategies differ between Instagram and TikTok for both brands, reflecting the distinct affordances of each platform. H2 proposes that Generation Z consumers perceive Pringles and Doritos as having different brand personalities. H3 proposes that perceived authenticity in brand communication is positively associated with consumer brand loyalty. H4 proposes that posts incorporating influencer collaborations are associated with higher engagement levels than those that do not. H5 proposes that consumer brand engagement acts as a mediating factor between brand perception and consumer loyalty. Each hypothesis is derived from the literature in Chapter 2 and operationalised into measurable variables in the methodology presented in Chapter 3.

1.5. Scope and Delimitations

The study is deliberately bounded in four ways. Geographically, it focuses on the brands' global official accounts (@pringles and @doritos) rather than local or country-specific ones, in order to avoid distortions caused by market-specific campaigns. In terms of time, the content analysis covers the period from 1 to 28 February 2026. This window was selected intentionally, as it includes two events relevant to both brands, Super Bowl

LX and Valentine's Day, thereby capturing both campaign-driven and routine communication. In terms of audience, the study focuses on international Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 24, who are legally adults and among the most active users of both platforms. The survey collected 106 valid responses, which provides a sufficient dataset for exploratory analysis.

Several additional delimitations are also applied. Stories and posts from local accounts are excluded from the content analysis to maintain comparability across brands. Qualitative analysis of user comments is not included, as the study adopts a primarily quantitative approach. Finally, platforms beyond Instagram and TikTok are outside the scope of the analysis, although they are considered in the discussion of future research directions in Chapter 5.

1.6. Research Approach

The dissertation follows a quantitative strategy with two complementary strands. The first is a structured content analysis of all posts published by @pringles and @doritos on Instagram and TikTok during February 2026, coded using a standardised coding scheme and analysed through a standardised engagement metric. This strand captures the brand's side of communication. The second is an online survey of Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 24, which captures the audience's perspective in terms of perceived brand personality, engagement, and loyalty. Taken together, both strands are designed to address the research question from complementary perspectives. The full research design is detailed in Chapter 3.

1.7. Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation is structured into five chapters. This first chapter has introduced the topic, research question, objectives, hypotheses, and the scope and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework by reviewing the literature on social media marketing, consumer-brand relationships, Generation Z as digital consumers, the affordances of Instagram and TikTok, and communication strategies in the food and snack sector, and identifies the research gap this study addresses. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, including the overall research design, the content analysis protocol, the survey, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the approach. Chapter 4 presents the findings from both the content analysis and the survey. Chapter 5 integrates both strands

of analysis, discusses their theoretical and managerial implications, presents the main conclusions, and outlines directions for future research.

2. State of the Art

2.1. Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing

Marketing has changed significantly over the past two decades. What was once a largely one-way, mass-communication activity has evolved into a more interactive, data-driven, and participatory environment, largely driven by the rise of social media as a central space for brand communication. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) offer one of the most widely cited academic definitions of social media, describing it as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (p. 61). Although the definition predates platforms such as TikTok, it remains relevant as it foregrounds the participatory and user-generated nature of these environments.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has since developed into a distinct field. Felix, Rauschnabel, and Hinsch (2017) argue that it should be understood as a cross-functional, organisation-wide concept rather than a simple communication tool, structured around four dimensions: scope, culture, structure, and governance. This strategic perspective is particularly useful when analysing brands operating in the same category but communicating in different ways, as is the case with Pringles and Doritos. More recently, Appel et al. (2020) highlight the forces shaping the evolution of SMM, including personalisation, influencer marketing, mobile-first consumption, and algorithmic curation. They note that despite how deeply social media now permeates personal and professional life, its role in marketing is still only partially understood (Appel et al., 2020), which underscores the continuing complexity of the field.

Two key insights can be derived from this literature. First, SMM should be understood as a strategic domain rather than an extension of traditional promotional tools. Second, platforms operate differently, meaning that engagement is shaped by platform affordances, content formats, and algorithmic logics, an idea that is further developed in Section 2.4.

2.2. Consumer-Brand Relationships in the Digital Era

Marketing practice is not the only thing that has shifted. The way brands and consumers interact has changed just as much. On social media, consumers not only receive brand messages. They respond to them, sometimes using brand content to create

their own, and help build the meaning of a brand in real time. Making sense of these relationships means bringing together three ideas: brand equity, brand personality, and consumer engagement.

Brand equity is a useful place to start. Keller (1993) defines customer-based brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (p. 2), and ties it to two components: brand awareness and brand image. Within brand image, brand personality matters a great deal for anything to do with social media. Aaker (1997) defines it as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (p. 347) and proposes a widely used five-dimension scale covering sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. That framework fits this study well, because Pringles and Doritos sit in the same product category yet project clearly different personalities online: Pringles playful and witty, Doritos bolder and more disruptive.

Consumer engagement is closely tied to personality. Brodie et al. (2013) argue that engagement in virtual brand communities is about more than counting interactions; it reflects a cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investment in the brand. Hollebeck, Glynn, and Brodie (2014) built on this with their Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) scale, which measures engagement across three dimensions: cognitive processing, affection, and activation. Their model is central to social media research precisely because it links the things we can see, such as likes, comments, and shares, with the psychological processes underneath, and it shapes the questionnaire used in the empirical part of this study.

Two further ideas complete the picture. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) introduce brand love, “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name” (p. 81), something more likely to appear in hedonic, self-expressive categories such as snacks. Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016), for their part, show that both firm-created and user-generated communication affect brand equity, but that user-generated content has a particularly strong pull on brand attitudes. Taken together, these contributions make the same point: consumer-brand relationships online are relational, emotional, and co-created rather than transactional.

2.3. Generation Z as Digital Consumers

Any study about young consumers has to be clear about who it refers to. Generation Z is usually defined as the cohort born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019), which places its members at approximately 14 to 29 years old in 2026. This study narrows the focus to users aged 18 to 24, who are legally adults, make independent consumption decisions, and are among the most active users of visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

There is broad consensus that this cohort grew up digital. Whereas Millennials experienced the transition from analogue to digital environments, Generation Z has been immersed in smartphones, social media, and on-demand content from an early age (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). In their McKinsey study, Francis and Hoefel describe a generation characterised by a fluid sense of identity, a strong preference for community and dialogue, and a pragmatic outlook. More broadly, research suggests that Gen Z consumers value authenticity, expect transparency, and respond positively to communication that feels native to the platform, although these preferences may vary across cultural contexts.

These values are reflected in observable behaviour. Djafarova and Bowes (2021), in their study of impulse fashion purchases, find that young Instagram users are strongly influenced by visual appeal, promotions, ease of purchase, and particularly influencers, often leading to emotionally driven consumption decisions. Their findings align with a broader observation: Generation Z is not only a heavier user of digital media, but also a segment with distinct expectations regarding how brands should communicate online.

This has two key implications for this study. First, snacks are a natural fit for this audience, as they are closely linked to informal, social, and leisure contexts in which young consumers are highly active online. Second, engaging Generation Z is challenging, as these consumers tend to disengage from overly promotional content and respond more positively to communication that feels authentic and platform-native. This tension between brand consistency and platform adaptation lies at the core of the Pringles–Doritos comparison developed in the following sections.

2.4. Platform Affordances and Engagement Across TikTok and Instagram

Comparing brand communication across platforms challenges the assumption that platforms are neutral pipes through which content simply flows. The concept of platform affordances offers a more precise analytical lens. Bucher and Helmond (2018) argue that platform design, algorithms, and cultural norms actively shape what users can do, how content circulates, and which forms of participation are encouraged. Kietzmann et al. (2011) complement this view through their seven functional building blocks of social media (identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups), highlighting that platforms prioritise these dimensions differently. Instagram and TikTok, therefore, are not interchangeable environments but distinct communicative ecosystems.

Engagement is the primary metric for evaluating brand communication on these platforms. As noted earlier, Hollebeek et al. (2014) conceptualise engagement as a multidimensional construct, although empirical research often relies on observable indicators such as likes, comments, shares, and views. Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García, and Castellanos-Verdugo (2017) propose a normalised engagement metric based on user interactions relative to audience size. Although originally developed for Twitter, the underlying logic is applicable to other platforms and is adapted here as the main quantitative indicator. However, it is important to note that identical metrics may not represent identical forms of engagement, as likes, comments, and shares can carry different meanings across platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

Instagram is often characterised as a platform where visual consistency, aesthetic quality, and aspirational display play a central role, making it a natural environment for influencer marketing. Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2020) show that perceived originality and uniqueness of influencer content enhance opinion leadership on Instagram, which in turn increases consumers' willingness to follow recommendations and make purchases. De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) add that the effect of influencer popularity is non-linear, as very high follower counts may reduce perceived authenticity and credibility. Consequently, micro-influencers often perform better in niche contexts. For Generation Z, Djafarova and Bowes (2021) confirm that Instagram functions as a key platform for brand discovery and emotionally driven consumption.

TikTok operates according to a different logic. Visibility is driven less by follower

networks and more by algorithmic distribution through the “For You” page, enabling content to reach large audiences without an established following. Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García (2022) describe the platform as being structured around participatory short-form content based on trends, sounds, challenges, and remixable formats. In comparing influencer marketing across platforms, Haenlein et al. (2020) argue that TikTok rewards creativity, spontaneity, and cultural fluency more than polished advertising.

Taken together, the two platforms reflect distinct underlying logics. Instagram emphasises visual consistency, aspirational branding, identity performance, and influencer-led persuasion, while TikTok prioritizes cultural fluency, trend participation, spontaneity, and platform-native creativity. These differences reflect deeper variations in affordances, algorithms, and user expectations, and they raise the central research question of this study: how can global brands such as Pringles and Doritos maintain a coherent identity across platforms that work so differently?

2.5. Food and Snack Brands on Social Media

The food and snack industry built its reputation on mass advertising and point-of-sale promotion, but over the last decade, it has pushed steadily into social media, especially for products tied to informal consumption and leisure. Vassallo et al. (2018), in a content analysis of Instagram, show that snack and fast-food brands have developed very active strategies on the platform, leaning on visually appealing, emotionally engaging content rather than traditional product-centred advertising.

