



Centennials and brands: Perceptions of Central American university students

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Abstract– *The study examines an underexplored area of research: the awareness gap between commercial and private brands among university students. Through a quantitative non-probabilistic survey of 154 university centennial students at private universities, the research aimed to understand how branding elements influenced their purchasing decisions. The findings emphasize the urgent need to establish a stronger bond between centennial consumers and products under private labels due to the prevailing lack of awareness and the challenges faced by private brands in attracting university students. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving educational initiatives and strategic marketing efforts to establish a deeper connection between private labels and the centennial consumer base.*

Keywords– Brands, centennials, emotions, perceptions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Brand usage loyalty is highly prized by marketers and widely researched by academics. Behavioral loyalty has been found to be systematically lower for smaller brands [1]. Marketers devote great efforts in maintaining brand value, however, brand value can come under attack in the absence of sufficient product performance and image [2]. Using the same brand name across a wide range of categories might strengthen familiarity and recollection of the store brand [3]. Consumer-brand relationships are complex, especially when love is involved [4]. One specific aspect of the retailer's assortment strategy aside from carrying manufacturer's brands is offering their own private label brands for a better balance in the negotiation leverage [5].

Private labels or white brands are increasing their presence within the main retail chains in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, but there is need to understand how well they are known, perceived, and favored by centennial's, over their traditional counterparts, the commercial brands.

Centennials are selected for being a group of well-informed, creative, and innovative consumers, committed to the environment, unlike millennials who are less idealistic and more pragmatic, and have little commitment to caring for the environment. Centennials are prone to responsible consumption, preferring natural products to mass goods [6].

The centennial generation, also known as generation Z, identified according to reference [7], as those young people born between 1997 and 2012, who represent a demanding generation, critical of technology and, above all, capable to obtain what they want by their own means when and where they want it, are nowadays the authentic prosumers. The Centennials

generation or Generation Z are a group characterized by being immersed in the digital world, one hundred percent digital natives, and who receive, produce, and exchange information in a public, fast, and ephemeral way. They reflect an ethic centered on the human, social and environmental problems that the planet is going through [7].

An explanation of the consumption behavior of young people of the centennial generation is needed to understand the role played by brand awareness and consumer habits, to influence them. This generational group is studied since they will be the future decision makers in companies, the oldest centennials are around 23 years old, they are starting their working life and after a few years they will replace the millennials in the workforce [8]. Education is a very important sector in the economy, it is the one that generates knowledge and together with research they maintain a meeting point in the universities [9].

Private label products are classified as goods sold using the brand name of the store or retail business. Instead of buying them from manufacturers, retailers invest in private labels to increase profit margins, establish market segmentation from other brands and strengthen customer loyalty by selling at lower prices by lowering their costs [10]. Private labels tend to be generally lower priced brands, with a somewhat more standard packaging system, lacking brand recognition and are rarely nationally advertised [11]. Retail stores get higher margins from private label brands [12].

In the 1970s, distributors began selling their products using their own brand. More recently, they added to their own supply products produced by brands with a name other than the establishment's banner, identifying themselves as private brands of the distributor. With the passing of time, these distributor brands are gaining more and more prominence and occupying, in return, a growing place in the market, mainly in European countries [13]. Private labels are seeing the strongest growth in Europe, especially Western Europe, where they hold a 30% market share. They have the largest share in the region and the world [14].

The growth in private labels or brands can be attributed to consumers' concerns over inflation and a possible impending recession. Over the past two years, private label food sales have increased 16%, reaching \$135.5 billion in March 2022. White or private brands made a strong statement during the last quarter in sales, making gains in beauty, pet, home cleaning supplies, vitamins plus supplements, and oral care [15] [16]. Image and reputation may be said to have become essential parts of the

state's strategic equity. Like commercial brands, image and reputation are built on factors such as trust and customer satisfaction [17] [18].

