

A Survey of Gen Z Preferences on Selected Social Media Sites: An Analytical Perspective

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Abstract

This research paper presents a comprehensive survey conducted to explore the preferences of Generation Z (Gen Z) regarding selected social media sites. Gen Z represents a significant segment of the population that has grown up in the era of digital technology and social media platforms. Understanding their preferences and usage patterns on social media sites is crucial for marketers, researchers, and industry professionals. The study focuses on six popular social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The survey captured information on demographic factors, including age and gender, as well as the participants' social media usage habits and preferences. The findings of the survey reveal intriguing insights into Gen Z's social media preferences. Instagram emerges as the most favoured platform among the respondents, indicating a significant shift from Facebook. This suggests a changing landscape in the way Gen Z engages with social media, with a preference for visually-driven and interactive platforms. Furthermore, the study highlights that gender and area do not play a substantial role in determining social media site preferences within the Gen Z cohort. Despite gender and area variations, there is a lack of significant changes observed in social media site usage patterns.

Keywords: Gen Z, Social Media, Preferences, *visually-driven, Interactive Platforms*

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the world of Social Media, a game-changing phenomenon that has changed the way we interact, communicate, and exchange information. Social media platforms have become a vital part of our daily lives in the digital age, crossing distances and breaking down boundaries like never before.

Individuals, communities, and corporations can interact, exchange ideas, and engage with material on social media platforms in real time. These platforms have empowered us to express ourselves, interact with friends and family, discover new hobbies, and even influence societal changes.

Social media has had a massive impact on society. Here are some essential features that define the social media world:

- **Connectivity:** Social media platforms have brought people from all over the world together. We may connect with friends, family, co-workers, and even strangers who share our interests and hobbies with only a few clicks. Social media has genuinely shrunk the world by encouraging worldwide connections and allowing cross-cultural discourse.
- **Sharing and Expression:** Social media platform allows us to share our views, ideas, and experiences with a large audience. It is a platform to amplify versatile voices and be heard, from sharing updates, images, and videos to expressing opinions on various topics. Social media has provided individuals with a tremendous instrument for self-expression, allowing them to showcase their creativity, advocate for causes, and draw attention to crucial concerns.
- **Information and News:** Social media has transformed how people consume news and keep up with current events. It gets immediate access to breaking news, hot topics, and updates from favourite sources thanks to real-time updates from across the world. Social media has evolved into a go-to tool for news discovery, allowing us to stay informed and engaged with current events in ways that were never before.
- **Community Development:** Social media has facilitated the establishment of virtual communities centred on similar interests, hobbies, and causes. Social media platforms provide a venue for like-minded people to come together, interact, and collaborate, whether it's a group of dedicated photographers, a support network for those facing similar issues, or an online forum for information sharing.

There are different social media platforms that are world widely available to people. The most common platforms are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and YouTube.

In addition, social media platforms have increased usage by Generation Z. Here the Generation Z definition is cleared by the author (Dimock, 2019). He said that the people born before 1997 are said to be Millennial generation i.e. anyone born between 1981 and 1996 are from Millennial generation. He also concludes that the generation born after 1996 is part of the new generation and it was named Generation Z. It was stated that Generation Z dominates online searches for information on the post-millennial generation.

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z or the iGeneration. As the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age, they have been profoundly shaped by technology, social media, and the rapid advancements of the 21st century. Gen Z is the demographic group that follows Generation Y (Millennials), and their unique characteristics and experiences distinguish them as a generation poised to reshape the world.

Defining Characteristics of Generation Z:

- **Digital Natives:** Gen Z has grown up with smartphones, social media, and instant access to information, making them highly skilled and fluent in digital technology.
- **Digital Upbringing:** Gen Z has an innate understanding of digital platforms, utilizing social media, online communities, and digital tools as integral parts of their lives.
- **Communication Preferences:** Instant messaging, video calls, and social media interactions are the norm for Gen Z, emphasizing connectivity, immediacy, and visual communication.
- **Online Personal Branding:** Gen Z leverages social media to curate personal brands and express their identities, while also being mindful of privacy and online reputation management.
- **Tech-Driven Learning:** Gen Z embraces technology in education, valuing personalized, interactive, and digitally enhanced learning experiences.
- **Digital Content Consumers:** Gen Z consumes media and entertainment predominantly through digital platforms, with a preference for streaming services, YouTube, and short-form content.
- **Influencer Culture:** Social media influencers play a significant role in shaping Gen Z's purchasing decisions and brand preferences.
- **Technological Innovators:** Gen Z's deep understanding of technology positions them as potential drivers of future innovations and advancements.
- **Generation Z is a generation that brings a unique set of characteristics, perspectives, and values to the world. As they enter adulthood and become key players in various fields, their impact on society, technology, and culture will undoubtedly shape the future in profound and transformative ways. Understanding the motivations, preferences, and aspirations of Generation Z is**

