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Intergenerational Communication on Instagram and TikTok: A Comparative Analysis of Language Styles and Visual Usage Among Algerian Millennials and Generation Z

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List of Abbreviations

BAE: Before Anyone Else

BRB: Be Right Back

BTW: By The Way

CAT: Communication Accommodation Theory

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

CMC: Computer Mediated Communication

DL: Digital Linguistics

FOMO: Fear of Missing Out

ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

IIRC: If I Remember Correctly

GC: Generational Cohort

LOL: Laughing Out Loud

TTYL: Talk To You Later

TY: Thank You

INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE USAGE OF LANGUAGE STYLES AND VISUALS AMONG MILLENNIALS AND GENERATION Z

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Abstract

In the modern era, social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have radically transformed how individuals from different generational cohorts communicate virtually. Indeed, these platforms not only create a virtual space that facilitates bridging the gap between different age cohorts, but also encourage users through features such as filters, trending sounds, emojis, hashtags, and visual storytelling tools to express themselves in **diverse, multimodal manners** that go beyond text alone. This includes the use of distinct language styles and visual strategies that reflect generational identities. Although previous studies have explored Millennials' and Generation Z's linguistic and visual preferences of Instagram and TikTok, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these generational differences manifest in the Algerian context. This study aims at comparing and analyzing the specific language styles and visual strategies used by Algerian Millennials and Generation Z in their intergenerational communication on Instagram and TikTok. The study uses a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. A survey is administered to 209 participants that are stratified by generation to collect data on their language and visual preferences. Additionally, focus groups are conducted to explore the factors influencing these preferences, such as cultural influences, technological familiarity, and generational identity. Then, content analysis of selected social media posts is performed to identify patterns in language and visual usage. The findings reveal some differences between the two generations and how they use language styles and visuals on Instagram and TikTok. Millennials prefer a balanced combination of formal and informal language with medium image content, but Generation Z prefer informal slang-based language and emotive images, especially on TikTok. Those patterns somehow reflect the digital habits, cultural influences, and the avenues used by members of each generation for expression of identity and to lay the foundations for intergenerational communication in Algeria.

Keywords: Algeria, Instagram, intergenerational communication, Generation Z, language styles, Millennials, visuals, TikTok

1.1. General Introduction

Social media networks, have not only brought interest of researchers and users in the modern age, for their ability to fill geographical space and allow for real-time communication, but have also created dynamic spaces where multiple generations may interact and express themselves. These developments have continued to shift and shape the loci of digital intergenerational communication, where the multiple generations of users employ different genre specific linguistic and visual aspects that also express generational identity (Abdullah et al., 2018; Alijagic, 2023).

This study investigates the way Algerian Millennials and Generation Z communicate on TikTok and Instagram, while paying attention to their usage of language styles and visual elements such as emojis, GIFS, and memes . While the examination of social media networks is vast, there is a notable gap since there is minimal examination on intergenerational communication on Instagram and TikTok in the Algerian context (Decressac, 2024; Armah & Li, 2023). These channels are of note given the prevalence among younger Algerians, however there is little research that has examined the role of cultural and linguistic factors as they relate to users' behaviours and interactions with the channels.

This study will employ a constructivist lens of inquiry using concepts of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Generational Cohort (GC) theory, to determine how forms of digital engagement can produce representations of sociolinguistic trends. The current study will also target a geographical and a typological gap in the literature, to study the way generational identity impacts the role of language and visual representation on social media placing this study between the nascent literature on Digital Linguistics (DL) – which studies language variation; social interaction; change of meanings in relation to online social spaces and digital technologies (Dragojevic et al., 2015; Cuefano, 2024).

1.Background of the Study

On social media, Millennials tend to use a casual language style quite often while communicating, and this type of language style is also featured with the use of abbreviations, slang, and informal phrases and sentences. On Instagram particularly, research shows that the casual style of Millennials stands as 56.7% of their overall language use, intimate style 23.3%, and formal style being the least common with only 10% (Nurjamin et al.,2023; Purba et al., 2021; Shahrin et al., 2024).

On TikTok, Millennials often rely on narrating in communication, favoring storytelling and providing context while using full sentences and proper grammar, which seems to be the opposite of Generation Z, who prefer visual content. Millennials balance the use of both texts and visuals (videos, GIFs, pictures) when communicating on TikTok and on Instagram, unlike Generation Z. Besides, millennials use memes and emojis as any other means of communication; Generation Z can rely on them solely to convey full, complex messages (Pratik, 2024; Verbalplanet, 2024).

Generation Z is known for their use of slang and casual language style on Instagram, by which their written expressions are full of abbreviations, acronyms, slang, and contractions that occur whenever they need to abbreviate or create emotional closeness. It is also important to note that the language on Instagram, TikTok, and other social media is marked by slang commonly adopted by Generation Z. Labels and catches frequently increase their exaggerated humor; at the same time, words evoke core values of inclusiveness and diversity (Basco, 2023; Syaputra et al., 2024; Telaumbanua et al., 2024). Generation Z likes to express their thoughts and feelings through visuals such as memes, GIFs, and emojis (Baird, 2018; Roman, 2024; Seguin, 2024). Also, on TikTok, slang language generally came about as a casual mode of informal communication inside social groups, especially among Generation Z on TikTok,

which is also a pot for memes that witnessed a quick shine through TikTok being Generation Z's favorite (Langdon, 2022; Syafa'ah et al., 2023; Zapal, 2019).

While prior studies have examined linguistic and visual aspects of intergenerational communication on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, the existing literature remains largely focused on global or regional contexts outside North Africa. For instance, Azad's (2023) study in Indonesia highlights the increasing role of emerging visual formats—such as GIFs, memes, and augmented filters—in shaping digital communication styles among younger generations. However, to the best of our knowledge, no empirical research has yet explored these intergenerational dynamics within the Algerian context.

The present study addresses this gap by offering a comparative analysis of language styles and visual strategies employed by Algerian Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok. By grounding the research in a specific sociocultural setting, it provides original insight into how generational identity, linguistic preference, and visual expression converge in Algerian digital communication. Future studies may build on this foundation by expanding to additional platforms, broader age groups, and other underrepresented regions in the Arab and North African digital landscape.

2. Statement of the Problem

Although social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok are very popular globally, especially among the younger generations who view them as essential tools of communication, there is a notable gap at the level of research on how the different age cohorts and generations, like Millennials and Generation Z, interact amongst each other on these platforms in the Algerian context. Besides, although intergenerational differences in communication styles have been studied worldwide, there remains a lack of understanding regarding how language styles and visual content used by Millennials and Generation Z differ in their use of **language styles and visuals** on Instagram and TikTok in Algeria. This gap in the literature limits our insights

into how these younger generations in Algeria engage with these platforms, particularly in terms of their sociocultural background, linguistic choices, and digital expression norms.