Previous studies manifest that lower prices in private labels are not enough to change consumers' purchasing habits due to social and cultural blame associated with private labels given that, in emerging markets, brands are perceived as characters that communicate consumer's place in society. Therefore, exploring private versus commercial brand perspectives using explicit measures may arouse a strong tendency towards socially acceptable feedback, since respondents tend to project a positive image to others [19].

There are various descriptive studies on the relationship between purchasing decisions and emotions. In their shopping experience, consumers perceive different types of emotions that put the sensory system into action, which subsequently causes the individual to repeat that rehearsal again, from one place to another in the purchase of a specific product or brand; emotional marketing not only focuses on the product, but also seeks to add value to the relationship it has with the consumer in order to achieve loyalty [20].

Studying the unconscious processes on consumers that conduct purchase behavior is imperative for private labels. While they offer interesting benefits to the market, consumers are still hesitant to explicitly confirm their preference of private labels over commercial brands. Considering centennials, a group of more conscious consumers and responsible in their consumption habits [6], it is important to evaluate how well informed they are about private brands and the benefits they offer as opposed to commercial brands.

There are few studies that cross examine descriptive with neural criteria that portray preferences between private and commercial brands and even more that correlate with blind tests, whether the results between the two are consistent or if they disagree. Therefore, this study could reflect how well known the private label market is for this segment and explores the main reasons for its preference and as a novelty if these coincide with the typical behavior of a centennial.

Companies have had to learn to differentiate themselves, but especially their goods and services from those of the competition. In this sense, it is precisely why brands constitute a fundamental tool to distinguish themselves and guide the consumer or client to identify what he needs and seeks.

The study, by combining descriptive and neural aspects, may offer a clearer and more assertive perspective on what the studied segment perceives in relation to private and manufacturers labels. Identifying cognitive and emotional attitudes in the descriptive survey will contribute to greater acculturation on the existence and reason of private brands and companies will be able to propose better criteria, marketing strategies that promote and highlight with greater effectiveness, the main benefits of a private brand, as a clear option to the general consumer. Hence, the main objective is to determine the degree of brand awareness, perception, and preference between private and commercial brands by a specific segment of the

centennial population in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. This tier that includes centennials has not been fully studied, Honduran companies in the retail sector would benefit from the results.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Method

The research aims to contrast the perception of the centennial generation on the relevance of brands in the choice of products of certain categories and their inclination to private brands. Several studies refer to the relevant elements for this population group, however, there are few studies on the disposition towards private brands. This study is descriptive, to establish perceptions about commercial and private brands, as a starting point for further causal investigations. A non-probabilistic sampling was applied to perform a descriptive cross-sectional study. The research sampling units are divided into three interrelated and independent unites: (1) centennials and (2) commercial brands and (3) private brands, located for convenience in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. A structured questionnaire or "person to person" was used to collect data regarding cognitive and affective attitudes towards a list of common brands. Nominal, ordinal, and Likert measurements were used [21] as showed in Table I.

The kinds of questions that make up the qualitative collection instrument are made up of the four types [22]: a) General questions (grand tour), this type of question begins with the global approach to the investigation or the topics of interest within the investigation, they are closed-ended for a more efficient tabulation process. b) Questions to exemplify are deeper structured exploration questions for the interviewee, elaborating direct questions to collect their perceptions and preferences. Through a digital questionnaire (Google Forms), participants shared their attitudes and perceptions through questions formulated with a four-point Likert scale. Standards for use of nominal scales to measure cognitive criteria and ordinal scales to classify preference patterns were followed, using an abridged version Source Credibility Scale tool [23].

TABLE I
CATEGORIES AND INSTRUMENT

Category	Conceptual definition	Instrumental measuring
Brand Image	Perceptions about a Brand as reflected by the Brand associations held in consumer memory [24].	Perception of benefits associated with the brand. Questions: 1, 2, 3, 6 – for commercial brands. Perception of Private brands Questions: 10, 12, 13 Perception of brand elements. Question: 4
Brand Awareness	Likelihood that a Brand name Will come to mind and the ease with which it does so [24].	Identification of brands given some product categories. Questions: 5 and 7 for Commercial brands Question: 9 for Private labels