crucial for individuals, businesses, and policymakers aiming to engage with this dynamic and influential generation.

2. Literature Review:

(Kuncoro & Kusumawati, September 2021) had identified the factors influencing customers' decisions in acquiring sleeping products and pinpointed the attributes that resonate with their preferences. Employing a quantitative approach with questionnaires as primary data and a literature review as secondary data, the research focuses on respondents aged 17-26 in Jabodetabek and Bandung. Utilizing Multiple Linear Regression methods, the study reveals that dimensions such as product, social, personal values, sales promotion, and social media marketing significantly and positively impact purchase decisions. The findings emphasize the importance of conveying product advantages and personal values, utilizing influencers for promotion, offering price discounts, and leveraging social media to attract customers in the sleeping product industry. This insight into consumer behavior is essential for refining marketing strategies and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the industry.

(Li, Xu, Cuomo, Purushothaman, & Mackey, 2020) had researched data mining and social content during the covid breakdown to assess the content of Chinese social media posts originating in Wuhan City on the microblogging platform Weibo during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher had done quantitative analysis, data on the daily COVID-19 cases in Wuhan. A linear regression model was then employed to examine whether the number of Weibo posts related to COVID-19 could predict the reported case numbers. The findings of the quantitative analysis revealed a positive correlation between the quantity of Weibo posts and the number of reported COVID-19 cases in Wuhan. Specifically, an increase of approximately 10 COVID-19 cases was associated with every 40 social media posts ($P < .001$). These results offer initial insights into the origins of the COVID-19 outbreak, derived from an analysis of Chinese social media data in Wuhan City. The study combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to shed light on this early epicentre of the pandemic.

(Odina, 2020) had delved into the evolving landscape of social media, particularly Instagram advertising, aiming to discern the preferences of Generation Y and Z while scrutinizing the motivating factors behind their interaction with advertisements. Employing a qualitative approach, the research utilizes interviews and surveys, with over 40 responses collected. The assessment, facilitated by visual mockups, focuses on visual appeal, trustworthiness, and purchase behavior influence. Thematic analysis reveals that participants predominantly base their preferences on Familiarity, Presentation of Information, and Advertising Intrusion. Although a consistent majority preference is not evident across all aspects, Video Ads emerge as the favored format. The study intentionally narrows its focus to Jönköping and excludes considerations beyond Generations Y and Z, along with specific social media elements like hashtags

and influencers, in order to maintain a methodologically sound and focused investigation.

(Dimock, 2019) had defined the different generations with their definition and concluded that the people born from 1981 to 1996 are the Millennial generation and people born after 1996 are the new generations and named Generation Z.

(Kircaburun, Alhabash, Tosuntas, & Griffiths, 2018) had examined the effects of (i) demographics and Big Five personality dimensions on social media use motives; (ii) demographics and use motives on social media site preferences; and (iii) demographics, personality, popular social media sites, and social media use motives on problematic social media use. 1008 undergraduate college students were used to examine the above factors. Multiple linear and hierarchical regression analysis was used for the analysis, and it was revealed that the social media use motivations of (i) meeting new people, and socializing, (ii) expressing or presenting a more popular self, and (iii) passing time and amusement were related to problematic behaviour.

(VICARIO, GAITO, QUATTROCIOCCHI, ZIGNANI, & ZOLLO, 2017) had researched the increasing concern over the spread of fake news and unsubstantiated rumors on social media platforms, coupled with the influence of confirmation bias, has prompted researchers to explore various aspects of this phenomenon. Experimental studies have demonstrated that people tend to accept information that confirms their existing beliefs, even when it contains deliberately false claims, while dissenting information is often disregarded or may even intensify group polarization. This paper tackles the challenge by focusing on the discussion surrounding the Italian Constitutional Referendum. A quantitative analysis is conducted using data from both public Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. The study observes the spontaneous formation of distinct communities on both platforms, indicating a natural segregation process without any predefined categorization of content. This study contributes to the understanding of content dynamics and the emergence of narratives on social media platforms, particularly in relation to the Italian Constitutional Referendum. By employing a quantitative, cross-platform analysis, the research sheds light on community formation, user attention patterns, and controversial topics. It also offers implications for detecting and addressing viral misinformation in a timely manner.