In order for this gap to be addressed, conducting a comprehensive comparative analysis will be a necessity to provide us with the needed opportunity to understand how generational linguistic and visual preferences shape communicative styles on these platforms and how they reflect the generational identity of each age group, providing insights into the intergenerational communication styles of Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok in Algeria by comparing their use of language styles and visuals on those two previously mentioned social media platforms, ultimately contributing to the field of digital intergenerational communication in the Algerian context.

3. Research Aim

This research aims at conducting a thorough comparative analysis of intergenerational communication on Instagram and TikTok among Millennials and Generation Z in the Algerian context, focusing on their language styles (e.g., formality vs. informality, use of slang) and use of visuals (e.g., images, GIFs, memes).

4. Research Objectives

1. To analyze how language styles (e.g., formal vs. informal, use of slang) vary across Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok.
2. To analyze how visuals (e.g., images, GIFs, memes) vary across Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok.
3. To assess the factors influencing generational preferences for language and visuals on these platforms.

5. Research Questions

1. How do language styles vary across Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok?

2. How does the use of visuals vary across Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok?
3. What are the key factors that influence generational preferences for language and visuals on Instagram and TikTok?

This study adopts an inductive, exploratory, and descriptive approach aimed at understanding and comparing how Millennials and Generation Z in Algeria use language styles and visuals on Instagram and TikTok. Because the research seeks to generate insights from observed patterns rather than test a predetermined theory, no formal hypothesis was formulated. The absence of a hypothesis aligns with the inductive nature of the study, which prioritizes open-ended inquiry and data-driven interpretation over deductive reasoning. This allows for a more nuanced and flexible exploration of intergenerational communication within a specific cultural and digital context.

6. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in providing a better understanding of the ways by which Algerian Millennials and Generation Z interact amongst each other on Instagram and TikTok, focusing on the uses of visuals and language styles across Instagram and TikTok. In addition to addressing the existing gap in the field of intergenerational studies across various social media platforms, this study aims at understanding the special aspects of the communicative styles of each generation, both linguistically and visually, which will ultimately contribute to the advancement of intergenerational communication across various social media platforms, benefiting both specialists and users of these platforms.

7. Research Methodology Design

Based on the research questions, a mixed-method approach was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to ensure comprehensive coverage of all relevant aspects of the study. Firstly, 209 participants, stratified by generation (Millennials and

Generation Z), were assigned to complete a survey on their language style and visual content preferences. The survey included both open-ended and closed-ended questions to allow for both measurable trends and deeper individual insights.

Following the survey, participants from each generation took part in separate focus group discussions to explore the underlying factors that influence their language and visual preferences on Instagram and TikTok. To minimize potential research bias, focus group questions were developed using neutral, non-leading language, and each session was conducted in a consistent and non-directive manner by the same facilitator. Additionally, generational homogeneity was maintained within each group to create a peer-based setting that encouraged open and honest discussion.

The quantitative data collected through the survey was analyzed using SPSS to identify communication trends and generational preferences. The qualitative data from focus groups was analyzed thematically using NVivo, enabling the identification of recurring themes and patterns. In addition, a sample of social media posts from both generations was selected and examined through content analysis to highlight how language styles and visuals are used in online interactions.

Together, these tools and data analysis procedures provide a coherent framework to investigate generational communication differences between Millennials and Generation Z across Instagram and TikTok. This approach offers both emic and etic perspectives, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of how these two age groups engage with one another through distinct language styles and visual strategies on social media platforms.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

This manuscript consists of four main chapters. The first chapter provides a general introduction to the study by outlining the background of the research, states the problem being investigated, and clearly defines the research objectives which are centered upon the

textual and visual aspects of both generations and the research questions. It also highlights the significance of the study, discusses the adopted methodology, identifies the limitations encountered, and defines key operational terms to guide the reader through the rest of the dissertation.

The second chapter addresses the theoretical foundation in great depth in addition to a comprehensive survey of the field of current knowledge. By examining the basic ideas connected to the study, it sets the groundwork. Starting with a general picture of intergenerational communication focusing particularly on Millennials and Generation Z, it looks at how their communication styles have been influenced by cultural and technological changes. Then it looks at theories explaining how these generations employ social media, including the Generational Cohort Theory and the Communication Accommodation Theory. The chapter also investigates different digital platforms and communication methods to show how language is used online. Particularly on TikTok and Instagram, it thoroughly covers topics like emojis, slang, and abbreviations. Moreover, considered is visual communication that includes memes and GIFs and how various age groups consume it. A look at Instagram and TikTok reveals the distinct features and user bases of each platform. It also shows the value of this effort by pointing out major gaps in the current body of knowledge especially the lack of studies conducted in Algeria.

The third chapter goes into great depth about the practical elements of fieldwork and data analysis. It is meant to reproduce the techniques employed in research. The first section of the study details the research approach which includes survey and focus groups, the data gathering procedure, and the justification for choosing 209 participants with an emphasis on their generational beginnings and the use of Instagram and TikTok in the study. The results next reported. This section examines survey data to identify Millennials' and Generation Z's linguistic and visual trends. Insights from interviews help us better grasp the cultural

influences and incentives guiding participants' online behavior. Content analysis of social media postings enhances the dialogue as well.

The last chapter is the concluding chapter. It summarizes the major findings of the research and discusses their implications in relation to the initial objectives and research questions. It also reflects on the limitations of the study and provides suggestions for future research, particularly in expanding the generational and cultural scope of intergenerational communication on digital platforms.

9. Operational Definitions

Millennials: Individuals born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 28 to 43).

Generation Z: Individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (ages 12 to 27).

Visuals: Images, videos, GIFs, memes, or other media used in posts on social media.

Language Styles: The formality or informality of language, including slang, internet language, and tone used in communication.

2.1. Literature Review

1. Introduction

In the early 21st century, social media platforms have become nothing short of important to the manners in which individuals make connections, interact with each other, and exchange life moments (Toure, 2024), with Instagram and TikTok standing out as two of the most prominent social media platforms (Bishqemi & Crowley, 2022). These platforms, thanks to the quick progress of technology, have developed from what was firstly simple mobile applications that had limited functions and were built to carry out very precise assignments to complicated environments that offer a variety of assistance actions and application capabilities (George, 2023), having a serious influence on the society from personal connections to business plans and from societal new phenomenon to political trends and changes (Morgan, 2024).

For instance, Instagram's "Link in Bio" has created a revolution in the strategies of online marketing as it does not only improve accessibility but also makes exchange rates better (Belmonte, 2025). However, TikTok's users find purposeful manners to interact with the platform and its culture by managing and being part of a diverse set of initiatives made by activists for universal consciousness, societal transformation, and civil and political rights and obligations (Lee & Abidin, 2023). One of the best examples is the #blacklivesmatter that has been used as a hashtag (Janfaza, 2020).