B. Data collection

Surveys were carried out from Monday, February 27 to Friday, March 17, 2023, the questionnaire was sent digitally to the institutional emails of each student. In total, 210 responses were obtained, of which 23 were excluded due to discrepancies and 20 others for being incomplete. After that, 154 surveys were available for the study. Personal data was not collected, and all participants consented to participate in the study. Different attitude measurement scales are applied to identify and characterize cognitive, affective and purchase intention level trends. The collection of information from the sampling units of commercial and private brands will be carried out through the qualitative research technique of direct approach of in-depth interviews, an individualized method to obtain qualitative data through effective structured formats to determine motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings [14].

C. Statistical analysis

Univariate statistics for key variables of interest were estimated, including the frequencies and percentages of the occurrence on answers by the population studied. Bivariate statistics were estimated as appropriate to answer key questions of interest; for instance, key outcome variables were compared across socio-economic groups to detect differences in the frequencies of practices implemented by the studied population. The statistical analyses were performed with SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), using frequencies, univariate and bivariate analysis.

III. RESULTS

A. Sample characteristics

A total of 154 students completed the survey. Of these, 87 were male (56.49%) and 67 were female (43.51%). Participants ranged in age from 16 to 25 years, with 56.59% falling between 16 and 20 years old, and 38.31% between 21 and 25 years old. The average age of respondents was 19 years. Most participants were enrolled in degree programs related to Business Management, Marketing, or International Business.

B. Analysis

Participants placed greater importance on branding when purchasing products in categories such as entertainment, transportation, and automobiles. In contrast, they assigned less importance to brand names when buying groceries, household appliances (white and gray goods), formal clothing, and health-related items. Notably, only one in five students considered the brand name to be a significant factor when selecting health products.

Based on Table II, which examines the importance of brands across different product categories by gender, several key findings emerge. Firstly, there are no statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of the perceived importance of brand in categories such as white or grey line products, dress clothes attires, health, and groceries, as indicated by p-values above 0.05 and Cramér's V values ranging from 5.9% to 13.3%. Notably, automobiles and

entertainment show a trend where males tend to find brand more important compared to females, though these differences do not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.108$ and $p = 0.107$ respectively). Conversely, transportation and personal cleanliness exhibit no significant gender disparities in brand importance. Overall, these results suggest that while there are nuanced preferences across genders in certain product categories, such as automobiles and entertainment, brand importance generally remains consistent across genders for most product lines studied in our sample of 154 participants (67 males, 87 females).

TABLE II
LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF A BRAND BY PRODUCT LINE BY SEX AND TOTAL

Product category / relevance	Important			Indifferent			Not Important			p; V
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	
White or grey line	70	27	43	36	19	17	48	21	27	0,376; 11,3%
Dress clothes attires	69	28	41	38	15	23	47	24	23	0,453; 10,1%
Health	52	19	33	63	27	36	39	21	18	0,255; 13,3%
Automobiles	44	25	19	32	12	20	78	30	48	0,108; 17,0%
Transportation	30	15	15	36	17	19	88	35	53	0,544; 8,9%
Groceries	23	9	14	87	37	50	44	21	23	0,766; 5,9%
Entertainment	22	14	8	49	21	28	83	32	51	0,107; 17,0%
Personal cleanliness	21	10	11	82	37	45	51	20	31	0,736; 6,3%
Total: n = 154; Male: n = 67; Female: n = 87).										
T: Total; M: Male; F: Female; p: p-value for Chi-square test; V: Cramér's V										

An analysis of Table III, which explores the perceived importance of branding across various product categories by age group, reveals several significant trends. In the category of formal clothing, participants aged 21 and older were significantly more likely to value brand names than those aged 16 to 20 (49.4% vs. 38.8%; $p = 0.027$, Cramér's V = 0.217). Conversely, in the automobile category, younger respondents (aged 16–20) placed greater importance on branding compared to their older counterparts (38.8% vs. 20.7%; $p = 0.032$, Cramér's V = 0.211).