Research on creative strategy helps explain what actually works in this sector. Ashley and Tuten (2015) find that brands using a varied creative mix, particularly combinations of functional, experiential, and user-image appeals, tend to earn more engagement than those that stay purely promotional. Building on that, Tafesse and Wien (2017) develop a typology of twelve content categories, including experiential, entertainment, cause-related, brand-resonance, and customer-relationship posts, and show that brands diversifying their content, with a clear tilt towards experiential and entertaining posts, achieve stronger engagement. This framework is operationalised in the methodological design to classify content types in the empirical analysis of this study.

Pringles (Kellanova) and Doritos (PepsiCo) are two of the most recognisable snack

brands in the global FMCG market. Pringles, with its distinctive packaging and its mascot “Mr. P”, communicates through humour, quirkiness, and a playful tone. Doritos has built itself as bolder, more disruptive, and youth-oriented, closely tied to energy and popular culture and often to high-profile Super Bowl campaigns. Both compete in the same category and target largely the same consumer segment, yet their tone of voice and their relationship with popular culture differ clearly, which makes them a strong pair for comparison. Both also maintain active official accounts on Instagram and TikTok, the central platforms of this study. In line with the methodological design, the analysis focuses specifically on Gen Z consumers aged 18 to 24.

Despite their visibility, integrated comparative analyses that combine platform-specific content strategies with Gen Z consumer perceptions across Instagram and TikTok remain limited. This study addresses this gap by combining content analysis and survey-based evidence to examine both brand communication and consumer interpretation within a unified framework.

2.6. Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature reviewed in this chapter moves from a general view of social media marketing (2.1) towards progressively more specific lenses: the changing relationship between brands and consumers (2.2), the traits of Generation Z as digital consumers (2.3), the affordances of Instagram and TikTok (2.4), and the practices of food and snack brands in this space (2.5). Taken together, the sections make a single argument: the effectiveness of brand communication on social media cannot be explained by looking at content in isolation, since it depends on the platform on which it circulates, the audience that receives it, and the broader strategy of the brand. On that basis, the empirical work is guided by a simple conceptual model organised around four connected dimensions: platform affordances, content strategies, consumer engagement, and brand perception, which together feed into loyalty.

Three gaps remain across this literature. Most studies of social media brand communication still focus on a single platform, and comparative work that includes TikTok is limited. Research on Generation Z often relies on studies that predate short-form video, or concentrates on fashion and retail rather than on FMCG. And within the snack industry, most work looks at single campaigns or single platforms, without

systematically comparing how different brands adapt across them. This study takes on those gaps with a comparative, platform-specific, Gen Z-focused analysis of Pringles and Doritos on Instagram and TikTok, pairing a content analysis of brand posts with a survey of young consumers. The next chapter sets out the research design built to examine these dynamics.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This chapter sets out the research design and methods used to answer the research question and test the hypotheses presented in Chapter 1. Given that the study examines both how Pringles and Doritos communicate their content strategies on Instagram and TikTok, and how Generation Z consumers perceive that communication, it follows a quantitative strategy. The design is grounded in a post-positivist epistemological stance, which assumes that social phenomena can be studied through systematic observation, measurement, and statistical analysis, while recognizing that interpretation of findings still requires theoretical and contextual judgement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The design combines two complementary quantitative strands. The first is a structured content analysis of posts published by @pringles and @doritos on Instagram and TikTok during February 2026, capturing the supply-side of brand communication. The second is an online survey of Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 24, capturing the demand-side perspective in terms of perceptions, engagement, and loyalty. Together, these two strands provide a complementary understanding of the research question: the content analysis examines what each brand does on each platform, while the survey captures how these practices are perceived and evaluated by the target audience. The integration of both strands is explained in Section 3.4.

3.2. Quantitative Content Analysis of Brand Posts

The first strand follows the logic of quantitative content analysis, which Krippendorff (2018) defines as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p. 24). The technique suits this study because it allows large numbers of brand posts to be classified and compared across platforms using clearly defined categories and measurable variables (Neuendorf, 2017).

The unit of analysis is the individual post published by each official account. The sample consists of all organic posts uploaded by @pringles and @doritos on Instagram and TikTok between 1 and 28 February 2026, a window chosen because it contains two events that matter to both brands: Super Bowl LX and Valentine's Day. That month therefore captures both campaign-driven and routine communication. Paid

advertisements, stories, and posts from local accounts are excluded to keep the comparison consistent across brands and platforms.

Each post is coded with a structured scheme organised in three groups of variables. The first captures the formal features of the post: platform, format, duration, visual style, presence of text overlay, and use of music or trending sounds. The second captures content strategy, adapting the typology of Tafesse and Wien (2017) to record whether a post relies on humour, storytelling, product-centred messaging, UGC integration, influencer collaboration, trend participation, or a clear tie-in with Super Bowl LX or Valentine's Day. The third captures engagement, measured through likes, comments, shares, and views, and summarised in an engagement rate.

Following Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García, and Castellanos-Verdugo (2017), this rate is calculated as the sum of observable interactions (likes, comments, and shares) divided by the account's follower base at the moment of data collection, then multiplied by 100 to give a percentage that can be compared across accounts and platforms. Views are recorded as supplementary metrics but are not included in the engagement rate calculation. Table 3.1 sets out the full coding scheme.

Coding is carried out by the author, following a detailed codebook that defines each variable and the rules for handling ambiguous cases. To keep the coding consistent, the coding scheme was pre-tested on a subset of posts and refined accordingly. The author also re-checks a subset of the posts a few days after the first round and resolves any doubtful cases before the dataset is finalised. The data are recorded and analysed in Microsoft Excel, mainly through descriptive statistics, such as the share of each content type and the average engagement rate for each brand and platform, complemented by descriptive comparisons of means across groups. This evidence speaks directly to hypotheses H1, H2, and H4.

Each post is therefore described through a set of variables organised in five groups: identification, formal features, content strategy, performance metrics, and contextual variables. The first three groups are coded manually by the author on the basis of the post itself, while the performance metrics are taken directly from the platform interface at the moment of data collection. Contextual variables are included for traceability purposes and as a reference in case of ambiguity in later analysis. The complete coding scheme is

summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Coding scheme for the content analysis of brand posts.

Group	Variable	What it captures
Identification	Identification	Sequential number identifying each post in the dataset
Identification	Brand	Pringles or Doritos
Identification	Platform	Instagram or TikTok
Identification	Date	Date (M/D/2026)
Formal features	Format	Static image, carousel, Reel, TikTok video
Formal features	Duration (s)	Length of video in seconds
Formal features	Visual style	Product-centred, lifestyle, meme/humorous, mascot, partnership, etc.
Formal features	Text overlay	Presence of text on image/video (Yes/No)
Formal features	Audio	Original audio, trending sound, or none
Content strategy	Content type (Tafesse & Wien, 2017)	Entertainment, experiential, brand-resonance, product, cause-related, customer-relationship
Content strategy	Humour	Yes/No
Content strategy	Storytelling	Yes/No
Content strategy	Product-centred	Yes/No
Content strategy	UGC	Yes/No
Content strategy	Influencer	Yes/No

Content strategy	Trend	Yes/No
Content strategy	Event tie-in	SuperBowlLX/Valentine's Day/none
Content strategy	Call to action	Yes/No
Performance metrics	Likes	Number of likes
Performance metrics	Comments	Number of comments
Performance metrics	Shares	Number of shares
Performance metrics	Views	Number of views (TikTok only)
Performance metrics	Followers	Followers of the account at time of data collection
Performance metrics	Engagement rate (%)	$(\text{Likes} + \text{comments} + \text{shares}) / \text{followers} \times 100$
Contextual variables	Notes	Visualdescription, hashtags,music, partnerships
Contextual variables	Caption (verbatim)	Exact caption text
Contextual variables	On-screen text (verbatim)	Exact text shown in post

Source: own elaboration based on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

3.3. Quantitative Survey of Generation Z Consumers

The second strand is a structured online survey designed to capture how Generation Z consumers perceive the communication of Pringles and Doritos on Instagram and TikTok. The target population is international Gen Z users aged 18 to 24 who report regular use of at least one of the two platforms. Sampling is non-probabilistic, combining convenience and snowball sampling through the researcher's academic and social networks, with a deliberate effort to include respondents from different countries.

The study obtained 110 responses; four respondents outside the 18–24 range were removed, leaving 106 valid responses, which were included in the final analysis. This sample size is considered sufficient for descriptive and comparative analysis in marketing research of this scope (Hair et al., 2019).

The questionnaire was designed in Google Forms and structured in five thematic sections, each aligned with the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2. Section 1 collects demographic information (age, gender, country of residence, and level of studies). Sections 2 and 3 measure Instagram and TikTok usage patterns, including frequency of use, time spent on the platforms, and exposure to branded content. A branching logic was implemented so that respondents only complete platform-specific sections if they actively use each platform, improving data quality and reducing respondent burden.

Section 4 focuses on brand awareness, consumption behaviour, and perceptual constructs, including brand personality, perceived authenticity, and consumer engagement. Section 5 measures purchase intention, loyalty, and influencer receptiveness. All perceptual items are measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), allowing the construction of composite indices for each construct.

Before distribution, the questionnaire was piloted with approximately ten Generation Z respondents to ensure clarity, flow, and appropriate length. Minor adjustments were made based on feedback.

Data analysis follows three steps. First, descriptive statistics summarise all variables using frequencies, percentages, and means. Second, reliability of multi-item scales is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). Third, hypothesis testing is conducted through mean comparisons between brands and platforms, correlation analysis to explore relationships between constructs (H3 and H5), and comparative tests aligned with H1 and H4. The analysis is conducted using Microsoft Excel for data cleaning and descriptive analysis. Given the cross-sectional design, mediation effects are not formally tested; instead, relationships between constructs are explored through correlation analysis.

Table 2 Structure of the Gen Z survey

Section	Theme	Type of questions	Conditional on
Section 1	Demographic profile	Single-choice(age, gender, level of studies), open text (country)	All respondents
Section 2	Instagram habits	Frequency of use, time spent, exposure to branded content	Instagram users
Section 3	TikTok habits	Frequency of use, time spent, exposure to branded content	TikTok users
Section 4	Brand perceptions	Brand awareness, consumption, Likert scales (personality, authenticity, engagement)	All respondents
Section 5	Loyalty and purchase intention	Likert scales (1–5), influencer receptiveness	All respondents

Source: own elaboration based on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

3.4. Integration of the Two Strands

Although the two strands are analyzed separately, they are designed to produce complementary evidence that, when interpreted together, provides a more complete answer to the research question. The content analysis captures what Pringles and Doritos publish on Instagram and TikTok and how these posts perform in terms of observable engagement, providing evidence for SRQ1 and hypothesis H1. The survey captures how Gen Z consumers interpret and respond to this communication in terms of brand personality, perceived authenticity, engagement, and loyalty, addressing SRQ2 and hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5.