Both platforms create special spaces for their users by offering distinct features and providing the opportunity of setting up and handling relationships within those spaces (The Unicist Research Institute, 2023). While Instagram and TikTok have granted everyone equal opportunities to innovatively create expressive content (Ewell, 2024), they have transformed notably as part of the virtual landscape, affecting both the ways and manners whereby diverse generations interact (Marzo, 2024). From the older generations approaching these social media platforms as tools for connection, to the younger cohorts who view them as spaces for

amusement, source of information, and an environment to be politically active (McDade, 2023), each generation has its own special experiences, cultural effects, and social media platforms that have molded its styles of communication (Verbalplanet, 2024).

Generation Z dominates TikTok (Robinson, 2023), embracing its fast-paced, captivating content because they are fond of originality and innovation and long for in moment satisfaction, which reflects their capability of screening rapidly through huge amounts of data (The Desiree Team). This generation uses the platform not just for entertainment but as a primary source of news and information (Palmer, 2024). They utilize slang and come up with new words or associate new meaning to already existing words, which makes their language vivid and reflective of the quickly evolving digital space they are part of (Basco, 2025). Generation Z have become the masters of communicating large amount of meaning using few words through depending on abbreviations, acronyms, and emojis to convey complicated thoughts rapidly and efficiently like LOL (Laugh Out Loud), FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out), TY (Thank You), and IIRC (If I Remember Correctly). They also view visuals like Emojis, GIFs, and memes an essential part of the meaning itself and not complementary to it, which enables them to put complicated thoughts into simply light designs that they can share (Ward, 2024).

In contrast, Millennials gravitate toward Instagram's visually curated environment, utilizing it for networking, branding, and nurturing their innovation (Dublino, 2024). They tend to mix the formal language that they learnt in educational organizations and the informal easygoing one that witnessed progress through online interactions, which later promoted briefness and the use of abbreviations resulting in including acronyms and emojis in daily language (Verbalplanet, 2024). Some remarkable expressions used by Millennials consist of "basic", which means a person or thing that is not original or mainstream; "adulting," "on

fleek," "ghosting," "smol," and "yas" (Fru, 2024). Visually, Millennials tend to utilize emojis and memes, yet this use is less in terms of number and type (Verbalplanet, 2024).

As the digital landscape expand and transform, different experiences of generations with these changes give rise to both similarities and differences in how they communicate and what they prefer (Marzo, 2024). It is, thus, becoming a necessity to understand the way different generations interact as a means of ensuring individuals do not fail to keep in communication with each other (Downs, 2019).

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Review

This study aims to explore how Millennials and Generation Z use language styles and visuals on Instagram and TikTok **with a particular focus on the Algerian context**. It compares and analyzes the linguistic forms and visual expressions used by individuals from these two generational groups on the specified social media platforms.

By conducting a thorough comparative analysis, this study tries to reveal the linguistic and visual preferences of the individuals belonging to each generation, showing how these preferences arise from their interactions and identities online. Specifically, the study examines the use of language styles, including formal and informal language, slang, abbreviations, and Internet-specific phrases, across the previously mentioned two generations. It also analyzes the role of visuals like images, GIFs, and memes in forming communication styles on Instagram and TikTok. In addition, this research explores the factors that affect generational preferences for language and visuals, such as, but not limited to, the cultural context and the development of technology. By focusing on these aspects, the study aims to give a comprehensive understanding of how generational differences in communication styles manifest on social media, offering valuable insights into the field of digital communication and generational research, along with adding to the broader field of intergenerational communication by

highlighting the ways in which social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok facilitate connections across age groups, while also reflecting and reinforcing generational identities.

This literature review focuses on three key elements that are intergenerational communication, language styles, and visuals, with a particular emphasis on how these elements intersect on Instagram and TikTok. It explores the concept of language style, including formal and informal language, slang, abbreviations, and Internet-specific phrases. Particularly, this chapter focuses on how these language styles are closely tied to generational differences, as younger generations often lead the way in adopting and popularizing new ways of expressing themselves. Besides, examining visuals addresses how individuals who are part of different generations use visuals like images, GIFs, and memes to communicate and express themselves. By analyzing these elements, the review provides insights into how visuals shape communication styles, and how these styles vary across generations. This chapter offers valuable insights into how Instagram and TikTok are shaping the way Millennials and Generation Z communicate, connect, and express themselves in the digital age.

1.2. Structure of the Literature Review

The literature review starts by establishing the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, including Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Multimodality, which provide insights into how digital platforms facilitate language and visual expression. Next, it explores generational communication theories, clearly showing the difference between Millennials and Generation Z. The review then analyzes language and visual trends, exploring how each generation employs slang, abbreviations, emojis, GIFs, and memes differently across Instagram and TikTok while focusing on how these elements function as identity markers and tools for engagement. After this, the section on platform influence compares between Instagram's and TikTok's, highlighting how the design and algorithms of each platform form generational presentation and interaction. Finally, the review pinpoints research gaps, such as

the limited comparative studies between Instagram and TikTok, the underrepresentation of Generation Z in existing literature, and the need for deeper analysis of how memes and viral visuals mediate intergenerational communication, ultimately setting the stage for future investigations into evolving digital discourse.

2. The Theoretical Framework

2.1. Generational Communication Theories

Fernandez-Durán (2016) raised the idea that groups of people who went through similar social, economic, political, and cultural experiences as young adults (17–23 years old) are said to have similar values throughout their lives, according to the Generational Cohort (GC) theory. Furthermore, Armah and Li (2023) proposed the idea that (GC) theory aims to comprehend and categorize individuals according to their membership in a generational cohort. A generation is a group of people who were born in the same period and were exposed to the same historical, cultural, political, and economic events during their formative years. According to the GC theory, each generation is distinguished by unique characteristics that are directly related to events that occurred during their formative years.

It is clear that generational cohort is linked to digital communication; for this matter, Armah and Li (2023) claimed that distinct generational cohort satisfaction with, and attachment to, technology often depend on how easy they find it to use. Different age groups might see the technology's ease of use differently. The design of today's social media platforms focuses on being user-friendly, which helps make them more accessible to a wider range of people.

For the sake of understanding how cultural context influences communication, Itzchakov and Reis (2023) claimed that understanding cultural context is important for how people communicate, listen, and respond.

2.2. Digital Communication Theories

Dragojevic et al. (2015) describe Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) as a general theoretical framework for understanding interpersonal and intergroup communication. CAT seeks to explain and predict why, when, and how individuals adjust their communication styles during social interactions, as well as the social consequences of those adjustments. According to the eSoft Skills team (n.d.), CAT, as a sociolinguistic theory, examines how individuals modify their speech when interacting with others in order to manage social relationships and enhance communication outcomes.

The two central concepts of CAT are speech convergence and communication adaptation. Speech convergence, as defined by Dragojevic et al. (2015), refers to the process by which individuals alter their communicative behaviors to more closely align with those of their interlocutors often to reduce social distance or signal affiliation. Communication adaptation, similarly, involves adjusting one's language and speech patterns such as sentence structure, vocabulary, or accent to better match those of the person being addressed.