(Colby & Ortman, 2014) had given the definition of all generations from WWII TO Generation Z. The author defined Generation WWII for the people born between 1922-27, Postwar for 1928-1945, Boomers I for 1946-54, Boomers II for 1955-64, Gen X for 1965-80, Millennials for 1981-96, Gen Z from 1997-2012.

(Ezumah, 2013) had researched on social media site preferences by college students. In that, they had taken factors like keeping in touch with friends, sharing images, keeping in touch with relatives, and entertainment. In that study Facebook emerged as the top SMN site, followed by Twitter, while LinkedIn was the least popular.

3. Problem Statement:

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, understanding the preferences and behaviors of Generation Z (Gen Z) on various social media sites is essential for marketers, businesses, and platform developers. This survey-based study aims to address the following problem: What are the preferences of Gen Z users on selected social media sites?

It focuses on investigating the specific preferences of Gen Z users, acknowledging that each social media platform offers unique features, functionalities, and user experiences. Understanding which platforms are most appealing to Gen Z and why can provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to engage this demographic effectively.

In summary, this survey-based study aims to explore and analyze the preferences of Generation Z users on selected social media sites. By addressing this problem, the research endeavours to provide valuable insights into the unique characteristics and behaviors of Gen Z on social media platforms, enabling marketers, businesses, and platform developers to optimize their strategies and offerings to better cater to this influential demographic.

4. Research Design:

The research employed a survey-based design to gather data on Gen Z preferences on selected social media sites. Surveys are an effective method for collecting quantitative data and capturing a wide range of responses from a large sample.

Sampling:

The target population is Gen Z individuals, but the survey was opened for the other generation people as well to identify the different perspectives on social media. A representative sample was selected using a combination of random sampling techniques and convenience sampling. The sample size was determined to ensure statistical significance.

Questionnaire Development:

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data on Gen Z preferences. The questionnaire had included closed-ended questions. The following variables were taken into consideration while creating the questionnaire:

- Social media platform preferences
- Features offered by different social media platforms
- Social media content types
- Engagement levels
- Satisfaction Level

Sample details:

This study is a survey that focuses on primary data gathered from social media users of Gen Z residing in Gujarat state. The research is based on a modified Likert scale questionnaire, which measures the above variable dimensions through responses given by participants on a 5-point measure. The data was collected from 162 respondents using a convenient sampling method. The research design employed in this study combines exploratory and descriptive elements to achieve its objectives. The sampling method used is "non-probability convenient sampling". The data examination was carried out using SPSS software.

Measurement of Scale:

A questionnaire was established to collect information from Gen Z using social media from the Gujarat region. Data was compiled using online and offline modes. The questionnaire was reviewed by a group of experts for content validity. Suggested changes were incorporated into the questionnaire. A five-point liker type measure moving as of strongly disagree and strongly agree measured the constructs matters

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data from the survey will be analysed using statistical techniques like frequency analysis and for a better understanding, visualizations have been created through Tableau software.

Following are the research outcomes:

Table 4.1.1: Respondents Demographic Details

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Female	85	52.5
	Male	77	47.5
	Total	162	100.0