On the other hand, categories like health and personal cleanliness demonstrate consistent perceptions of brand importance across age groups, with no statistically significant differences observed. These findings underscore the varying importance of branding across different product categories and age demographics, suggesting nuanced marketing strategies

tailored to specific consumer segments based on their age-related perceptions of brand significance.

According to the results presented in Figure 1, when purchasing a product, 37.0% of respondents (95% CI: 28.4–45.1) consider the brand name as the most influential element, followed by the logo at 32.5% (95% CI: 25.1–40.5). The slogan and brand colors are considered less important, at 16.9% (95% CI: 11.3–23.7) and 13.6% (95% CI: 8.6–20.1), respectively. A stratified analysis by sex revealed that 46.0% of women (95% CI: 35.2–57.0) prioritize the brand name, compared to 25.4% of men (95% CI: 15.5–37.5). This difference is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.009 < 0.05$), indicating a relationship between sex and the importance attributed to the brand name. However, the effect size is low, as reflected by a Cramér's V value of 0.211. No statistically significant association was found between sex and the importance given to the logo ($\chi^2 = 0.665 > 0.05$), slogan ($\chi^2 = 0.243 > 0.05$), or brand colors ($\chi^2 = 0.067 > 0.05$). The Cramér's V values for the logo (0.030) and slogan (0.094) indicate negligible effects, while the value for colors (0.147) suggests a small effect size. These results are visually summarized in Figure 1.

TABLE III

LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF A BRAND BY PRODUCT LINE BY AGE AND TOTAL									
Product category / relevance	Important			Indifferent			Not Important		
	Total	16–20	21–>	Total	16–20	21–>	Total	16–20	21–>
White or grey line	70	30	40	36	18	18	48	19	29
Dress clothes attires	69	26	43	38	13	25	47	28	19
Health	52	20	32	63	27	36	39	20	19
Automobiles	44	26	18	32	14	18	78	27	51
Transportation	30	17	13	36	19	17	88	31	57
Groceries	23	9	14	87	35	52	44	23	21
Entertainment	22	10	12	49	26	23	83	31	52
Personal cleanliness	21	6	15	82	34	48	51	27	24
p: p-value for Chi-square test; V: Cramér's V									

When asked about what these consumers value the most of a brand, 31,17% selected originality as their first choice, and 27,92% as the second. Innovation, diversity, and loyalty programs were elements of interest, but not for the majority. For 20,78%, there were other reasons to prefer some brands, like economy, accessibility, and promotional offers.

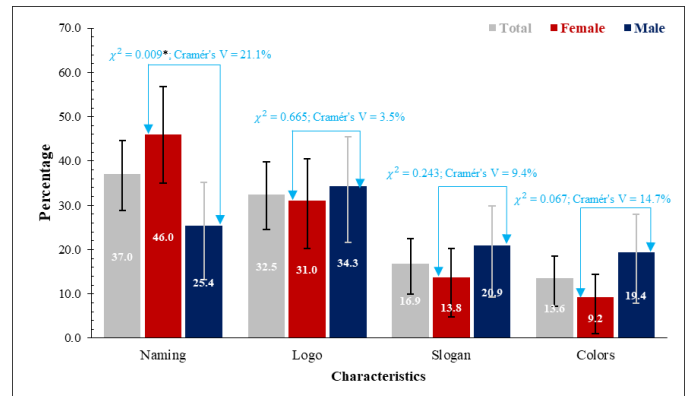


Fig. 1 Characteristics of brands considered when purchasing products $\chi^2 = 0.037^*$; Cramér's V = 23.5%; *Statistically significant at a 5% level ($p < 0.05$)