Cuefano (2024) adds that communicative convergence or divergence is often shaped by individuals' social identities and interpersonal goals. While CAT has been critiqued for its simplicity and limited predictive capacity, it remains useful for understanding how communication contributes to social harmony, relationship-building, and cultural sensitivity.

Although originally applied to contexts such as intercultural or intergroup interactions, CAT also offers valuable insights into intergenerational digital communication. On platforms like Instagram and TikTok, Millennials and Generation Z users may unconsciously or deliberately adjust their language styles or visual strategies such as tone, vocabulary, emoji use, or visual trends in ways that reflect either convergence to bridge generational gaps or divergence to reinforce distinct generational identities. Thus, CAT provides a relevant

theoretical lens for examining how communication styles evolve across generations within digital environments.

In the digital era, social media platforms offer users the opportunity to communicate meaning not only through language but also through visuals that convey emotion, identity, and intent. According to Study Smarter (2024), visual symbolism refers to the use of images and symbols to represent deeper meanings, feelings, or ideas, as commonly seen in literature, cinema, and the visual arts. Applied in a digital context, this concept helps explain how users embed symbolic meaning into visual content such as emojis, filters, memes, or carefully chosen images on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. The layered nature of visual symbolism allows audiences to engage with content on both emotional and intellectual levels, enhancing the expressive power of visual communication.

Decressac (2024) claimed that with each passing generation, language adapts to keep pace not only with societal trends but with the vision of each age bracket as well. One of the most obvious, in fact, according to sociolinguists, reasons for language evolution is perhaps the dimension of age; younger years are frequently at the forefront of introducing new vocabulary, catchphrases, and even grammatical changes. One can observe that language serves as a social marker in the manner that young adults and adolescents' toy around with words and phrases. For example, younger people would perhaps use the line "That's lit" to imply something is interesting, while older people would perhaps comment, "That's fantastic." These variations reflect how language reflects changing cultural values and intergenerational communication styles, revealing more than mere patterns.

Earlier generations also have their own language patterns, commonly keeping words and phrases from their younger days. The way younger people may often respond can be in a confused tone or laughingly towards language used by older generations. Younger listeners may find "a broken record" or "put a sock in it" outdated, while older listeners are more used

to hearing them. By being a living history of language, this language "lag" allows sociolinguists to trace linguistic change through the centuries. With the explosive growth of social media, the younger population is now shaping language at unprecedented levels, such sentences as "LOL" (laughing out loud), "BRB" (be right back), etc (Decressac, 2024).

"It is viewed that when people belong to the same chronological age group, they often speak similarly. As there are many different age groups in a community, an individual may use different linguistic features with a range of other speakers" (Abdullah et al., 2018, p. 760). This affirmation highlights that people from the same age category have the likelihood of employing the same type of speech forms or linguistic features. However, when people communicate with other age categories, they will probably modify the employment of language to suit the linguistic needs of the new category. This would suggest that linguistic behavior is significantly affected by age, but one that also values the flexibility and variation of language in terms of the social context and interaction of the speaker across age boundaries.

Alijagic (2023) added that when we examine the language disparity between both generations, one of the first features we notice is the "simplification" of words, the shortening of words or phrases, or even substituting words so that they refer to the same thing (e.g., "greed" used to be "cupidity," a completely different word). That is not to suggest the older population would never master the younger generation's vocabulary; they should rather be unexpected to need it. Even so, such data proves difficult to obtain because nothing really is understood when it comes to how people mature in speaking languages.

2.3. Social Media and Digital Literacy

One of the most highly praised benefits of social media algorithms is that they increase user engagement. Algorithms can create user-specific content streams according to user preferences, activities, and interaction histories (Walubengo, 2024).

Williams (2024) stated that access to the Internet has become a necessity in today's age of technology. There are countless ways through which a person can be connected on the Internet, stay informed about news, manage finances, or reconnect with estranged family members. This is of special significance for those generations that have aged later, such as Millennials, who have found technology as a means to connect with friends and family members who live far away. While younger generations, like Generation Z, have been referred to as "digital natives," the older generations are more plugged in than ever before. The Internet has opened new doors for the older generations to stay connected, from social media and online shopping to video chatting with their grandchildren. There do exist, though, vast differences in digital competence, or competence in using the online world effectively, by age. While some are equipped with technology, there are others who could not even perform rudimentary online activities or perhaps know about several cybersecurity threats.

Understanding how each generation serves a unique way, Williams (2024) added that compared to past generations, Millennials, especially the younger ones, are more tech-savvy. They are accustomed to a variety of devices and platforms, ranging from smart phones to home automation systems, as they were born at the onset of the Internet. They frequently use the Internet for social networking, online video streaming, and workplace collaboration tools.

3. Intergenerational Communication

3.1. Definition and Importance

Donsbach (2015) stated that communication between members of different age cohorts or age groups is referred to as "intergenerational communication." Families offer readily available examples of people whose communication might be labeled as intergenerational, such as parents and children or grandparents and grandchildren. These interactions are contrasted with intra-generational communication, which occurs between people of the same generation or age group, such as siblings. Intergenerational communication also takes place outside of the

family. Intergenerational communication can be operationalized as any communication between a young person and an adult, a middle-aged person and an older person, or a child and an adult. Therefore, a great deal of our everyday communication in social life, work, and home is intergenerational.

Lengsfeld (n.d.) defined the term digital age as the period of human history that has been influenced by digital information and communication technologies. Thus, the "digital age" is the period in human history when digital transformation and digitalization have become sufficiently advanced that digital technologies are influencing people's lives. On the other hand, Holzer (2024) referred to the term as the era in human history that is marked by the general use and acceptance of digital technology in almost all aspects of our daily lives. It marks the historical shift from analog to digital forms, changing forever how we work, communicate, and connect with the world. Now, during the era of digital technology, information is being stored, processed, and communicated as digital information and not on physical media. Computers, mobile phones, computer software, digital content, and the Internet are only some among a multitude of technologies that form the era of digital technology. while Worthington et al. (2018) and Goh (2022) both argue that interactions between people from various age cohorts or age groups are referred to as intergenerational communication, Herdiansiyah (2025) diverges by conceptualizing it as: The process of conveying message content in the form of values that are deemed significant and must be transmitted and learned from one generation to the next is known as intergenerational communication. It enables the transmission of knowledge from the local wisdom and knowledge that each generation has explored to the following generation.

As the virtual world continues to change and grow, Marzo (2024) claimed that over the past few decades, the digital era has moved drastically, modifying both the channels and strategies by which distinctive age cohorts' interface. Additionally, according to the Vorecol

Editorial Team (2024), agreeing to investigate distributed within the Diary of Intergenerational Connections, cultivating sympathy and understanding over age gaps requires intergenerational communication. Within the digital age, promoting complementary learning between age bunches could be a valuable methodology for closing the era gap.

