How Social Media and Technological Advancements Have Affected Gen Z’s Communication Skills

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**Introduction**

The first social media platform was created in 1997 by Andrew Weinreich. Since then, social media has gained unprecedented popularity and has had many advancements and changes throughout time. With new advancements, social media has made it easier than ever to quickly receive information and global news along with a simple mode of direct messaging without the use of text. It has created a whole virtual world where users can expect immediate responses and validation without having to wait for service or emailing. Social media has seen the evolution of multiple generations with Gen Z being the first to have it implemented in their childhood. However, there is great debate over how social media has been affecting the growing generation as they begin to enter workplaces and professional fields. Similarly, different means of digital communication have become more prominent specifically due to the lockdown of 2020 where nearly the whole population was pushed to work and communicate virtually from remote locations. Through this pandemic, different applications such as Zoom, Google Meets, and Gmail have begun to gain popularity as people are finding simpler ways to work from home, without having any face-to-face interaction. Through all of this, the debate over how social media negatively affects the growing generations remained. However, my research in this study has shown that it is not social media, but a heavy reliance on digital communication solely, that has had a negative impact on Generation Z’s interpersonal communication skills through time.

**Methods**

The research conducted in this study was aimed to answer the question of how social media has affected the manner in which the younger generation communicates. Similarly, it showed how this idea was misunderstood, and how it was not social media directly that negatively affected Generation Z’s interpersonal communication skills, but rather a heavy reliance on digital communication throughout the generations life that led to a lack of growth in their face-to-face communication skills. The research sources in this paper were found using google scholar in order to locate credible, scholarly sources that had been peer reviewed and published. Along with this, three non-scholarly but credible sources were used to complete research within this paper. These sources provided information that was used to evaluate the question proposed and to discover a misconception in the understanding of the proposed topic.

The research completed with these sources displays how social media provides both advantages and disadvantages to society and how it has been affecting the younger generations throughout their lives. Along with this, it explained how digital communication itself also has both advantages and disadvantages as it continues to advance technologically to provide more opportunities for society today.

**Results**

Social media has provided numerous platforms for people to create, share, and explore new ideas or communicate, however it has also been accused of causing the younger generation to have a lack of interpersonal communication skills. Unlike other generations Anwar states that, “they tend to believe that their lives in social media are more essential than in the real world” (Anwar, 2019). Because of this hyper fixation on their lives on the internet, this generation was led to neglect their personal lives in the real world. However, this wasn’t solely due to the use of social media. It wasn’t the presence of social media directly that consumed a generation, but rather the form of digital communication. Along with being more present on the internet than previous generations, “Gen Z is also more dominant on social media communication” (Anwar, 2019). Because social media has been implemented into this generation’s life from such an early age, Gen Z quickly learned to communicate digitally. This led them to be quite adept with digital communication and the internet which varies greatly from the digital skills of previous generations. However, these advancements come with negatives. This sense of a heavy reliance on digital communication has led Gen Z to lack many of the communicatory skills that are commonly needed in professional fields. Gen Z’s reliance on digital communication began “affecting their competencies in face-to-face interactions” (Anwar, 2019). As this generation advances in digital communication, it regresses in interpersonal communication thus creating a tradeoff of sorts within skill sets. However, while social media is commonly blamed for the lack of interpersonal communication skills of Gen Z, it has been commonly misunderstood. It was not social media that directly affected this generation, but the efficient and immediate nature of digital communication that coincided with social media. Direct messaging through Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp has led the younger generation to lack an understanding of the need for face-to-face communication. As Hughes states, “As the first generation of digital natives, they’re not only used to the availability of information, but also to the immediacy of information” (Hughes, 2022). Due to the implementation of digital communication and instant replies from a young age, along with a reliance on total online communication caused by the pandemic, this generation has now begun to fall behind in interpersonal communication skills.

**Conclusion**

As social media and digital communication gained popularity in the two thousands, the generations began to slowly shift into the online world. However, through the quick rise in social media popularity and vast technological advancements occurring in recent years along with the pandemic of 2020, Generation Z was led to rely heavily on communicating virtually and began to lose previously implemented interpersonal communication skills. As they began to advance in technological skills, they simultaneously lost the in-person communication skills that every generation prior had maintained. Through the presence of social media, this generation began to hyper fixate on their lives in the virtual world and lost view of their lives in the real world. However, while social media was commonly blamed for Gen Z’s lack of personal communication skills, it was not the direct implementation of social media, but rather the efficient and immediate nature of digital communication that caused an entire generation to fall behind in face-to-face communication in such an unprecedented way.

**Annotated Bibliography**

Anwar, Tika Mutia. “Phenomenology of Communication of Generation Z in Pekanbaru.” *Komunikator*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2019, https://doi.org/10.18196/jkm.111015.