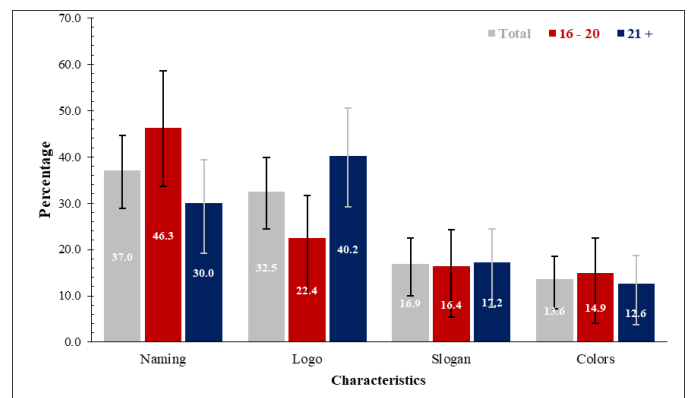


Fig. 2 Comparison of Branding Characteristics by Age $\chi^2 = 0.085$; Cramér's V = 20.7%; * Statistically significant at a 5% level ($p < 0.05$)

The typical profile identified is that of a Centennial consumer who prioritizes brand names and tends to disregard private label or white brands. Quality is the most valued attribute, cited by 44.84% of respondents as the primary benefit sought across all product categories.

The findings reveal notable gender-based differences in brand preferences across specific product categories. In the footwear segment, Nike is significantly more preferred by females than males (39.1% vs. 26.5%, $p = 0.053$, Cramér's V = 0.207), although the statistical significance is marginal. Conversely, males demonstrate a stronger preference for Adidas compared to females (16.4% vs. 6.9%, $p = 0.307$, Cramér's V = 0.109), though this difference is not statistically significant.

In the smart mobile category, there are no significant gender differences in the preference for Apple or Samsung. However, a noticeable trend emerges, with males showing a higher preference for Samsung (34.3% vs. 27.6%), and females demonstrating a stronger preference for Apple (56.3% vs. 46.3%). Similar trends are observed in the clothing category, where females exhibit a slightly higher preference for Zara

compared to males (35.6% vs. 10.4%, $p = 0.685$, Cramér's $V = 4.3\%$).

These findings highlight subtle gender-based differences in brand preferences across various product categories, suggesting opportunities for businesses to tailor marketing strategies to better target specific consumer groups.

Results evidence that 23,97% of the target market claim to have heard of private labels after having identified some of them in Tegucigalpa, nevertheless they disregard what could be the main differentiating effect between a commercial and private brand, since 74,03% are unaware. Only 10,39% of those surveyed perceive that price has a differentiating effect between a commercial brand and a private one.

Regarding if they have bought private labels, 25,97% state that they have done so, but that leaves almost 74% of the participants with a great opportunity to get involved with this branding category. There is an evident market niche still present for private brands or labels; retailers should build more consciousness on their consumer target to potentialize market share and participation. The purchase intention on their part was analyzed, describing a specific scenario if among the product lines with the highest consumption rate, there is an offer of a private label available at 20% less in price, only 2,60% responded that they would buy it, with a possible probability of doing so of 17,53%, however 89,60% have no interest or intention.

C. Discussion

The main hypothesis that we wanted to validate with this study is whether the population of the centennial generation in Central America has a greater openness and knowledge of private brands, beyond commercial brands, given that as a population group they are more informed and aware of the social reality. The interpretation of this data should consider that the market segment studied is enrolled in a private university, and they might have different priorities to other age groups.

The results show that the relationship with commercial brands is important, and they make their choices based on the positive associations they have with them, which makes them prefer them among many others. From these results, important derivations can be made for brand management in the region, aimed at the population group, but also opens the door for future research.

One of the reasons why centennials from a private university were selected to be part of this research was precisely to analyze and identify the degree of knowledge they had about private brands and contrasts if that brands are still neophytes in Latin America as Ref [14] established.

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the study's results, several robust discussions can be proposed for the article. Firstly, the findings highlight significant gender differences in consumer preferences towards branding characteristics. Specifically, females, especially those aged 16-20, exhibit a higher inclination towards considering brand names when making purchasing decisions compared to males in the same

age group. Conversely, older males (21 and above) show a stronger preference for brand logos, suggesting varying emphasis on different branding elements across gender and age demographics.