Furthermore, according to Brodowicz (2025), the Internet has facilitated communication between people from different geological locations, strengthening ties between people who have similar interests in leisure or careers. Intergenerational communication has also flourished on social media, providing a useful platform for older adults to engage with family members, re-establish connections with older friends, and join interest-based organizations. The significant expansion of more seasoned online customers has prompted social media organizations to identify the rising want from this statistic and plan administrations custom suited to their demands.

3.2. Generational Profiles

Before exploring how Millennials and Generation Z use language on Instagram and TikTok, it is essential to first define these two generations.

A generation refers to a group of people who have similar birth years, similar experiences, and are shaped by the same culture. It is also defined as a group of people born in a similar period that is no more than fifteen years, who share a similar age and stage of life, and were influenced by some events, trends, and developments of the era.

According to Azad et al. (2023), Millennials have very quickly learned to use the technologies and developed a much more conversational, expressive online persona. Because they have an instinct to respond to fast-paced, visually driven media, emojis, memes, and abbreviations are very common in online communication. So that social media messages can be more easily consumed by their peer networks, emoji- and meme-based language is often short and filled with visual symbols that replace words. Generation Z (born 1997–2012) also

grew up with more advanced digital technologies. They use many different types of social media services regularly, and the speed and visual nature of social media have led to the kinds of new forms of communication they have created. This generation often feels that emojis, GIFs, and memes are key parts of themselves and uses very informal language and abbreviations that can often only be understood by their peer networks. This shows not only how they have adapted to technology but also how they see social interaction and identity in the digital world. The use of emojis and other visual symbols by Generation Z also shows that they have made significant changes to how they convey emotions and subtleties in online discussions besides their preference for rapid and efficient communication. Experience Generation Z.

On social media, Millennials incorporate slang into their communication to make social bonds stronger, demonstrate closeness, and adhere to trends, knowing that this use is also viewed as a way to build a special and suited virtual identity in their social atmosphere (Juli et al., 2024). These slangs have turned out to be an important side of the linguistic stock of millennials and are mostly utilized to convey comedy, individuality, and cultural bonding (Millan, 2023), like “BRB” (be right back), “LOL” (laugh out loud), “totes” (totally), and “TTYL” (talk to you later). Moreover, Millennials presented Internet slang like “bae” (before anyone else), “FOMO” (fear of missing out), and “ICYMI” (in case you missed it) became part of the virtual jargon. These phrases caught the general outlook of that period and mirrored its ideals, perspectives, and events the Millennials went through. Expressions like “basic,” which means someone or something is not original or basic; “adulting,” “on fleek,” “ghosting,” “smol,” and “yas” are all remarkable in the linguistic stock of Millennials (Fru, 2024). Millennials follow an approach that is informal, mostly utilizing abbreviations like "thx" and employing emojis to deliver feelings or extra tones (Azad et al., 2023).

Language unlimited (n.d.) agree that social media has made all our interactions and communication much more interesting and powerful. Since social media has become so popular, our talking patterns and words have quickly evolved. The effect social media language has on youth cannot be underestimated. The use of language on social media sites has had a considerable effect on how people communicate with each other. Since acronyms, abbreviations, and the short form of words are so widely used, writing and writing tools are dated. Emojis are making a noticeable comeback, being a visual language of emotions and feelings that has been very effective. Besides, there are slang words and new words created through social media. Young people use all these new terms and expressions regularly because they are able to take them and incorporate them into their daily lives. Thus, the use of language has become generational because older generations have very difficult times grasping what is going on with the language on social media. Overall, the language used on social media has a large impact on youth. It has caused the creation of new terms, acronyms, and emoticons, which are now standard in today's communication.

Zahira and Nasution (2025) stated that Generation Z is savvier about modern technology than Millennials. This means they are less hesitant in using the new technology to keep up with their information. In today's world, this is essential. Generation Z prefers fast and fun ways to learn. Due to their frequent use of social media and other online platforms, they are very accessible to information at a quick pace. The same is true of how they grew up in a digital world where information and knowledge are easy to access immediately. Generation Z is a more cautious generation when it comes to technology. They prefer traditional sources of information like email and websites, where they use well-structured and organized information. The first time they moved from analog to digital materials, they looked closer and carefully at technology. In addition to that, Zahira and Nasution (2025) added that Generation Z is probably much more likely to be comfortable disclosing their personal information online, which can be a privacy

hazard. They are used to their social media platforms being kept casual, thus putting them at risk in some cases when it comes to data security. Millennials are generally more open with their information and favor formal methods when working with it, so more documentation and clarity when handling information from them is accessible. They favor informal styles in language, regular use of abbreviations, emojis, and memes, which reflect the way they adapt to the rapid, visually based characteristics of online communication (Azad et al., 2023).

Generation Z has platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram as their favorite and primary sources for content that fits their preference for short, small, visually engaging materials. They favor videos, memes, and interaction-based content that can be viewed rapidly and shared without difficulty, as they have a briefer attention duration, which makes them appreciate quick, entertaining, and easily shareable content (Chakraborty, 2024). Generation Z often relies in their communication on the use of emojis and memes to deliver complicated feelings and ideas in a concise, visual way. While Millennials also use emojis and memes, this use is usually characterized by being less frequent and limited in diversity. While Millennials were the pioneers of platforms like Facebook and Twitter to socialize digitally, Generation Z favors more recent platforms like TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram, which focus on visually based content and concision, where their style mostly involves digital slang and abbreviations, mirroring how comfortable they are with communication that is digitally rapid-paced. Millennials also use slang and abbreviations, yet not as frequently as Generation Z. Generation Z tends to create content as a way of interaction, utilizing platforms like TikTok or YouTube to convey their ideas and innovation, while Millennials tend to consume content more on social media (Verbalplanet, 2024).

4. Language Styles in Digital Communication

4.1. Digital Linguistics

In the field of Digital Linguistics (DL), DL is an interdisciplinary field that analyses language using quantitative approaches, benefiting from massive linguistic corpora, evolutionary biology-based analysis methods, and advanced communication technologies for investigating and representing linguistic phenomena in various ways (Sargsyan, 2023). Alternatively, (DL) is an interdisciplinary field that examines human language as a digital evolution of mammalian analog vocal sign communication, founded on the vertebrate spinal reflex mechanism. It deals with the neural and evolutionary dimensions of linguistic processing. (Tokumaru, 2018). From a broader view, DL is a human-oriented field of digitally mediated language and communication, integrating approaches from linguistics, computer science, social sciences, and humanities to address sociolinguistic, technological, economic, infrastructural, and ethical issues emerging in the digital era (Vintar, 2019).