The integration of both datasets follows a convergent logic, in which quantitative evidence from brand-generated content is compared with consumer perceptions in order to identify areas of alignment and divergence between brand strategy and audience interpretation. This approach allows for a form of methodological triangulation based on two complementary perspectives of the same phenomenon: brand output and consumer response.

The two strands are fully integrated in Chapter 5, where the findings are discussed jointly. This comparison is used to identify where brand communication strategies align with consumer perceptions and where inconsistencies emerge, to answer SRQ3 and derive theoretical and managerial implications.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The research follows the ethical principles set out in the ICADE guidelines for the Final Degree Project and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Participation in the survey is voluntary and anonymous and is preceded by an informed consent statement that explains the purpose of the study, its academic nature, the estimated completion time, and the use of aggregated data for research purposes.

No personally identifiable information is collected, and all responses are stored and analyzed in aggregated form using Google Forms and Microsoft Excel, with access restricted exclusively to the researcher. Data are used solely for academic purposes and are not shared with third parties.

For the content analysis, only publicly available posts from the official Instagram and TikTok accounts of Pringles and Doritos are examined. No private content or individual user data is accessed, and no social media users are identified, quoted, or tracked.

3.6. Limitations of the Research Design

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the content analysis is restricted to a single month (February 2026), which captures a relevant communication period but does not fully reflect the long-term content strategies of either brand.

Second, the survey relies on non-probabilistic sampling, combining convenience and snowball techniques, which limits the generalizability of the findings to the wider Gen Z population. This approach may also introduce self-selection bias, as individuals more

interested in social media or the brands under study may be more likely to participate.

Third, the survey is based on self-reported data, which may be affected by social desirability bias and recall limitations, particularly in relation to platform usage, exposure to branded content, and behavioral intentions such as purchase likelihood.

Fourth, the study focuses exclusively on Instagram and TikTok. While this choice is justified by their relevance for Gen Z and visual brand communication, it excludes other relevant platforms such as YouTube Shorts, which may also play a role in FMCG brand strategies.

Finally, the cross-sectional and correlational nature of the research design does not allow for causal inference between variables. The relationships identified in the survey should therefore be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

4. Results

This chapter presents the empirical evidence collected for the dissertation. The first section reports the findings of the content analysis carried out on the @pringles and @doritos accounts during February 2026. The second section presents the survey findings. The third section uses both sources of evidence to test the five hypotheses formulated in Chapter 1, and the fourth section closes with a synthesis of the results that sets up the discussion in Chapter 5. All numerical results reported in this chapter are computed from formulas in the two companion Excel files referenced in the methodology: the coded posts dataset and the cleaned survey responses.

4.1. Content analysis findings

4.1.1. Sample composition and overall activity

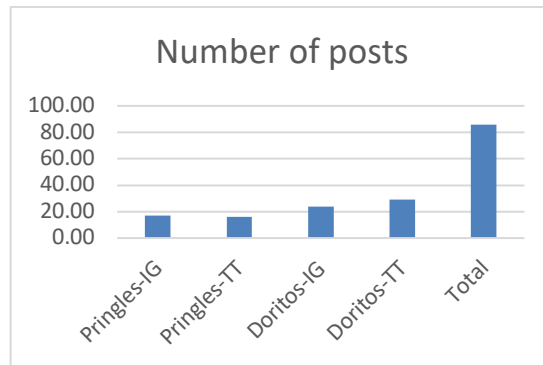
During the four weeks of February 2026, the official Pringles and Doritos accounts published 86 posts that met the inclusion criteria defined in Chapter 3. Doritos published 53 posts and Pringles 33, which already points to a more active brand on the Doritos side during the observation window. Both brands divided their output between Instagram and TikTok in fairly similar proportions, as Table 3 shows.

Table 3 Number of posts analysed by brand and platform.

Platform	Pringles	Doritos	Total
Instagram	17	24	41
TikTok	16	29	45
Total	33	53	86

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 1 Number of posts by brand and platform



Source: own elaboration.

4.1.2. Format and content type

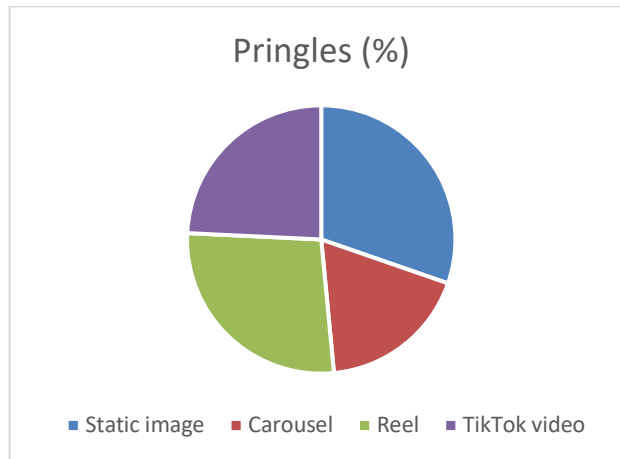
Reels and TikTok videos together account for 51.5% of Pringles's output and 71.7% of Doritos's, confirming the dominance of short-form video. Static images are now a minority on both sides, with 10 posts from Pringles (30.3%) and 8 from Doritos (15.1%) in the whole month. Carousels sit in between and are used mainly for product launches or partnerships that require more than one slide.

Table 4 Distribution of posts by format.

Format	Pringles (n)	Pringles (%)	Doritos (n)	Doritos (%)
Static image	10	30.3%	8	15.1%
Carousel	6	18.2%	7	13.2%
Reel	9	27.3%	16	30.2%
TikTok video	8	24.2%	22	41.5%

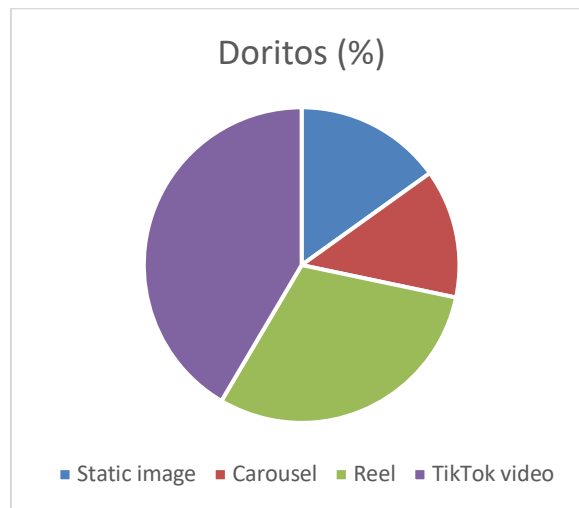
Source: own elaboration.

Figure 2 *Distribution of posts by format — Pringles.*



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 3 *Distribution of posts by format — Doritos.*



Source: own elaboration.

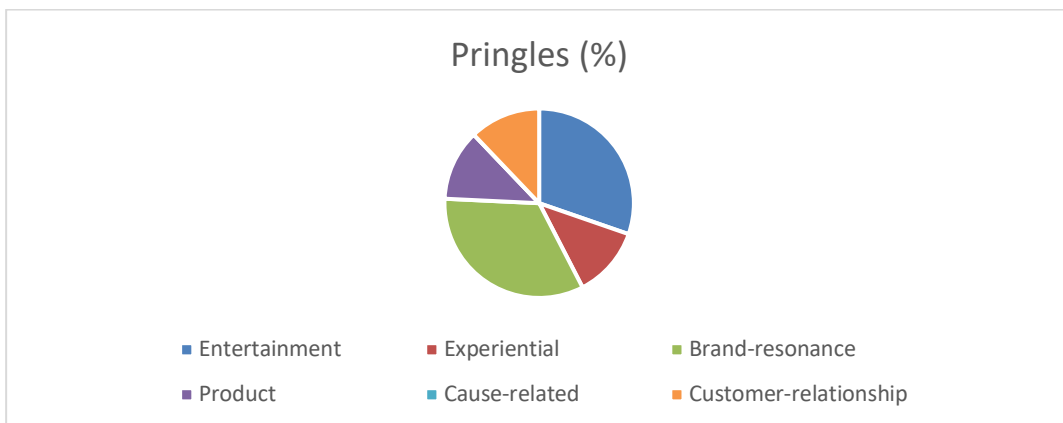
Content type was coded using the typology of Tafesse and Wien (2017). Brand-resonance content accounts for almost half of Doritos's output (47.2%) and one third of Pringles's (33.3%). Entertainment is the second most frequent category for both brands. Pringles spreads its output more evenly across the typology, with 12.1% of its posts in experiential content, 12.1% in customer relationship, and 12.1% in product-centred posts. Doritos puts almost no weight on the experiential (0%) or customer relationship (1.9%) dimensions and concentrates almost everything in brand-resonance and entertainment.

Table 5 Distribution of posts by content type.

Content type	Pringles (n)	Pringles (%)	Doritos (n)	Doritos (%)
Entertainment	10	30.3%	19	35.8%
Experiential	4	12.1%	0	0.0%
Brand-resonance	11	33.3%	25	47.2%
Product	4	12.1%	8	15.1%
Cause-related	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Customer-relationship	4	12.1%	1	1.9%

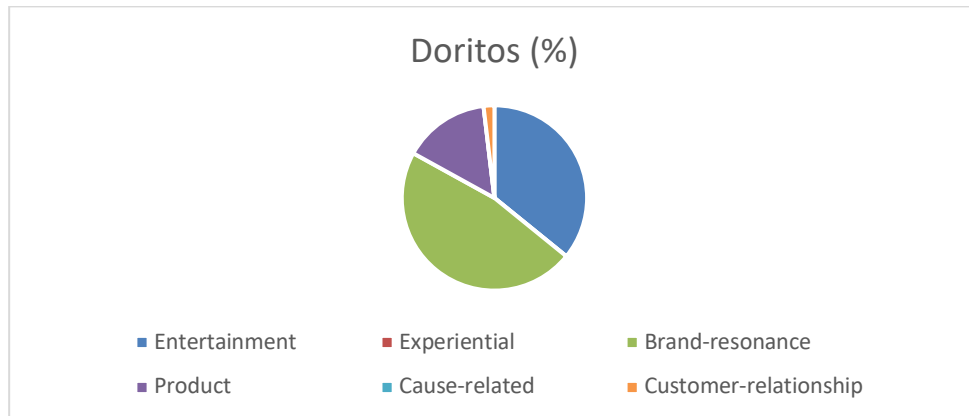
Source: own elaboration based on Tafesse and Wien (2017).