This source explores Generation Z's growing capability to follow technological advancements along with their strong technological communication skills. Contrary to this, it speaks on how their reliance on digital communication has led to a lack in personal skills. It explores how through advancements in technology, Gen Z has formed an overwhelming reliance on social media and has therefore neglected their interpersonal connections I would use this source in my essay to support my claim that it isn’t social media directly that has had a negative effect on gen z's communication skills, but rather the reliance on digital communication that stems from technological advancements. However, I could also use this source to show an opposing view that illustrates how it has been helpful to advancements in the younger generation. This source is very credible as it has been peer reviewed by over twenty people, and has received an accreditation certificate. This source relates to other sources by sharing a similar viewpoint in which a heavy digital reliance or more specifically a heavy reliance on social media has had a negative effect on the younger generations communication skills.

Annotated Bibliography

Dey, Ainesh. “Gen Z and the Rise of Social Media Influence.” *International Policy Digest*, 28 Jan. 23AD, intpolicydigest.org/the-platform/gen-z-and-the-rise-of-social-media-influence/.

This source explains how social media has affected Gen Z's preferred method of communication, and how they would choose for everything to be accomplished digitally. Furthermore it explores the complications this introduces into their lives and their future workplaces. It explains how although they are rather technologically advanced, they lack standard interpersonal skills commonly obtained by other employees in previous generations due to their digital reliance. I would use this source to further support the claim that a heavy reliance on digital communication has had a negative effect on the interpersonal social skills of the younger generations as opposed to social media being the sole cause. I could also use this source to introduce the positive aspects of digital advancements. This source is credible as it lists the author and publisher. This website is similar to my other sources as it provides evidence to support the harmful effects of social media on the younger generations

Hughes, Joanna. “Communicating with Generation Z: Everything You Need to Know.” *keg\_left\_Sharp*, 2 July 2023, www.keg.com/news/communicating-with-generation-z-everything-you-need-to-know#:~:text=Gen%20Z%20communicates%20with%20images,and%20images%20rather%20than%20text.

This source explains how the use of social media has affected Generation Z's attention span and communication skills within a workplace. It illustrates how the use of direct messaging has led to a lack of understanding on how to communicate professionally. I could use this source to support the idea that Generation Z is lacking basic communication skills that other generations have maintained due to an increase in social media usage. This source is credible as it was written by Joanna Hughes who spent several years in higher education administration for a leading research institution before becoming a writer for an education group. It relates to my other sources by providing more specific details on how digital reliance has affected Gen Z.

Kick, Amanda L, et al. “How Generation Z’s Reliance on Digital Communication Can ... - Proquest.” *ProQuest*, 2015, www.proquest.com/openview/5a46db142cff6135e5f739b38ac0e8f2/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=39801.

This source explores how having a heavy reliance on social media and digital communication has affected generation Z in their ability to maintain interpersonal communication in their lives and more specifically workplaces. I can use this source in my essay to illustrate the way that social media has had a negative effect on the younger generation's communication skills. This source is a scholarly journal written by multiple authors which brought different ideas, collaborators, and opportunities to peer review which portrays its credibility as a source. This source relates to my other sources as it provides more evidence to support the claim that social media and digital communication has led to a lack of interpersonal communication skills in the younger generations.

Ndmu. “The Evolution of Communication from Boomers to Gen Z: Ndmu.” *NDMU Online*, 19 Sept. 2022, online.ndm.edu/news/communication/evolution-of-communication/.

This source portrays the differences in communication styles that can be observed throughout the different generations. It also explains how a reliance on digital communication has led Gen Z to have a shorter attention span and a preference for communication from home. It shares how social media consumption has led gen Z to expect quick results which varies from other generations. This source would be useful in my essay as it would not only support the claim of social media having harmful effects on the interpersonal communication skills of Gen z but it also introduces ideas of how to work around these effects as well as portraying some positive aspects of social media. This source is credible as it was published by a respectable university and researched by multiple people which offers multiple opportunities for peer review. This source relates to my other sources as it shares similar ideas found in the others.

Prakash Yadav, Gyan, and Jyotsna Rai. “The Generation Z and Their Social Media Usage: A Review and a Research Outline.” *Global Journal of Enterprise Information System*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2017, p. 110, https://doi.org/10.18311/gjeis/2017/15748.

This journal expands on Generation Z's use of social media in order to communicate, and how that affects them in their personal lives, and as a generation as a whole. It explains the differences between Gen Z and other generations and how the implication of digital media has divided the generations throughout the years. I would use this source in my essay to provide more ideas on how social media has led to differences in the way that Generation Z behaves, thinks, and communicates compared to other generations. This source has been peer reviewed by multiple people as well as having multiple collaborators to read through and correct this work. This Journal relates to my other sources by offering more evidence as to how social media has affected Generation Z throughout their lives.