Building upon Tokumaru's (2018) and Vintar's work (2019), we can now tackle specific linguistic features such as abbreviations, slang, hashtags, and emojis and how they emerge and evolve in online spaces. Abbreviations have become crucial for digital communication (Jadeja, 2024), making the process of communication easier thanks to the concept of language brevity (Minyar-Beloroucheva et al., 2019), These abbreviations usually take the form of clipping (e.g., "exam" for "examination"), contractions (e.g., "Mr. and Mrs." for "Mister and Missus"), initialisms (e.g., "CEO" for "Chief Executive Officer"), acronyms (e.g., "LOL" for "laugh out loud"), or textese (e.g., "btw" for "by the way") (Ellis, 2023). The use of abbreviations in digital communication is driven by the need for brevity and speed (Sharipova, 2023), as linguistic economy is a key factor in the simplification of language on social media, with abbreviations becoming increasingly common among the younger generation (Panjaitan & Patria, 2024). Although abbreviations can improve communication, overusing them can cause confusion and misunderstandings. It is highly important to use abbreviations carefully and make sure that they are widely understood by the targeted audience, and as some abbreviations can have several

meanings, this can complicate communication (Navruzova & Akhmadova, 2024). Although several abbreviations are not formal and resemble slang, several of them can be used in formal settings (Monroy, 2023).

Slang is commonly used in informal settings (Kalinowski, 2022), and is a constantly changing area of the language that continues to make things surprising and engaging. It arises from diverse roots, like social media (Smith, 2024), which serves as a recreation area for language, where slangs are built, developed, and spread extremely fast (Smith, 2024). Slang has turned out to be a feature of online communication, mirroring the functioning character of digital interaction and language creativity (Jumanazarova & Khamitov, 2024).

Emojis are extensively used in posts on social media and are believed to be number one amongst users (Sara & Narimane, 2024); they function as essential signs to create bridges, fill emotional voids in written discussions, and support the making of detailed meanings in the language of social media (Akpan & Shogeyinbo, 2024). Emojis function as visual signals that complement text-based language, adding meaning and emotional expression. The same way facial cues and body movements are essential in delivering meaning during direct communication, emojis have an equivalent role in online communication, enhancing the realm of digital communication. Although emojis cannot completely take the place of ordinary language, they can improve written communication by offering features like facial cues and body movements in real-world interactions (Gallop, 2023).

Abbreviations, slang, hashtags, and emojis have not only transformed the manner individuals interact online but have also paved the way to the progress of new movements related to both language and society. Besides, as technology proceeds to progress, it is essential for humans, societies, and organizations to make the necessary adjustments and direct these transformations with the aim of promoting efficient and comprehensive communication in the virtual era (Ladzekpo et al., 2023).

5. Visual Communication

5.1. The Rise of Visuals in Digital Communication

According to Rustico (2023), memes have really taken off in the social media age, thanks to their relatability, flexibility, and cultural references. They spread like wildfire across online platforms, almost like digital chameleons, constantly adapting to the shifting tides of popular culture, news, and trends. Memes are fantastic at conveying emotions, thoughts, and messages to a broad audience, often transcending language barriers and cultural differences. These days, GIFs are the go-to for expressing a whole range of feelings, from joy and laughter to frustration and sadness. They can be found everywhere from news articles and marketing campaigns to social media updates and text messages. With their talent for visually conveying the feeling of a moment and versatility, they now have their place in the digital landscape. While both memes and GIFs have their roots from visual communication, they do have some key differences. While memes typically communicate a single reaction or emotion, GIFs can communicate larger ideas (along with a comedic element). Memes can communicate an idea, message, or emotion in a more malleable manner to an audience that stretches across the masses to transit cultural and language borders.

People speed through the digital world so quickly that symbols, micro videos, and easy-to-remember acronyms principally have taken over as the forms of emotional communication and expression. Because digital languages, such as emojis, GIFs, memes and slang are officially communicating more effectively, companies are now working on ways to leverage these experiences into offline platforms, where they are even more clearly and distinctly identifiable by the public at large .(OAAA, 2017)

Pictory (2023) claimed that having started life as basic online jokes, memes have become highly influential tools of political influence, cultural understanding, and communication. They are now an integral part of our Internet existence in the modern digital

world. They have the ability to influence marketing tactics, build connections, and even influence public perception. In the digital age, memes have emerged as a popular culture phenomenon that influences online communication and reflects the values of society. These digital relics, being the essence of human culture in the age of the Internet, imitate communal experience, anxiety, and assumption as the Internet users engage with mainstream Internet memes. The Internet meme is a potent mode of communication and expression in modern times.

5.2. Generational Visual Preferences

Azad et al. (2023) state that many of the formalities have been abandoned by Millennials, who prefer to express themselves in a concise and to-the-point manner. Generation Z's communication is very informal in nature and tends to incorporate the use of emojis, abbreviations, and less formal language. There are also huge differences in emoji usage across generations. Emoji usage is more common in Generation Z than in previous generations while it is less common among Millennials, who have grown up on social media, and they demonstrate how adaptable they are with online communication tools.

Having grown up entirely in the digital age, Generation Z employs emojis extensively to express meaning, intent, and emotion more effectively. Furthermore, Millennials employ abbreviations like "thx" with emojis to convey feelings or to add additional layers of meaning, making the tone more informal. Generation Z, the newest generation to utilize social media, frequently employs emojis and acronyms to create short but effective sentences. Generation Z is the primary audience that consumes memes on the Internet at a rate of two memes per message. This shows that Generation Z primarily uses humorous and ironic pictures to support their arguments, something that would be better realized in a speedy electronic environment. In addition to depicting their necessity for effective and rapid communication, the use of emojis

and other graphical icons by Generation Z represents an elementary transformation of conveying sentiments and nuances within electronic communication.

The usage of GIFs, those ubiquitous looping videos, has tripled within the last couple of years, only to be outdone by the rise in GIF popularity as the GIF is frequently misidentified as a part of contemporary communication. Gen Zs manage their anxieties through visual-orientated social media platforms, by way of memes, emoji, and GIFs, where they can create and share visual content to express their emotions. They exhibit memes, employ visual storytelling styles, create GIFs, and emoji include on social media platforms to portray their artistic transforms of a shared cultural experience, project emotion into their social media accounts, as well as produce fan art. The visual narrative content produced and shared across social media platforms can be repurposed, remixed, and appropriated across social media platforms for varying purposes at differing points in time. In this manner, a shared social narrative emerges, pinning visual content temporally across the platforms both conversationally and archiving, and frames the sort of aqueous condition and termination of unique platform languages at the same time (DeBaird, 2018).

5.3. Semiotic Analysis

Verbalplanet (n.d.) stated that there is a need to grasp the cultural and technological context that shaped both generations' unique communication patterns. Personal computers and early Internet impacted the formative period of millennials, generating a combination of digital and analog modes of communication. Generation Z, on the other hand, has been exposed to smartphones, fast Internet, and social media since birth, and they have grown to value efficiency, speed, and visual aspects in their communications.