Figure 4. Distribution of posts by content type — Pringles.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 5 Distribution of posts by content type — Doritos.



Source: own elaboration.

4.1.3. Creative resources

Humour is the most common creative device for both brands, present in roughly three quarters of all posts (75.8% Pringles, 76.5% Doritos). After that the two brands diverge. Pringles relies much more on storytelling, with 63.6% of its posts following a narrative arc against 28.3% for Doritos, and on on-screen text overlays (87.9% versus 52.8%). Doritos leans more on influencer collaborations, which are present in 26.4% of its posts against only 9.1% for Pringles. User-generated content is rare in both feeds, although Doritos uses it slightly more often (5.7% versus 0%).

Table 6 Share of posts using each creative resource.

Creative resource	Pringles	Doritos	Difference (P-D)
Humour	75.8%	76.5%	-0.7 pp
Storytelling	63.6%	28.3%	+35.3 pp
Product-centred	75.8%	62.3%	+13.5 pp
UGC	0.0%	5.7%	-5.7 pp
Influencer	9.1%	26.4%	-17.3 pp
Trend participation	21.2%	9.4%	+11.8 pp
Call to action	42.4%	26.4%	+16.0 pp

Text overlay	87.9%	52.8%	+35.1 pp
--------------	-------	-------	----------

Source: own elaboration.

4.1.4. Event tie-ins

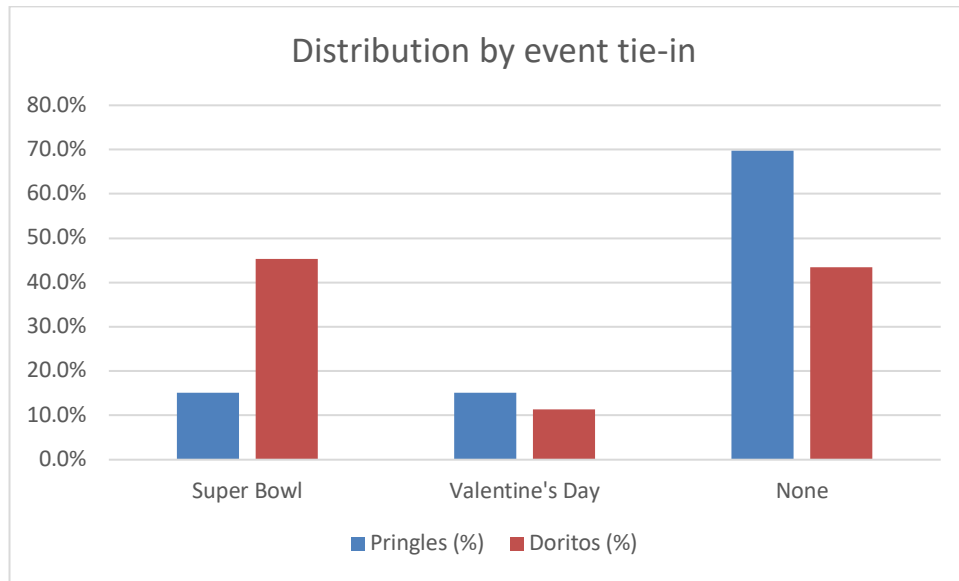
February 2026 contained two clear calendar anchors: the first half of the month was dominated by Super Bowl LX and the middle by Valentine's Day. The two brands invested in them very differently. Doritos turned almost half of its monthly output into Super Bowl content (45.3%), while Pringles dedicated only 15.2% of its posts to it. Valentine's coverage was more balanced, with 15.2% from Pringles and 11.3% from Doritos.

Table 7 Distribution of posts by event tie-in.

Event	Pringles (n)	Pringles (%)	Doritos (n)	Doritos (%)
Super Bowl	5	15.2%	24	45.3%
Valentine's Day	5	15.2%	6	11.3%
None	23	69.7%	23	43.4%

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 6 Event tie-in distribution per brand.



Source: own elaboration.

4.1.5. Engagement performance

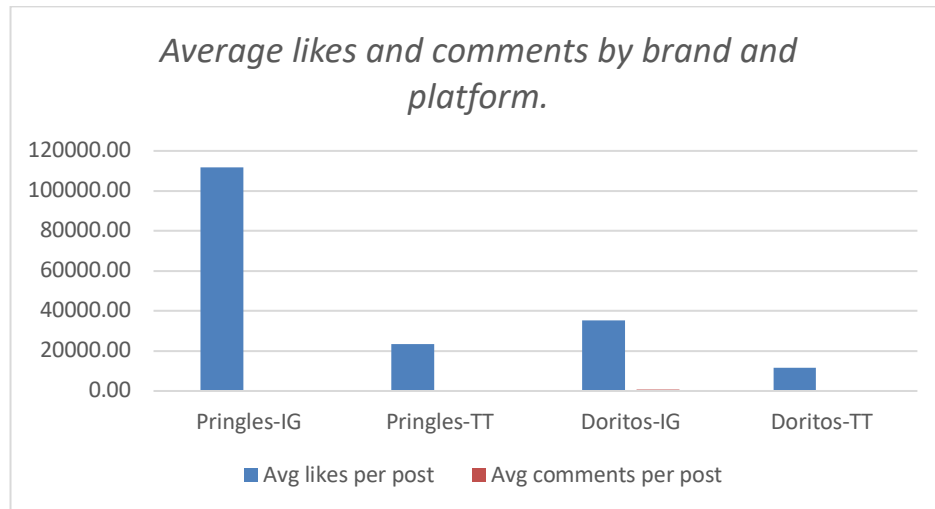
Engagement was measured using the metric proposed by Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García and Castellanos-Verdugo (2017): the sum of likes, comments and shares divided by followers, multiplied by 100. The follower base at the time of data collection was 922,000 for Pringles on Instagram, 1,100,000 for Doritos on Instagram, 650,300 for Pringles on TikTok and 1,900,000 for Doritos on TikTok. The averages per brand and platform are reported in Table 8.

Table 8 Engagement descriptives by brand and platform.

Metric	Pringles–IG	Pringles–TT	Doritos–IG	Doritos–TT
Avg likes per post	111,727	23,301	35,213	11,499
Avg comments per post	473	296	590	354
Avg shares per post	8,292	637	2,205	636
Avg engagement rate (%)	13.07	3.73	3.46	0.66

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 7 Average likes and comments by brand and platform.



Source: own elaboration.

Two patterns deserve to be flagged here. The first is that Instagram outperforms TikTok in mean engagement rate per follower for both brands, even though TikTok consistently generated more views across the month. The second is that the means are pulled up by a small number of viral posts (Sabrina Carpenter for Pringles, IShowSpeed for Doritos), so the gap between brands at the level of averages is driven by a handful of high-performing collaborations rather than by the bulk of everyday content. This nuance is picked up again in Section 4.3.1.

4.2. Survey findings

The questionnaire reached 110 respondents through Google Forms. Four cases outside the 18 to 24 Gen Z window were removed before analysis (two under 18 and two over 24), leaving 106 valid responses. This section first describes the demographic profile of the sample, then reports platform habits and brand awareness, and finally summarises the response patterns on the four perception scales.

4.2.1. Sample profile

Sixty-three respondents are between 22 and 24 years old and forty-three are between 18 and 21. Gender is balanced almost evenly, with 52 women, 51 men, two non-binary respondents and one who preferred not to disclose. Spain accounts for 70 of the 106 respondents after merging the spelling variants of the country name. The United States contributes 9, the United Kingdom 7, France 7, and the remaining respondents come from

a handful of other European, Latin American and Asian countries. Fifty-three respondents had recently completed an undergraduate degree, fifty-two were currently in undergraduate studies, and one selected "Other".

Table 9 Demographic profile of the survey sample (n = 106).

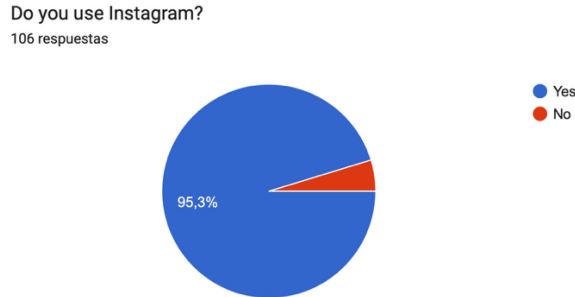
Variable	Category	n	%
Age	18–21	43	40.6%
Age	22–24	63	59.4%
Gender	Female	52	49.1%
Gender	Male	51	48.1%
Gender	Non-binary	2	1.9%
Gender	Prefer not to say	1	0.9%
Country	Spain	70	66.0%
Country	United States	9	8.5%
Country	United Kingdom	7	6.6%
Country	France	7	6.6%
Country	Other	13	12.3%

Source: own elaboration.

4.2.2. Platform habits and brand awareness

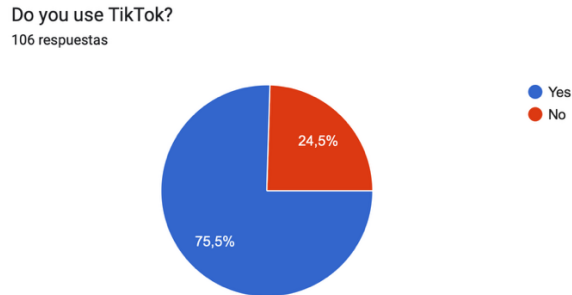
Instagram is part of the daily routine for almost every respondent in the sample. 101 of the 106 participants reported using it (95.3%) and 80 reported using TikTok (75.5%). On both platforms the most common pattern of use is several times a day, and daily time spent ranges between thirty minutes and three hours, with one to two hours being the modal answer on both platforms. Brand awareness was effectively universal: every single respondent recognised both Pringles and Doritos. Forty-two respondents rated their Pringles purchase frequency as a 4 or a 5 on the five-point scale, against 34 for Doritos. When asked whether they follow either brand on social media, 80 of the 106 respondents (75.5%) said they followed neither.