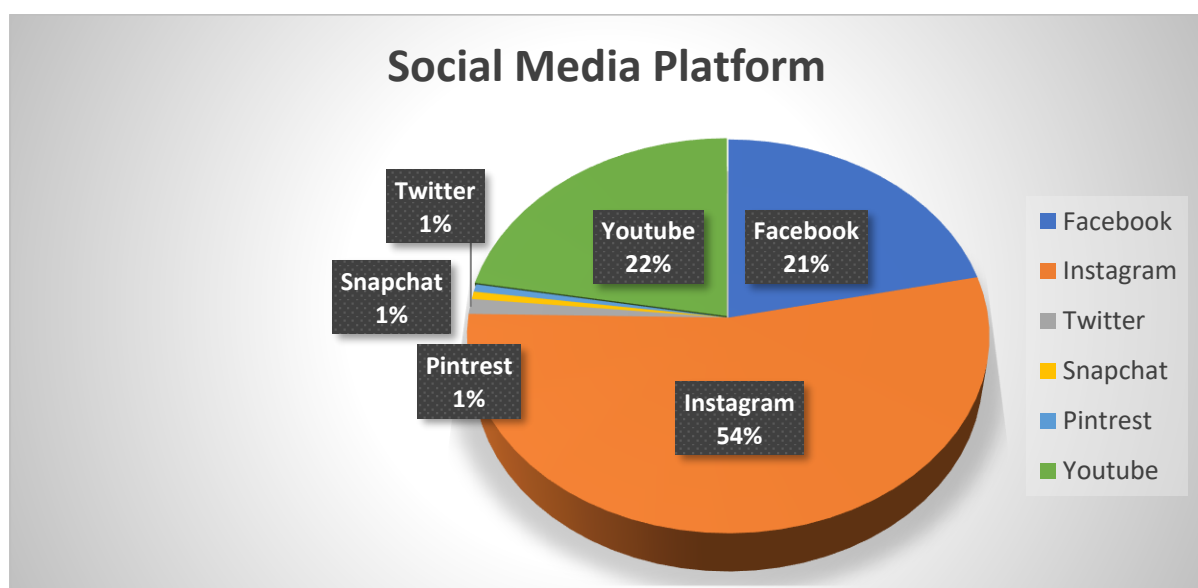
Area	Frequency	Percent
Urban	124	76.5
Rural	38	23.5
Total	162	100.0

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
00-12	3	1.9
13-17	3	1.9
18-24	73	45.1
25-34	31	19.1
35-44	19	11.7
45-54	22	13.6
55-64	6	3.7
65 and above	5	3.1
Total	162	100.0

Education	Frequency	Percent	Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Secondary	4	2.5	In school	22	13.6
Higher Secondary	44	27.2	In University	60	37.0
Graduation	48	29.6	Looking for job	4	2.5
Post Graduation	58	35.8	Salaried employee	48	29.6
Doctoral	7	4.3	Selfemployee	15	9.3
Post-Doctoral	1	.6	Retired	5	3.1
Total	162	100.0	Other	8	4.9
			Total	162	100.0

Table 4.1.1 summarises the respondent's gender, age, place, occupation, and education. There are 162 respondents in total, with 52.5% being female and 47.5% being male. 64.2% are between the ages of 18 and 34, and 45.1% are between the ages of 18 and 24. The majority of respondents (76.5%) live in cities, while the rest of them live in rural areas. As seen in the table, 37.0% of all respondents work in a university, 29.5% are salaried, and the rest of them work in other occupations. In terms of education, the majority of them are either graduates or postgraduates.

Chart 4.2.1: Social Media Platform Usage



The distribution of social media platform users is depicted in chart 4.2.1. Instagram is used by more than half of all respondent. Instagram is the most popular social media platform, followed by YouTube and Facebook.

Table 4.1.2: Gender * Social_media_Platform Crosstabulation

									Total
			Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Snapchat	Pintrest	Youtube	
Gender	Female	Count	19	48	0	1	1	16	85
		% of Total	11.7%	29.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	9.9%	52.5%
	Male	Count	16	39	2	0	0	20	77
		% of Total	9.9%	24.1%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	12.3%	47.5%
Total		Count	35	87	2	1	1	36	162
		% of Total	21.6%	53.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	22.2%	100.0%

The chart 4.1.2 shows the correlation between gender and social media platforms, indicating that there are no observable differences in the data concerning gender.