6. Instagram and TikTok as Platforms

Social media generally refers to the variety of Internet applications that are interactive and easy for groups or individuals creating, curating, and sharing the content generated by them

as social media users. There are several and diverse examples of social media platforms that involve Facebook, Friendster, Wikipedia, Craigslist, websites that provide dating services, and others that allow users to share recipes, like allrecipes.com, YouTube, and Instagram. All social media platforms have the previously mentioned features in common, yet each platform is special in several regards. Specifically, platforms usually differ in their overall design, arrangement, standards, and subscribership (Davis, 2016).

Kemp (2025) highlights that Meta's ad platforms recently revealed that there were 11.40 million Instagram users in Algeria at the beginning of 2024. Reference data from the company's regular updates shows Instagram's advertising reach in Algeria at the year's start was about 24.8% of the total population. In 2024, in Algeria, 33.8% of the population deemed "eligible" are Instagram users, which should be highlighted since Meta allows users to use Instagram only if they are 13 years of age or older.

In early 2024, ByteDance's advertising metrics show that TikTok had 17.42 million users in Algeria that were over 18. It is also important to note that while ByteDance's advertising products allow marketers to target TikTok advertising to users over the age of 13, the audience metrics provided by these products are limited to users that are over the age of 18.

6.1. Instagram Platform

The story of Instagram's evolution reveals much about the changing essence of online media (Jing, 2024), and although Instagram was brought into existence from a basic idea that is yet an innovative one, it went through a noticeable transformation since its creation (Jing, 2024).What started in 2010 as another application designed for sharing photos with special square-shaped photos and a set of filters that differentiated it from the already existing similar applications (Jarvey, 2016), has transformed into a hyper social media platform (Raj, 2025) that has more than two billion active users (Mortensen, 2024), and became more inclusive to other sorts of content creation like pictures, videos, Lives, Stories, IGTV, and recently Reels

(Nguyen, 2020). Notably, Reels emerged as a direct response to TikTok's success and fame amongst Generation Z users (Moates et al., 2022). The genius behind the platform lies in the quick adaptation and addition of new features that the platform keeps making in attempt to continue to be useful and provide services to the public (Lynch, 2023). Each new added feature is built to serve the needs of the users and to get the upper hand over its opponents (Sara, 2022). Instagram uses complicated and intricate algorithms that are constantly learning and adapting based on the interactions and comments of its users (Panda, 2024). Taking into consideration the type of content the user is seeing, like pictures, videos, or carousels, and the time spent on this content, this algorithm takes the decision of what sort of content to reveal mostly in the users' feed (Radu, 2025). This algorithm is built in a way that every time individuals put a like on a post or comment, they receive a small amount of dopamine, and this small amount would make them most of the time return for more without even knowing it (Panchotia, 2024). This temporary dopamine-based reaction circles traps users into returning for more, fueling an addiction to social media (Fernandez, 2022).

Instagram is a mobile geolocation photo and video sharing app. It allows users to add digital filters to their material and share it on other social media sites and websites. The app was developed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in San Francisco, California. Instagram was launched on October 6, 2010, exclusively for iPhone. Burbn was the original name of the app and was meant to combine aspects of the most popular social networking sites, like Foursquare. However, as soon as Krieger joined, they chose to focus on photo sharing only (Amaral, 2015). The name for the company "Instagram" was derived from "instant camera" and "telegram," meant to bring about a sense of nostalgia in Polaroid and Kodak Instamatic photographs that are now digital. When users post photographs on the application, they are resized automatically into square form, as opposed to the 4:3 aspect ratio used by most mobile

cameras. To enhance that illusion further, users can also apply a variety of manipulation options, such as 20 filters to alter the lighting and tone of the images (Amaral, 2015).

Users can follow individuals on Instagram, like and comment on photos, and link their account to other social networks so they can share effortlessly. There is also a geographic component in the app, where users can add geo-tagged data to their posts, making it more discoverable and providing it with economic and social value. Instagram introduced hashtags in January of 2011, together with a Twitter trend, which encouraged users to put certain tags to find photos and other users. Hashtags also helped with community building by interests and allowed groups of people to share photos with ease. Web profiles were introduced by Instagram in 2012, so users could basically utilize their accounts as a social network website. Instagram became a full-fledged social network website over time from a photo-sharing application with a location component. Instagram introduced video sharing of 15 seconds in June 2013 and in August 2014 introduced the Hyperlapse feature, through which users could create time-lapses (Amaral, 2015). Instagram had 1 million users at the end of 2010, 5 million in June of 2011, and doubled from there until September 2011. It had 150 million photos on the website uploaded as of August of 2011. Facebook acquired Instagram in April 2012, and more than 30 million accounts had been created by that point. Instagram boasted 200 million active users (65% international) in the summer of 2014, 20 billion photos shared, 1.6 billion "likes" per day, and 60 million photos uploaded daily on average. The website also revealed that 68% of its visitors were female, while the traffic was split evenly between iPhone and Android users (Amaral, 2015).

Instagram overhauled its terms of service in December 2012, authorizing itself to sell photographs from users without informing them or offering compensation. This infuriated the millions of users, as well as organizations such as the National Geographic Society, and caused Instagram to backtrack on the contentious terms. Therefore, many users flocked to rival photo-

sharing platforms like Pheed and Flickr. Instagram then reworked its terms of use, addressing controversies related to ownership and authorship of content (Amaral, 2015). Co-creation of content and collaboration on Instagram are at the heart of its success. Based on different studies, co-creation motivations of users can be individual or network-based. Highly connected users in the network tend to share more content. Personal growth, reputation, and commitment are some of the motivations that play a significant role in photo-sharing behavior. The platform's economics are based on collective intelligence, consumers being regarded as co-creators of value, and active agents in content production. Instagram enables mass collaboration by means of user-generated content to generate social interaction and value production through network relations and theme communities (Amaral, 2015).

Instagram is a widely used social media platform that is widely used by Generation Z. It has various features through which its users can post, find friends, and create social connections. It has gained a lot of popularity among this age bracket over the last few years. The site has exciting features like short video screens (IGTV), different types of content (carousel, album, and mix videos), and interactive elements like stories and how to engage with friends (likes, comments, and sharing). As a result, Instagram has become a destination platform for young people to socialize and be engaged. It allows users to express their content in a creative way and interact with other users, either by direct interaction through likes and comments or by the interactive Instagram Stories mode (Sikumbang et al., 2024). Initially introduced on Snapchat, Stories gained immense popularity after Instagram introduced the feature in 2016, and it has continued to grow and mature ever since. Stories are quick to create and share, and they appear at the top of a user's feed, grabbing the social media user's attention immediately. They provide a quick and concise way to relay key information. Thus, this tool is ideal for media responses, guaranteeing it boosts engagement, attracts new users, and drives

traffic to media sites. Another aspect Instagram Stories offers is uniqueness in its presentation of content (Mudra & Silchenko, 2022).