Figure 8 Instagram Users.



Source: Google forms, elaborated from survey data.

Figure 9 Tiktok Users.



Source: Google forms, elaborated from survey data.

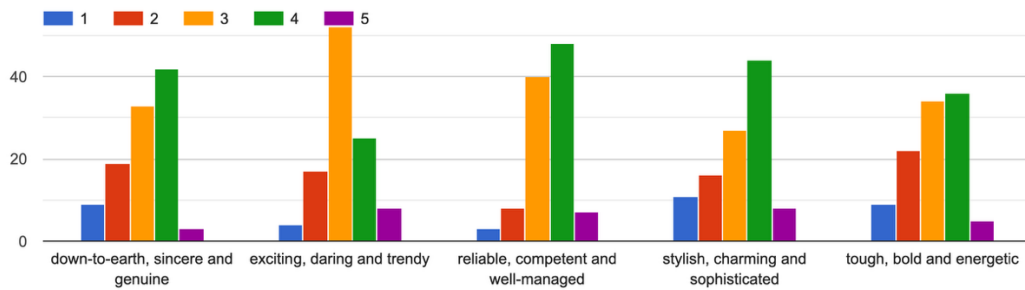
4.2.3. Perception scales

Four perceptual constructs were measured with multi-item Likert blocks. Brand personality was captured with five items adapted from Aaker (1997), one per dimension (down-to-earth, exciting, reliable, stylish and tough). Consumer-brand engagement was captured with ten items adapted from Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014). Perceived authenticity was measured with three items focused on whether the brand's communication feels genuine, honest and not overly staged. Purchase intention, loyalty and influencer receptiveness were combined into a six-item block. The same items were repeated for both brands, so every respondent rated Pringles and Doritos on identical scales. For each respondent and each block, the items were averaged into a single composite score per brand on the 1 to 5 scale. Those composite scores are the inputs used in Section 4.3 to test H2, H3 and H5.

Table 10 reports the mean score given to each brand on the five Aaker (1997) dimensions. Doritos is rated as more exciting (mean = 3.58) than Pringles (mean = 3.15) and somewhat tougher (3.34 versus 3.06). On reliability and down-to-earth, the two brands sit at almost identical means. Gen Z respondents do perceive the two brands differently, but the differentiation is concentrated in only two of the five personality dimensions.

Figure 10 Pringles – Brand personality.

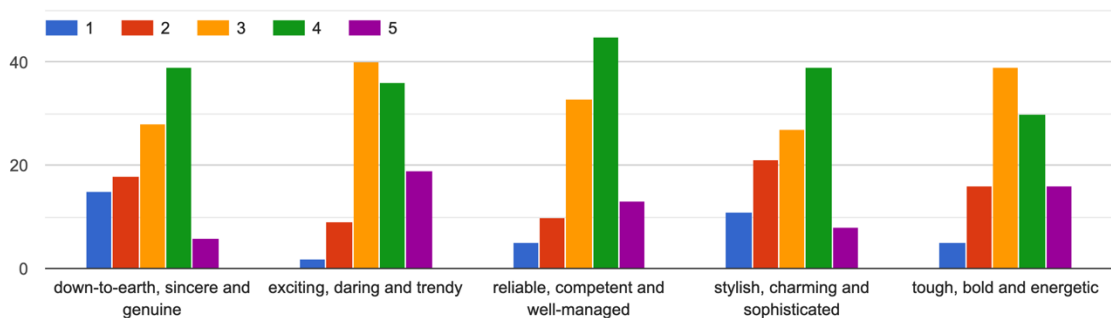
Pringles – Brand personality. "This brand feels..." (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Source: Google forms, elaborated from survey data.

Figure 11 Doritos – Brand personality.

Doritos – Brand personality. "This brand feels..." (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



Source: Google forms, elaborated from survey data.

Table 10 Brand personality means and standard deviations (1–5 Likert scale).

Dimension	Pringles (M)	Pringles (SD)	Doritos (M)	Doritos (SD)
Down-to-earth	3.10	1.01	3.03	1.16
Exciting	3.15	0.91	3.58	0.95
Reliable	3.45	0.84	3.48	0.99
Stylish	3.21	1.12	3.11	1.13
Tough	3.06	1.04	3.34	1.06

Source: own elaboration.

4.3. Hypothesis testing

4.3.1. H1. Platform differences in engagement and content strategies

H1 proposed that engagement rates and content strategies differ between Instagram and TikTok for both brands. The content analysis data show that the two strategies are not the same. Doritos posts noticeably more TikTok videos (41.5% of its output) than Pringles (24.2%), and Pringles posts more static images (30.3% versus 15.1%). Mean engagement rates also differ. For Pringles the engagement rate is 13.07% on Instagram and 3.73% on TikTok. For Doritos the figures are 3.46% on Instagram and 0.66% on TikTok. The gap is sizable and it runs in the same direction for both brands, so the hypothesis is supported in the sense that a platform effect is clearly present.

Two qualifications matter and both push back against the intuition often used in marketing practice. The first is that the direction of the effect is the opposite of what is usually assumed. The popular view is that TikTok delivers higher engagement than Instagram because the For You feed distributes content beyond the follower base. The data here show the reverse pattern. The second is that the mean-level difference is driven by a small number of high-performing influencer posts on Instagram (Sabrina Carpenter for Pringles, IShowSpeed for Doritos) and not by a structural advantage of the platform itself. H1 is supported, but the direction of the effect is discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3.2. H2. Different brand personalities

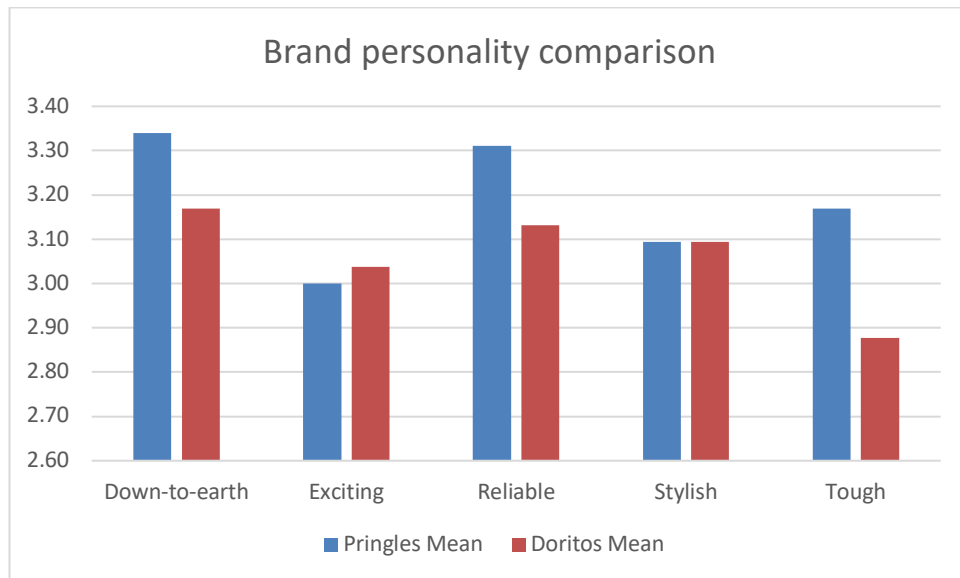
H2 proposed that Gen Z consumers perceive Pringles and Doritos as having significantly different brand personalities. The mean score given to each brand was compared on each of the five Aaker (1997) dimensions using a paired-samples t-test, since every respondent rated both brands within the same questionnaire. The function used in Excel is TTEST with type 1 (paired) and two tails. The results are reported in Table 11.

Table 11 Paired-samples t-test of brand personality dimensions (n = 106).

Dimension	Pringles M	Doritos M	M diff	p (two- tailed)	Significant?
Down-to-earth	3.10	3.03	+0.08	.4786	No
Exciting	3.15	3.58	-0.42	.0003	Yes
Reliable	3.45	3.48	-0.03	.8072	No
Stylish	3.21	3.11	+0.09	.4168	No
Tough	3.06	3.34	-0.28	.0199	Yes

Source: own elaboration. Significance threshold: $p < .05$.

Figure 12 Brand personality comparison.



Source: own elaboration.

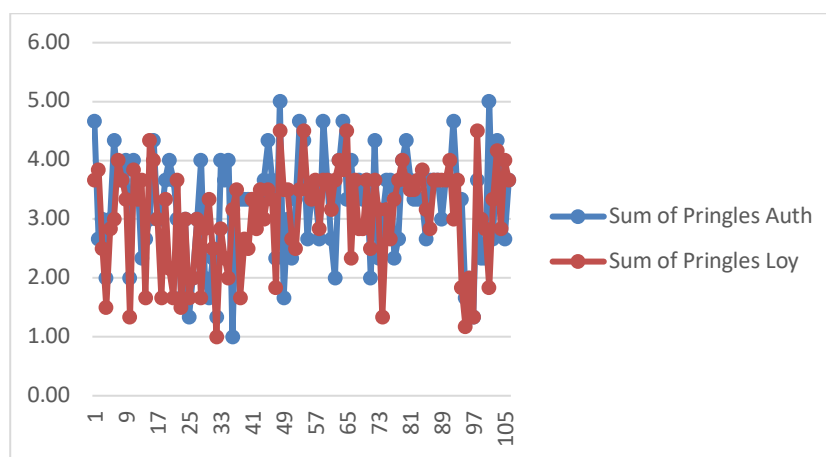
On two of the five dimensions the difference is statistically significant. Doritos is perceived as more exciting than Pringles (mean difference of 0.42 points, $p = .0003$) and tougher (mean difference of 0.28 points, $p = .0199$). On the remaining three dimensions the differences are small and not significant. The hypothesis is therefore partially supported. The two brands differ on the exciting and tough dimensions, which are precisely the ones that the content analysis pointed to, but they do not differ on the rest.

4.3.3. H3. Authenticity and loyalty

H3 proposed that the more authentic a brand's communication feels, the more loyal consumers tend to be. For each respondent, an authenticity score was calculated as the average of the three authenticity items, and a loyalty score as the average of the six purchase intention, loyalty and influencer-receptiveness items. The relationship between the two scores was measured with Pearson correlation, which captures the strength of the linear association between two continuous variables on a scale from -1 to $+1$.