These insights underscore the importance of targeted marketing strategies tailored to specific demographic segments to enhance brand resonance and consumer engagement [25]. Moreover, the study identifies consistent consumer priorities across genders and age groups regarding valued reasons for brand preference, such as originality and usability, which remain crucial irrespective of demographic differences. Additionally, the research reveals nuanced preferences across different product categories, with consumers placing varying degrees of importance on brands depending on the product type, such as entertainment products versus health-related items. This variation necessitates adaptive marketing approaches that cater to the distinct preferences and priorities of consumers across different market segments. Overall, these discussions contribute valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences, offering actionable implications for marketers aiming to optimize branding strategies and effectively reach diverse consumer groups.

In Latin America, the market share of private label products has expanded in the period 2010-2014, the most increases of approximately 3% was listed in Chile and Colombia [14]. The highest market shares range in 11% although most Latin countries reflect results inferior to 5%. The boost is due to the efforts of retailers in terms of product quality. 76% of consumers in Latin America positively feel private labels, with meager differences between countries: Peru 84%, Mexico 79%, Chile 78% and 78% Columbia [15]. In addition, two thirds of respondents consider quality own brand products as being as good as the product brand manufacturer. Most positive perception is recorded in Venezuela, 74%, and Peru, 73%, and the least in Argentina, 62%.

One out of four students (23,97%) have heard about private brands and were able to identify some of them, but they are unaware of the differentiating elements regarding commercial brands with them. It is necessary to create communication strategies that, apart from creating brand awareness, attract and retain a new tier or segment. The moment is an opportunity to attract a consumer who is price sensitive and once he has experienced the product, has no doubt that it's as good and comparable with any commercial brand. This is consistent with other studies [26], that suggest the need for several conditions in developing countries for a greater presence of private labels: configuration of the retail structure, wide suppliers, efficient logistics systems serve, competitive cost of transportation and attractive margin profit, and most importantly, the presence of global discounters that gave familiarity to consumers to private labels.

It seems that commercial brands dominate the market in the minds of this segment of centennials, creating a strong sense of belonging and loyalty with brands such as Coca Cola, Dell, Nike, among others. Private labels must create and retain their

own tier [27] [26]. This research has discovered that there is a gap in the market niche that by offering the appropriate marketing strategy, private brands will flourish and are here to grow and stay. It is advisable to delve into more specialized studies in marketing and market research, for example neuromarketing, this could confirm whether there are emotions in private brands, at what level of intensity and how they differ from the emotions of commercial brands.

The implications of these findings for business strategies are both profound and multifaceted. For instance, understanding that younger females are more responsive to brand names while older males prioritize logos allows marketers to craft differentiated branding campaigns emphasizing verbal brand identity in digital platforms targeting young women and leveraging visual cues for products aimed at older male consumers. Furthermore, the generally positive perception of private labels in Latin America, combined with the relatively low awareness among centennial consumers, indicates an untapped potential for brand development in this segment. Businesses can capitalize on this by designing integrated communication strategies that not only build brand awareness but also emphasize emotional connection, quality equivalence, and value for money. By leveraging tools such as neuromarketing, companies could better understand the subconscious responses of consumers to private labels, enabling the development of more emotionally resonant branding. Additionally, aligning product strategies with logistical efficiencies and retail infrastructure can enhance private label competitiveness, especially in price-sensitive markets. Altogether, these insights provide a roadmap for crafting adaptive, demographically attuned, and emotionally intelligent branding strategies that can increase market share, customer retention, and long-term brand equity across diverse consumer groups.

Building on these findings, there is a valuable opportunity to integrate digital tools, big data, and artificial intelligence (AI) into brand management strategies to enhance decision-making and consumer engagement. For instance, AI-powered analytics can be utilized to segment consumers more precisely based on gender, age, and behavioral data, allowing for hyper-personalized branding campaigns that align with the identified preferences for brand names or logos. Additionally, big data tools can analyze vast consumer datasets in real time, uncovering patterns in brand interaction and purchase behavior across platforms, particularly among centennial consumers who dominate the digital space. Predictive algorithms may also forecast shifts in brand perception, enabling marketers to proactively adjust their messaging or visual branding components. Furthermore, neuromarketing technologies, combined with AI, could be employed to measure emotional responses to private labels versus commercial brands, offering deeper insights into consumer loyalty and brand attachment. Incorporating these technologies not only strengthens the strategic application of the current research but also positions

organizations to remain agile and responsive in an increasingly data-driven market environment.

