


Social Media Usage: A Comparison Between Generation Y and Generation Z in India

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ABSTRACT

Social media is an important part of young generations' digital lives and has become much more than a social connection tool. This research offers comprehensions into usage of social media among Gen Y and Gen Z and investigates the usage of social media's features such as socialization, information, entertainment, education, and shopping. Various previous studies are available which attempted to investigate the usage of social media by Gen Z and Gen Y independently. This study is the first that attempted to compare the usage between Gen Z and Gen Y. This is an empirical study comprising 293 respondents from Gen Y and Gen Z, who were selected purposively. The findings suggest that Gen Z use social media more than Gen Y for education, entertainment, shopping, and socialization whereas social media usage of both the generations for information seeking are equal. This study offers recommendations for companies from India to consider incorporating social media marketing actions to encourage their brands and products to specific age groups.

KEYWORDS

Consumer Behavior, Generation Y (Millennials), Generation Z, India, Segmentation, SMP, SNS, Social Media Marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

In 21st century, social media have intruded people's everyday life with incredible speed to turn out to be one of the most significant means of communication through technology (Arli, 2017; Lau, 2017). Over a period, social media have evolved as an interactive social platform for conversation and collaboration, as well as for sharing information and expertise (Singh et al., 2010). In today's era, the popularity of social media has increased significantly. Billions of users worldwide are using social media (Laudon & Traver, 2016). Facebook (FB), YouTube (YT) and WhatsApp (WA) are mostly used social media platforms (SMP) globally. On Facebook, more than one hundred billion messages shared every day (*Company Info*, 2020). More than 2 billion people in over 180 countries use WhatsApp (*About WhatsApp*, 2021). With over 560 million active internet users, India is the world's second-largest digital marketplace (Keelery, 2021). Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp are among the most popular social media sites in India, based on usage reach (Diwanji, 2020). The regular use of Twitter and comments from other Twitter users seems to have a beneficial impact on the finances raised by the start-up (Singhal & Kapur, 2022). This signifies the importance of this study from marketers' point of view. With the surge in the SMP usage, the past decade has witnessed

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paradigm shift in digital advertising, marketing communication and interactive media for reaching out massive customers. One of the upcoming marketing trends that can be witnessed in the next days is for brands to remain organic and honest.

In India, social media was accessed by more than 50 percent of the population in 2020. According to predictions, 67 percent of the population will have access to social networks by the year 2025 (Tanushree, 2022). Around 1.8 billion individuals, or approximately 23 percent of the world's population, are members of the millennial generation, often known as generation Y (Gen Y). Millennials, make up 440 million people, or 34%, of India's overall population. India has over the past several years grown to be the largest millennial market in the world, attracting interest in Indian millennials from all over the world (Priyam, 2021). Deloitte also published research in 2021 that included information on the growing influence of generation Z (Gen Z) in the post-pandemic consumer landscape. Thus, it is necessary for academics and marketers to know how Gen Z and Gen Y access information, interact using web - based technologies, and use social media. This study served aforesaid mentioned purpose and revealed generational differences that exist between Gen Y and Gen Z for social media usage in India.

The usage of SMP varies from generation to generations. Various studies attempted to understand usage of SMPs for every generation (Bolton et al., 2013; Curtis et al., 2019; Dimock, 2019; Leung, 2013). Most of these studies were conducted in developed countries (García et al., 2020; Martín-Rojas et al., 2020; Schaefer et al., 2019; Seemiller & Grace, 2017). Further, these studies emphasized on SMP usage of each generation separately rather than comparing among the generations. Therefore, this study is an attempt to bridge this gap. Research on social media is still in its nascent stages in the emerging countries like India particularly in context of newer generations. Further, Gen Z and Gen Y also called as Millennials are emerging demographic cohort with increasingly substantial internet access and online presence and, therefore, understanding their social media usage is significant to marketers. It is important to understand basic differences and distinctions across generations for use of social media. This is of utmost importance for marketers to devise their offerings and promotions specific to targeted generations. Companies may also use this research to gain an improved understanding of their customers' social media habits, as well as what types of content on which platforms will most likely appeal to their target demographic.

Social media are increasingly has been used to keep up with the latest information in a fast-paced world nowadays. Companies, executives, academics, and governments are all interested in how Gen Y and Gen Z use social media since it has an impact on their behaviour across a wide range of industries. Social media also empowers these generations to interact with brands and companies.

Even though there has been huge development in the field of social media usage of late, it is little known how Gen Z and Gen Y assess and use different aspects of social media. For academicians and marketers, it is imperative to understand how Gen Z and Gen Y consume information, how do they communicate through internet technologies, how do they use social media. This information would help organizations to understand their customers in better way, to design/alter their offerings, marketing communications and offer more value to prospects.

The objective of this research is to offer understandings into usage of social media among Gen Z and Gen Y and to investigate usage of social media's features like, socialization, information, entertainment, education, and shopping. The structure of the paper is divided into 6 sections. First Section presents an introduction to the study and its objectives, while the second Section presents a literature review and the development of hypotheses. Subsection 2.1 provides information about social media, whereas subsection 2.2 presents information about generations, which include discussion on Gen Y and Gen Z. Subsection 2.3 provides justification for developed hypotheses. While section 3, 4, 5, and 6 describes methodology, results and discussion, conclusion, and originality/value respectively.

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