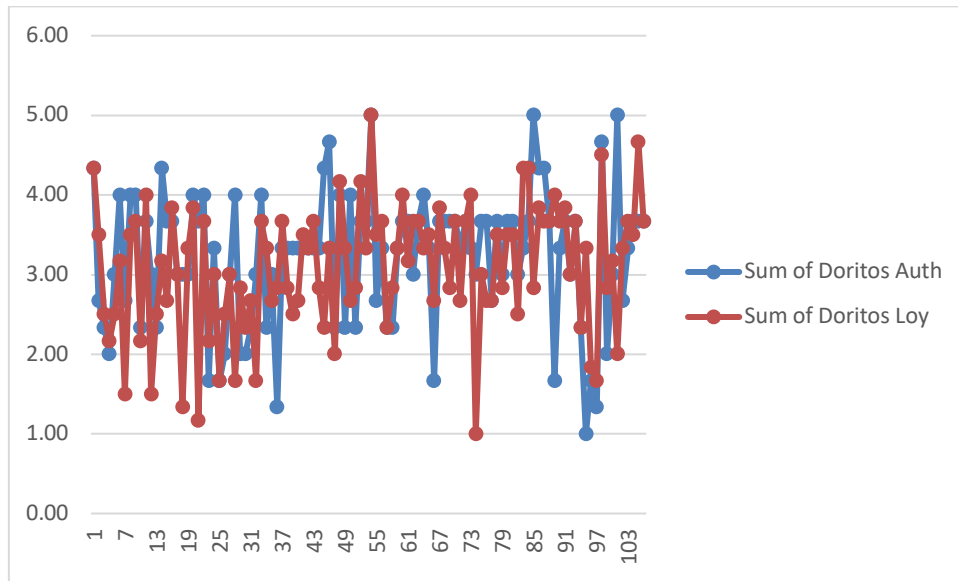
Both correlations are positive, moderate in size and statistically significant. For Pringles, the correlation between authenticity and loyalty is $r = 0.42$ ($n = 106$). For Doritos the correlation is $r = 0.43$ ($n = 106$). The hypothesis is supported for both brands, and the size of the relationship is almost identical for the two, which means that authenticity carries similar weight in driving loyalty regardless of which brand is being evaluated.

Figure 13 Pringles authenticity and loyalty.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 14 Doritos authenticity and loyalty.



Source: own elaboration.

4.3.4. H4. Influencer collaborations and engagement

H4 proposed that posts built around influencer collaborations would achieve higher engagement than those that are not. The test is run directly on the content analysis dataset, comparing the mean engagement rate of the 17 posts coded as featuring an influencer collaboration against the 69 posts coded as not.

Table 12 Engagement comparison between collaboration and non-collaboration posts.

Group	n	Mean ER %	Mean likes	Mean shares
Influencer = Yes	17	21.67	190,937	12,624
Influencer = No	69	0.22	2,968	115

Source: own elaboration from the coded posts dataset.

The difference is striking. Posts with an influencer collaboration recorded a mean engagement rate of 21.67% across the 17 cases, while posts without such collaboration averaged only 0.22% across the remaining 69. In likes alone the gap is two orders of magnitude. The hypothesis is therefore strongly supported, and the magnitude of the effect suggests that the few highly visible collaborations of February (Sabrina Carpenter

for Pringles, IShowSpeed for Doritos, Dylan Efron, Connor Wood and the Jack Link's cross-launch) account for a disproportionate share of each brand's monthly reach.

4.3.5. H5. Engagement as a bridge between perception and loyalty

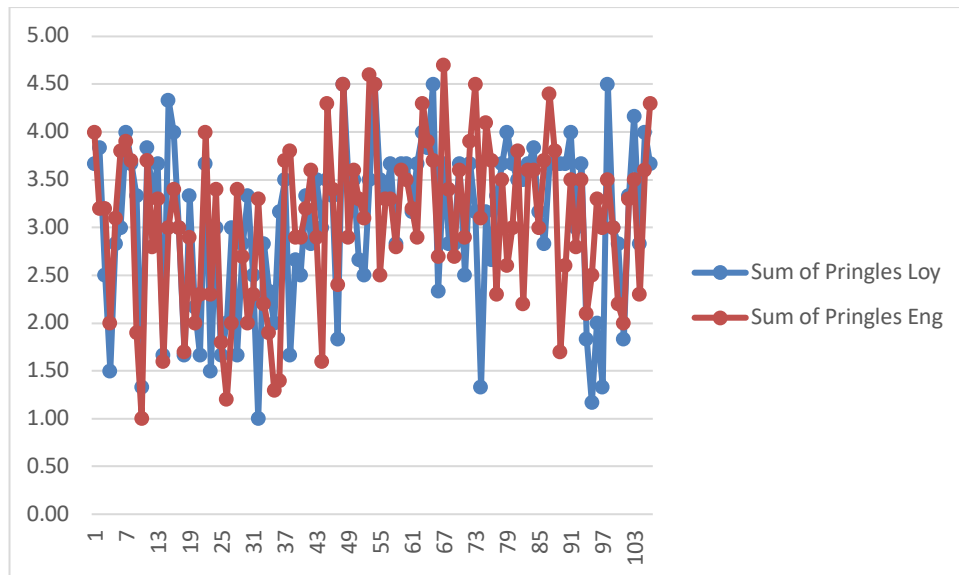
H5 proposed that consumer-brand engagement works as a bridge between what consumers think about a brand and how loyal they become. A full mediation test goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, but the three Pearson correlations that would underpin such a model can be inspected directly. The results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13 Correlations supporting the engagement-as-bridge logic.

Path	Pringles (r)	Doritos (r)
Brand personality → Loyalty	0.49	0.41
Brand personality → Engagement	0.45	0.32
Engagement → Loyalty	0.54	0.58

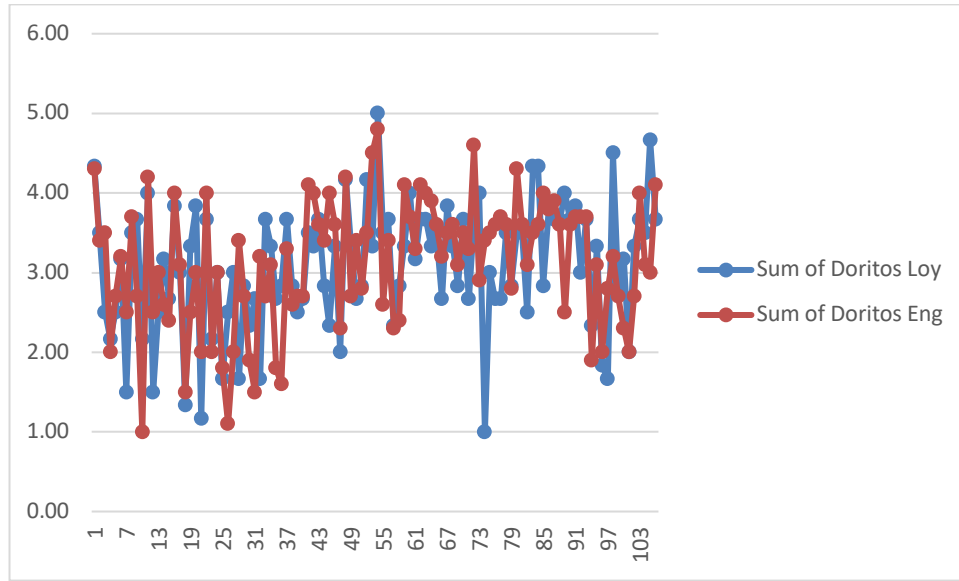
Source: own elaboration.

Figure 15 Pringles engagement and loyalty.



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 16 Doritos engagement and loyalty.



Source: own elaboration.

Three observations follow. First, engagement is the strongest predictor of loyalty for both brands ($r = 0.54$ for Pringles, $r = 0.58$ for Doritos), which fits the role assigned to it by the hypothesis. Second, brand personality also correlates directly with loyalty ($r = 0.49$ for Pringles, $r = 0.41$ for Doritos), which means that engagement cannot fully account for the effect. The pattern is therefore closer to a partial mediation than to a full one. Third, the engagement-to-loyalty link is slightly stronger for Doritos than for Pringles, which is consistent with the content analysis finding that Doritos invests more heavily in influencer-led, brand-resonance content.

4.4. Summary of findings

Of the five hypotheses, four receive support from the data and one is partially supported. H1 is supported in the sense that a platform effect on engagement is clearly present, although the direction of the effect is the opposite of what marketing practice usually assumes. H2 is partially supported: Pringles and Doritos differ on the exciting and tough dimensions of brand personality, but not on the other three. H3 is supported for both brands. H4 is strongly supported, with influencer-led posts outperforming organic ones by roughly two orders of magnitude on every engagement metric. H5 is supported

in correlational terms, with engagement emerging as the strongest direct predictor of loyalty while leaving room for a direct effect of brand perception. A summary is provided in Table 14.

Table 14 Summary of hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Status	Source of evidence
H1. Platform effect on engagement	Supported (opposite direction)	Content analysis (n = 86)
H2. Different brand personalities	Partially supported	Survey (n = 106)
H3. Authenticity → loyalty	Supported	Survey (n = 106)
H4. Influencer collabs → engagement	Strongly supported	Content analysis (n = 86)
H5. Engagement bridges perception → loyalty	Partially supported	Survey (n = 106)

Source: own elaboration.

The unexpected direction of the platform effect, the partial mediation pattern around engagement, and the disproportionate weight of a handful of influencer collaborations on overall reach are the three points that deserve a closer interpretation in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. These are taken up in the discussion that follows.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This final chapter interprets the empirical findings of Chapter 4 in light of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 and translates them into both academic and managerial takeaways. Section 5.1 discusses the findings of the two strands in dialogue with the literature. Section 5.2 outlines the theoretical implications of the study. Section 5.3 develops the managerial recommendations for FMCG snack brands. Section 5.4 acknowledges the limitations of the research and points to a few directions for future work. Section 5.5 closes the dissertation by answering the central research question and the three sub-questions formulated in Chapter 1.

5.1. Discussion of findings

The content analysis and the survey, read together, paint a picture in which platform, content choices and brand perception interact in ways that broadly confirm the framework set out in Chapter 2, with some twists worth carrying into the discussion. Of the five hypotheses, four receive support and one is partially supported. The interpretation that follows takes the findings one by one and reads them against the literature.