Insights derived from the analysis point to clear opportunities for tailoring branding strategies across demographic segments. Younger female consumers demonstrate greater sensitivity to brand names, suggesting the value of emotionally engaging naming strategies and storytelling. In contrast, older male consumers place more emphasis on logos, highlighting the need for strong visual identity in communication efforts.

In the Latin American context—where perceptions of private labels are increasingly positive—retailers and manufacturers can capitalize on this momentum through targeted campaigns that emphasize quality, value, and emotional parity with commercial brands. Messaging that reinforces product usability and originality, supported by appealing design and credible endorsements, may be particularly effective in closing perception gaps and strengthening loyalty among emerging consumer segments.

IV. CONCLUSION

The market segment evaluated in this study shows a higher demand for commercial brand products compared to private or white-label brands. However, this preference does not necessarily stem from a strong preference toward commercial brands, but rather from a general lack of awareness about private brands. Most respondents within the segment studied are still largely unaware of private brands. The most preferred commercial brands include Nike, Apple, Dell, Coca-Cola, and Toyota. Instagram ranks highest in perceived value, whereas TikTok leads in usage frequency.

With respect to branding elements, the brand name and logo are perceived as the most influential components. Quality is the primary benefit sought by consumers when evaluating products. Yet, it is premature to determine whether private brands can elicit emotional responses in purchase decisions, given the segment's limited awareness of such brands. If it is assumed that the market primarily bases its purchase decisions on price, private brands represent a viable alternative. However, it is essential for companies managing these brands to develop a more precise and consistent promotional strategy, both in terms of messaging and communication frequency [12].

Retailers should match their pricing strategies with a strong emphasis on quality in the advertising and promotion of their brand-new product lines. Furthermore, they are encouraged to intensify the use of digital media and social networks particularly platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to enhance brand visibility and consumer engagement. Establishing a deeper, more meaningful connection between products and consumers is essential, fostering a sense of belonging. Emotional marketing should take precedence, but it must be employed with responsibility and integrity within the broader scope of marketing strategies.

This study highlights a significant gap in research regarding private brand awareness among Centennial consumers. Addressing this gap through future studies could provide valuable insights into how businesses can better engage with Centennials and other market segments. The findings from such studies could serve as a valuable guide for businesses seeking innovative strategies to engage Centennials and other market segments. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digitization process, raising consumer expectations. Today, consumers not only demand online availability but also expect diverse payment options, user-friendly and fast websites, personalized offers, and prompt responses across multiple channels, including social networks, virtual chats, and messaging apps like WhatsApp.[7]

These expectations are particularly relevant in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where such digital features remain relatively novel. The Centennial generation may represent an ideal segment for capturing the growth of private brands, providing valuable insights into new purchasing behaviors and preferences.

To effectively engage Centennials with private brands, businesses must prioritize increasing awareness through targeted digital campaigns, leveraging platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Emphasizing product quality in marketing while maintaining competitive pricing is crucial. Companies should foster emotional connections with Centennials by aligning brand values with their expectations, such as sustainability and inclusivity, and using personalized, responsible emotional marketing strategies. Additionally, enhancing digital experience with user-friendly websites, diverse payment options, and prompt customer support through platforms like WhatsApp will further support the growth of private brands among this demographic. [25]

Considering the limitations of the current study, particularly the sample being drawn exclusively from private school students, it would be beneficial to expand the analysis to include an equal number of students from public schools, ensuring a more balanced demographic representation. Maintaining a similar age distribution across both groups would allow for meaningful comparisons and help determine whether the observed brand preferences and consumer behaviors are consistent across different educational backgrounds. This approach could provide a more complete understanding of Centennial consumer behavior in various contexts.

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