Table 4.1.3 Cross Tabulation of Age Group and Selected Social Media:

Age Group * Social_media_Platform Crosstabulation									
			Social_media_Platform						Total
			Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Snapchat	Pintrest	Youtube	
Age Group	00-12	Count	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
		% of Total	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	1.9%
	13-17	Count	0	2	0	0	0	1	3
		% of Total	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	1.9%
	18-24	Count	1	57	1	1	0	13	73
		% of Total	0.6%	34.1%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	7.9%	29.9%

		% of Total	0.6%	35.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	8.0%	45.1%
	25-34	Count	2	24	0	0	0	5	31
		% of Total	1.2%	14.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	19.1%
	35-44	Count	11	0	1	0	0	7	19
		% of Total	6.8%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	11.7%
	45-54	Count	11	4	0	0	1	6	22
		% of Total	6.8%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	3.7%	13.6%
	55-64	Count	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
		% of Total	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%
	65 and above	Count	3	0	0	0	0	2	5
		% of Total	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	3.1%
	Total	Count	35	87	2	1	1	36	162
		% of Total	21.6%	53.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	22.2%	100.0%

The table 4.1.3 depicts the usage of various social media platforms across different age groups. This study specifically focuses on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube as the selected platforms. Among these, Instagram emerges as the most widely used social media site, with a significant shift from Facebook in recent times. However, it is noteworthy that the age group of 55-64 continues to predominantly utilize Facebook, despite a smaller sample size. This indicates their limited engagement with other social media platforms.

Table 4.1.4 Cross tabulation of Selected Social Media Sites and Area.

Area * Social_media_Platform Crosstabulation									
			Social_media_Platform						Total
			Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Snapchat	Pintrest	Youtube	
Area	Urban	Count	24	69	2	0	0	29	124
		% of Total	14.8%	42.6%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	17.9%	76.5%
	Rural	Count	11	18	0	1	1	7	38
		% of Total	6.8%	11.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	4.3%	23.5%
Total		Count	35	87	2	1	1	36	162
		% of Total	21.6%	53.7%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	22.2%	100.0%

Chart 4.1.4 shows the correlation between area and social media platforms, indicating that there are no observable differences in the data concerning area. In terms of popularity, Instagram occupies the leading position, with Facebook following closely behind.

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION:

The study "A Survey of Gen Z Preferences on Selected Social Media Sites: An Analytical Perspective" provides valuable insights into the preferences and usage patterns of Generation Z (Gen Z) regarding various social media platforms. The following discussion highlights key findings and implications of the research.

One of the prominent findings is the dominance of Instagram among Gen Z participants. This aligns with the trend observed in recent years, where Instagram has gained significant popularity, surpassing other platforms like Facebook. The study suggests that Gen Z's inclination toward Instagram can be attributed to its visually-oriented nature, interactive features, and strong community engagement. This finding has significant implications for marketers and advertisers, emphasizing the importance of leveraging Instagram as a strategic platform to effectively reach and engage with Gen Z audiences.

Another noteworthy aspect highlighted in the study is the limited impact of gender on social media preferences within the Gen Z demographic. The research indicates that irrespective of gender, there are no substantial variations observed in the choice of social media sites. This implies that Gen Z, regardless of gender, gravitates towards similar platforms and exhibits comparable usage patterns. This finding indicates that marketers can adopt a gender-neutral approach when targeting Gen Z on social media, focusing on shared interests and preferences rather than gender-specific strategies.

The study also sheds light on the declining popularity of Facebook among Gen Z. This suggests a generational shift in social media preferences, with younger users gravitating towards more visually-driven and interactive platforms. It is crucial for businesses and brands to acknowledge this shift and adapt their marketing strategies accordingly to effectively engage with Gen Z audiences. While Facebook still maintains a significant user base, understanding the preferences and usage patterns of Gen Z on other platforms becomes vital staying relevant and resonating with this demographic.

Moreover, the research highlights the need for continuous monitoring and adaptation of social media strategies, as preferences and trends among Gen Z are subject to change over time. The fast-paced nature of social media demands constant evaluation and adjustment of marketing approaches to align with evolving Gen Z preferences.

Overall, "A Survey of Gen Z Preferences on Selected Social Media Sites: An Analytical Perspective" provides valuable insights into the dynamic landscape of social media preferences among Gen Z. The findings serve as a valuable resource for marketers, researchers, and industry professionals seeking to understand and effectively engage with this demographic on social media platforms.

6. LIMITATION AND FUTURE SCOPE:

The survey's sample may not fully represent the diverse population of Gen Z. The study's findings may be biased toward certain demographics or geographical regions, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. This study basically targeted the North Gujarat region only. The study focuses on a specific selection of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube. Considering these limitations, future research could address these gaps to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's preferences on social media sites. This could involve larger and more diverse samples, incorporation of emerging platforms, and longitudinal studies to capture temporal changes and cultural variations.

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