The first finding worth interpreting is the structural difference in how Pringles and Doritos use Instagram and TikTok. Doritos publishes more TikTok videos (41.5% of its output) than Pringles (24.2%) and concentrates almost half of its monthly content in brand-resonance posts (47.2%), supported by a heavy reliance on influencer collaborations (26.4%) and on Super Bowl tie-ins (45.3%). Pringles leans more on storytelling (63.6% of its posts follow a narrative arc against 28.3% for Doritos) and on text overlays (87.9% versus 52.8%), and spreads its output more evenly across the Tafesse and Wien (2017) typology. The result is two brands that share an industry, an audience and a product category, but communicate in genuinely different keys. This is consistent with the platform-affordances argument of Bucher and Helmond (2018) and with the strategic view of social media marketing proposed by Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch (2017): platforms are not neutral channels, and effective brand communication requires adapting to each one rather than treating them as variants of a single broadcast medium.

The most counter-intuitive finding of the study is the direction of the platform gap in engagement rates. For both brands, Instagram outperforms TikTok in mean engagement per follower (13.07% versus 3.73% for Pringles, 3.46% versus 0.66% for Doritos), even

though TikTok generated far more total views across the month. This runs against the dominant narrative in marketing practice, which tends to treat TikTok as the more engaging platform because its algorithm distributes content beyond the follower base. Two readings make sense of this. The first is conceptual: as Muñoz-Expósito, Oviedo-García and Castellanos-Verdugo (2017) note when proposing their normalised engagement metric, what counts as high engagement depends on the denominator chosen. Instagram's followers actively decided to follow the brand, so each interaction reflects a deliberate response. TikTok's higher view counts come from algorithmic exposure to non-followers, which inflates impressions but does not produce proportionally more reactions per follower. The second reading is content-related: the very large engagement rates on Instagram are pulled up by a small number of celebrity-led collaborations, particularly the Sabrina Carpenter reel for Pringles and the IShowSpeed reel for Doritos. The platform gap at the level of means is therefore driven by a handful of viral posts rather than by a structural advantage of the platform itself.

The brand-personality results complicate the assumption that brands competing in the same category are necessarily perceived as similar. Gen Z respondents in the sample differentiate Pringles from Doritos on the exciting and tough dimensions in particular. Doritos is seen as more exciting (mean = 3.58 versus 3.15, $p = .0003$) and tougher (mean = 3.34 versus 3.06, $p = .0199$), while the two brands sit virtually together on reliable and down-to-earth, and only marginally apart on stylish. Read against Aaker (1997), this matters. The exciting and tough dimensions are precisely the ones her work links to youthful, bold archetypes, which is Doritos's territory in cultural terms. The fact that perception aligns so closely with positioning, even in a category where buyers often describe brands as interchangeable, suggests that the differentiated content strategies seen in the content analysis are landing with the intended audience. Brand personality, in Aaker's terms, seems to be a genuine outcome of consistent platform-native communication rather than a default category trait.

Across both brands, perceived authenticity is moderately and significantly correlated with declared loyalty ($r = 0.42$ for Pringles, $r = 0.43$ for Doritos). The strength of the link is almost identical for the two brands, even though each one builds its authenticity in a very different way: Pringles through ongoing storytelling and recognisable characters, Doritos through partnerships with culturally relevant creators. This points to authenticity

as a portable mechanism in Gen Z's relationship with snack brands rather than as something tied to a particular communication style. The finding is in line with what Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) propose about the role of perceived authenticity in user attitudes towards brands on social media.

The fifth hypothesis was the most exploratory of the five and the one that most clearly leads into future work. The three Pearson correlations that would underpin a mediation model are all significant and positive, with engagement emerging as the strongest predictor of loyalty for both brands ($r = 0.54$ for Pringles, $r = 0.58$ for Doritos), which fits the role that Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) and Brodie et al. (2013) assign to engagement as an intermediate state between perception and behaviour. At the same time, brand personality also correlates directly with loyalty ($r = 0.49$ for Pringles, $r = 0.41$ for Doritos), which means that engagement cannot fully account for the effect. The pattern is therefore closer to a partial mediation than to a full one. Confirming this with a formal mediation model would require a larger sample and a more advanced analytical technique than the present dissertation can carry, and is listed as one of the directions for future research in Section 5.4.

The single largest gap in the data is the engagement difference between collaboration posts and the rest. The 17 posts coded as featuring an influencer collaboration averaged an engagement rate of 21.67%, while the remaining 69 averaged only 0.22%. The ratio is roughly two orders of magnitude, and it holds for every individual metric (likes, comments and shares). This is consistent with what Casaló, Flavián and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2020) describe as Instagram's influencer-led persuasion logic, and gives quantitative weight to the qualitative observation made earlier. A small fraction of each brand's content, concentrated on a handful of well-chosen partnerships, accounts for a disproportionate share of its monthly reach.

5.2. Theoretical implications

The study contributes to the literature on social media marketing in three connected ways. The first is comparative. Most published work focuses on a single platform or a single brand, which leaves the comparative question relatively underexamined. By looking at two direct competitors on both Instagram and TikTok during the same month and integrating the brand and the audience perspectives, this dissertation offers a more

controlled view of how platform affordances shape brand behaviour within one specific industry.

The second contribution concerns the reading of engagement metrics. Treating mean engagement rate as the headline indicator, as is common in practitioner reports, can produce misleading conclusions in environments with the right-skewed distribution typical of social-media data. The fact that the means in this study are clearly inflated by a small number of viral collaborations argues for the routine reporting of additional measures of central tendency in academic and practitioner work alike.

The third contribution relates to the partial-mediation pattern observed around engagement. Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) propose engagement as a multidimensional construct that links cognition, affection and activation. The data here are consistent with that view, but they also show that perception retains a direct pull on loyalty even after engagement is accounted for. Future research could test this more formally through a mediation model on a larger sample.

5.3. Managerial implications

For brand managers in the FMCG snack category, three practical recommendations follow naturally from the findings. The first is platform-specific consistency. Treating Instagram and TikTok as variations of the same channel is the wrong frame. They are different cultural environments, and what works on one will rarely transfer untouched to the other. Pringles's narrative continuity on Instagram and Doritos's event-driven boldness on TikTok are not stylistic accidents. They reflect platform-native logic. A brand that wants to remain recognisable across both should invest in adapting tone, format and pace to each platform while keeping a stable underlying personality.

The second recommendation concerns the role of authenticity. The data suggest that Gen Z translates perceived authenticity into loyalty at a fairly constant rate, regardless of the specific brand voice. That gives managers freedom in how they build authenticity, whether through mascots and storytelling, through influencer partnerships, or through honest replies to consumer complaints. It also implies that anything that damages perceived authenticity will translate directly into loyalty losses. Authentic communication is not an aesthetic choice. It is a structural asset.

The third recommendation concerns the economics of influencer collaborations. The finding that influencer posts generate engagement rates roughly two orders of magnitude higher than organic posts suggests that the marginal return on influencer spending is very high relative to standard organic content. This does not mean abandoning organic communication, which provides narrative continuity and brand identity, but it does suggest that the optimal allocation in this category may lean more heavily on a few well-chosen partnerships than current internal budgets typically reflect.

5.4. Limitations and future research

Several limitations should be acknowledged before reading the conclusions. First, the content analysis is restricted to a single month (February 2026), which captures one relevant communication cycle but cannot stand in for the long-term strategy of either brand. Second, the survey relies on convenience and snowball sampling, which limits the statistical generalisability of the results to the wider Gen Z population, even though the size of the final sample ($n = 106$) is sufficient for the descriptive and comparative analyses applied here (Hair et al., 2019). The country distribution is also heavily weighted towards Spanish respondents. Third, the survey is based on self-reported data, which can be affected by social desirability and recall limitations. Fourth, the study focuses exclusively on Instagram and TikTok, leaving aside other platforms such as YouTube Shorts that may also play a role in FMCG brand strategies. Finally, the cross-sectional and correlational nature of the design does not allow for causal inference between variables. The relationships identified in the survey should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Several directions open up naturally from these limitations. A longitudinal study covering several months, including months without a major sports event, would help to isolate the structural effect of Super Bowl-style campaigns from the brands' baseline activity. Including more platforms (YouTube Shorts, Snapchat) would broaden the comparative scope. Running a proper mediation model on a larger and more international sample could test H5 more rigorously than the present correlational evidence allows. Complementing the survey with qualitative interviews could also capture nuances that scale-based instruments tend to flatten, particularly around the meaning that consumers attach to influencer collaborations.

5.5. Conclusions

The dissertation set out to answer one central research question: how do Pringles and Doritos adapt their content strategies across Instagram and TikTok to generate engagement, shape brand perception and influence consumer loyalty among international Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 24. The empirical work brought together a content analysis of 86 posts and a survey of 106 respondents within that age range, and the picture that emerges allows the question to be answered in concrete terms.

Pringles and Doritos behave like two different brands on social media, even within the same product category and the same observation window. They share humour as a baseline register, but Pringles relies more on storytelling and on-screen text overlays and builds its presence around recurring characters like Pringleleo and Mr. P. Doritos relies more on influencer collaborations and event-driven creative material centred on the Super Bowl. Each brand reads the affordances of Instagram and TikTok in its own way: Pringles for narrative continuity, Doritos for cultural reach. This answers SRQ1.

The performance metrics show that those choices are consequential. Instagram delivers higher engagement per follower than TikTok for both brands, an effect partly driven by a small number of highly visible influencer collaborations rather than by a structural advantage of the platform itself. The qualitative perception of the brand by Gen Z respondents differentiates Doritos from Pringles on the exciting and tough dimensions of brand personality, while authenticity, regardless of how it is built, translates into loyalty at a similar rate for both brands. Engagement mediates part of the link between perception and loyalty without fully absorbing it. This answers SRQ2.

In normative terms, and answering SRQ3, the recommendation for FMCG brands in the snack category is to adopt a platform-native communication strategy that protects perceived authenticity as a structural asset, concentrates a meaningful share of the creative budget on a few well-selected influencer partnerships, and treats Instagram and TikTok not as a single channel but as two different cultural environments with their own grammar. That, at least within the comparative frame of Pringles and Doritos during February 2026, is the strategy the data point towards.

6. Declaración de Uso de Herramientas de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa en Trabajos Fin de Grado

ADVERTENCIA: Desde la Universidad consideramos que ChatGPT u otras herramientas similares son herramientas muy útiles en la vida académica, aunque su uso queda siempre bajo la responsabilidad del alumno, puesto que las respuestas que proporciona pueden no ser veraces. En este sentido, NO está permitido su uso en la elaboración del Trabajo fin de Grado para generar código porque estas herramientas no son fiables en esa tarea. Aunque el código funcione, no hay garantías de que metodológicamente sea correcto, y es altamente probable que no lo sea.

Por la presente, yo, Casilda Trevijano Ruiz Caro, estudiante de Grado en Administración y Dirección de Empresas (E-2) - Bilingüe en inglés de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas al presentar mi Trabajo Fin de Grado titulado " PLATFORM-SPECIFIC BRAND COMMUNICATION ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRINGLES AND DORITOS AMONG INTERNATIONAL GENERATION Z CONSUMERS", declaro que he utilizado la herramienta de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa ChatGPT u otras similares de IAG de código sólo en el contexto de las actividades descritas a continuación:

1. **Brainstorming de ideas de investigación:** Utilizado para idear y esbozar posibles áreas de investigación.

4. **Metodólogo:** Para descubrir métodos aplicables a problemas específicos de investigación.

8. **Corrector de estilo literario y de lenguaje:** Para mejorar la calidad lingüística y estilística del texto.

10. **Sintetizador y divulgador de libros complicados:** Para resumir y comprender literatura compleja.

13. **Revisor:** Para recibir sugerencias sobre cómo mejorar y perfeccionar el trabajo con diferentes niveles de exigencia.

14. **Generador de encuestas:** Para diseñar cuestionarios preliminares.

15. **Traductor:** Para traducir textos de un lenguaje a otro.

Afirmo que toda la información y contenido presentados en este trabajo son producto de mi investigación y esfuerzo individual, excepto donde se ha indicado lo contrario y se han dado los créditos correspondientes (he incluido las referencias adecuadas en el TFG y he explicitado para que se ha usado ChatGPT u otras herramientas similares). Soy consciente de las implicaciones académicas y éticas de presentar un trabajo no original y acepto las consecuencias de cualquier violación a esta declaración.

Fecha: 03-06-2026

Firma: 

7. References

- Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347–356. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224379703400304>
- Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(1), 79–95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1>
- Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2015). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20761>
- Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2013). Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 105–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.029>
- Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2018). The affordances of social media platforms. In J. Burgess, A. Marwick, & T. Poell (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social media* (pp. 233–253). SAGE Publications.
- Carroll, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, 17(2), 79–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-006-4219-2>
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2020). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 510–519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.005>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Dimock, M. (2019, January 17). *Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/>

- Djafarova, E., & Bowes, T. (2021). "Instagram made me buy it": Generation Z impulse purchases in the fashion industry. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59, 102345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102345>
- Felix, R., Rauschnabel, P. A., & Hinsch, C. (2017). Elements of strategic social media marketing: A holistic framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 118–126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.05.001>
- Francis, T., & Hoefel, F. (2018, November 12). 'True Gen': Generation Z and its implications for companies. McKinsey & Company. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/true-gen-generation-z-and-its-implications-for-companies>
- Haenlein, M., Anadol, E., Farnsworth, T., Hugo, H., Hunichen, J., & Welte, D. (2020). Navigating the new era of influencer marketing: How to be successful on Instagram, TikTok, & Co. *California Management Review*, 63(1), 5–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620958166>
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28(2), 149–165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.002>
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241–251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005>

- Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Muñoz-Expósito, M., Oviedo-García, M. Á., & Castellanos-Verdugo, M. (2017). How to measure engagement in Twitter: Advancing a metric. *Internet Research*, 27(5), 1122–1148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-06-2016-0170>
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The content analysis guidebook* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Schivinski, B., & Dabrowski, D. (2016). The effect of social media communication on consumer perceptions of brands. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 22(2), 189–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2013.871323>
- Tafesse, W., & Wien, A. (2017). A framework for categorizing social media posts. *Cogent Business & Management*, 4(1), 1284390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2017.1284390>
- Vassallo, A. J., Kelly, B., Zhang, L., Wang, Z., Young, S., & Freeman, B. (2018). Junk food marketing on Instagram: Content analysis. *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance*, 4(2), e54. <https://doi.org/10.2196/publichealth.9594>
- Vázquez-Herrero, J., Negreira-Rey, M.-C., & López-García, X. (2022). Let's dance the news! How TikTok is shaping news consumption and production. *Journalism*, 23(8), 1717–1735. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920969092>

8. Annex

Survey questionnaire

Introduction shown to respondents

Thank you for taking part in this survey. I am a Business Administration student at ICADE (Universidad Pontificia Comillas). This questionnaire is part of my Final Degree Project on how snack brands communicate on Instagram and TikTok. It takes about 5 to 7 minutes. Participation is voluntary and completely anonymous: no personal or identifying information is collected, and your answers will be used only for academic purposes and analysed together with all the others. By continuing, you confirm that you are between 18 and 24 years old and that you agree to take part.

Section 1. About you

1. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18 – 21
- 22 – 24
- Over 24

2. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

3. In which country do you currently live?

Open text answer.

4. What is your current level of studies?

- Secondary / high school
- Currently in undergraduate studies
- Undergraduate degree completed
- Other

Section 2. Your social media habits

5. Do you use Instagram?

- Yes (continues with the Instagram block)
- No (skips the Instagram block)

The following three questions appear only if the respondent answered "Yes" to question 5.

6. How often do you use Instagram?

- Several times a day
- About once a day
- A few times a week
- Rarely
- Never

7. On an average day, how much time do you spend on Instagram?

- Less than 30 min
- 30 to 60 min
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours

8. How often do you see content from food or snack brands on Instagram?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

9. Do you use TikTok?

- Yes (continues with the TikTok block)
- No (skips the TikTok block)

The following three questions appear only if the respondent answered "Yes" to question 9.

10. How often do you use TikTok?

- Several times a day
- About once a day
- A few times a week
- Rarely

- Never

11. On an average day, how much time do you spend on TikTok?

- Less than 30 min
- 30 to 60 min
- 1 to 2 hours
- 2 to 3 hours
- More than 3 hours

12. How often do you see content from food or snack brands on TikTok?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Section 3. Snacks and brands

13. Have you bought a snack after seeing content about it on Instagram or TikTok?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

14. Which of these snack brands do you know?

Multiple selection allowed.

- Pringles
- Doritos
- Lay's
- Cheetos
- Ruffles
- Takis
- Walkers
- Cheez-It

15. How often do you buy Pringles?

Linear scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very often).

16. How often do you buy Doritos?

Linear scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Very often).

17. Do you follow either brand on social media?

Multiple selection allowed.

- Pringles on Instagram
- Pringles on TikTok
- Doritos on Instagram
- Doritos on TikTok
- I do not follow either

18. In the last month, how often have you seen content from these brands?

Likert grid with one row per option and columns: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often.

- Pringles on Instagram
- Pringles on TikTok
- Doritos on Instagram
- Doritos on TikTok

Section 4. What you think of each brand

Questions 19 and 20 are Likert grids. Respondents rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

19. Pringles – Brand personality. "This brand feels..."

- down-to-earth, sincere and genuine
- exciting, daring and trendy
- reliable, competent and well-managed
- stylish, charming and sophisticated
- tough, bold and energetic

20. Doritos – Brand personality. "This brand feels..."

- down-to-earth, sincere and genuine
- exciting, daring and trendy
- reliable, competent and well-managed
- stylish, charming and sophisticated
- tough, bold and energetic

Questions 21 and 22 are Likert grids. Respondents rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

21. Pringles – Engagement with the brand's content

- This brand's content gets me thinking about the brand
- I think about this brand when I see its content
- Its content makes me want to learn more about the brand
- I feel positive when I see this brand's content
- This brand's content makes me happy
- I feel good about this brand because of its content
- I am proud to engage with this brand's content
- I spend more time with this brand's content than with other snack brands
- When I see snack-brand content, this is a brand I pay attention to
- This is one of the snack brands I engage with most on social media

22. Doritos – Engagement with the brand's content

- This brand's content gets me thinking about the brand
- I think about this brand when I see its content
- Its content makes me want to learn more about the brand
- I feel positive when I see this brand's content
- This brand's content makes me happy
- I feel good about this brand because of its content
- I am proud to engage with this brand's content
- I spend more time with this brand's content than with other snack brands
- When I see snack-brand content, this is a brand I pay attention to
- This is one of the snack brands I engage with most on social media

Questions 23 and 24 are Likert grids. Respondents rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

23. Pringles – Authenticity

- This brand's social media content feels genuine and authentic
- This brand communicates in an honest and transparent way
- Its content feels real rather than overly staged or too salesy

24. Doritos – Authenticity

- This brand's social media content feels genuine and authentic
- This brand communicates in an honest and transparent way
- Its content feels real rather than overly staged or too salesy

25. On which platform do you mainly see each brand's content?

Grid with one row per brand and columns: Mostly Instagram, Mostly TikTok, Both about equally, Neither.

- Pringles
- Doritos

Section 5. Buying, loyalty and influencers

Questions 26 and 27 are Likert grids. Respondents rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

26. Pringles – Purchase intention, loyalty and influencers

- Seeing this brand's content makes me more likely to buy it
- I would choose this brand over other snack brands
- I would recommend this brand to my friends
- I feel an emotional connection to this brand
- I am more likely to try this brand if an influencer I follow promotes it
- I trust this brand more when I see influencers using it

27. Doritos – Purchase intention, loyalty and influencers

- Seeing this brand's content makes me more likely to buy it
- I would choose this brand over other snack brands
- I would recommend this brand to my friends
- I feel an emotional connection to this brand
- I am more likely to try this brand if an influencer I follow promotes it
- I trust this brand more when I see influencers using it

The Excel files containing all the calculations for the structured content analysis of posts published by @pringles and @doritos on Instagram and TikTok during February 2026, as well as the data from the online survey of Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 24 capturing the demand-side perspective in terms of perceptions, engagement, and loyalty, can be accessed in a Google Drive folder named “PLATFORM-SPECIFIC BRAND COMMUNICATION ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK” via the following link:

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OeY-YSdKLTRoScmHtRVCmfOXQrdAvwjC?usp=sharing>