Instagram, the most widely used social media site among young people, provides a variety of linear storytelling functions such as image filtering and editing, sound effects, instant sharing, liking, commenting, hash tagging, geotagging, and reposting, all enhanced by its extensive audiovisual content. The creative industries are among the most powerful social and economic forces of the 21st century, and Instagram has great potential to contribute to these industries, particularly to the music industry (Instagram as a Creative Tool, 2022). Instagram users' profiles are considered a type of self-presentation through Instagram messaging. The users construct and present idealized selves through their posts, captions, comments, and interactions, emphasizing parts of their identity, values, and lifestyle. Such self-presentation is composed of written (e.g., comments and captions) and visual (e.g., images and videos) components, which combined provide an in-depth and frequently idealized representation of the individual. Instagram is a constantly evolving self-presentation and identity-constituting platform since users constantly construct and develop their online versions of themselves through interactions with followers and other users (Skrynnik, 2024).

6.2. TikTok Platform

TikTok emerged in September 2016 and is nowadays a very famous social media application that offers users the opportunity to make, view, and exchange short videos recorded by portable devices or digital cameras (D’Souza, 2025). TikTok's emergence illustrates a profound turning point in the way consumers interact with content, creating a challenge for ordinary channels of communication to either adjust or fall into the risk of turning outdated (Stone, 2024). The special view the platform has for content and society distinguishes it from ordinary social media platforms (Phokaewkul, 2024). Contrasting with ordinary social media platforms like Instagram, which is well known for having creators with talent and visually

pleasing styles, TikTok makes the genuine relevant content its priority over the elegant perfect one (Jade, 2023; Ng, 2025). While TikTok appears to have features that are already offered by other deeply rooted platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, it is undoubtedly popular (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022). The emphasis that TikTok's algorithm has on personalizing the content and making it both engaging and fresh builds an unbiased space that offers any individual or brand equal chances to reach explosive growth (Phokaewkul, 2024), without regard to popularity or the number of followers (Ng, 2025). For example, artists like Lil Nas X leveraged TikTok's algorithm to launch global music careers, promoting his song that reached millions of individuals following and viewing content on TikTok (Grady, 2021, as cited in Okanovic & Agnès, 2023). The algorithm of the platform processes thousands of signals made by the user, like likes, comments, follows, and the time spent on a specific video, to decide what sort of content they want to view most and then decide the type and order of the videos that will show up on their 'For You' page (Lang, 2024). This design of TikTok takes advantage of the preferences related to sensation through constant scrolling, giving a steady enormous amount of content, yet it is hypothesized that it establishes a zone that makes users fully occupied and potentially results in symptoms that are similar to having an addiction (Vigil, 2023).

Xing (2022) discusses how TikTok is really making waves and changing how younger folks connect with each other through its fun slang, catchy phrases, and those viral trends. TikTok has truly made its mark as a go-to platform in the social media landscape, famous for its fun and catchy short videos that can range from just 15 seconds to a full 10 minutes. Since it burst onto the scene globally in 208, it has rapidly captured the hearts of younger audiences, thanks to its standout features like lip-syncing to hit songs, exciting dance challenges, and the latest viral trends. One of the most impressive features about TikTok is its recommendation

algorithm, which does a remarkable job of curating content that aligns with each user's interests, keeping them engaged and eager for more (Greenware Tech, 2024).

7. Concluding Remarks

7.1. Methodological Approaches and Gaps in Existing Research

7.1.1. Research Methodologies

According to Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. (n.d.), the research method referred to as content analysis is used to identify the frequency of specific words, themes, or ideas in some selected qualitative data, like text. Researchers can use content analysis to quantify and analyze the frequency, meaning, and association of specific words, themes, or ideas. Researchers can, for instance, analyze the words used in a news article to search for signs of bias or biasness. Then researchers can make conclusions regarding the messages in the text, regarding the author(s), the addressees, and even the time and culture surrounding it.

Ethnographic research on online and offline behaviors and communication with digitalization shaping it has gained a foothold in recent years, with the Internet’s growing influence on people’s everyday lives. This study exists in many different forms, under a range of various names and across a range of academic disciplines as ‘digital ethnography’ (Murthy, 2008, as cited in Varis, 2014).

According to the San José State University School of Information (2025), social media ethnography has become a powerful method of research into how people live, form relationships, and interpret their world on social media. Given the vast amount of our social lives, identity formation, and information exchange taking place online, this approach is extremely relevant. Social media ethnography operates as an ethnographic study of cultures on platforms like Instagram, Reddit, TikTok, and X. Researchers examine a variety of online environments, including fandoms and hashtag groups, to see how social media users create

meaning collectively. They are interested in how people interact through these hashtags, and become meaningfully united by them. While ethnographers are interested in what user's post, they also must view the meaning created by social interaction, social rules, and social reasons.

7.1.2. Comparative Research on Generational Communication

Previous research, like Azad et al. (2023), studied 4000 social media posts through content analysis and ANOVA from Millennials, Generation Z, Baby Boomers, and Gen X on Instagram and other platforms to see how different generations communicate. They found clear differences in how each generation uses language, memes, and emojis.

7.1.3. Research Gaps

According to Azad et al. (2023), Subsequent research should seek to examine other factors, such as how socioeconomic influences on platform-based communication behaviors may also influence generational language use. Further, a more detailed investigation of the role of visual representations, represented through memes and GIFs, in modern digital communication may contribute to the understanding.

7.2. Interaction between Language and Visuals

Recent studies have increasingly highlighted the interactive role of language and visuals in shaping communication styles on social media platforms, particularly among younger generations. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok encourage users to blend written text with visual elements including emojis, GIFs, filters, and memes to construct meaning, convey emotion, and establish identity (Azad et al., 2023). This multimodal approach to communication is especially prominent among Generation Z, who are often noted for their informal and concise communication style, particularly in digital spaces.

Visual elements do not simply decorate communication; they contribute actively to how meaning is structured and understood. Emojis, for example, may replace or reinforce written expressions of tone, while image-based posts and short videos convey affective and

cultural cues that might otherwise be expressed linguistically. Scholars argue that the convergence of linguistic and visual resources is central to understanding how digital communication evolves across generations (Study Smarter, 2024).

While these dynamics have been explored in various cultural and global contexts, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature regarding how these patterns manifest in the Algerian digital sphere. This review therefore underscores the importance of examining how Algerian Millennials and Generation Z interact with both language and visuals on social media. Understanding this interaction can offer valuable insights into the broader processes of generational identity formation and digital expression within culturally specific contexts.

3.1. Field Work

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology chosen for investigating intergenerational communication on Instagram and TikTok, with a specific focus on the use of language styles and visuals among Algerian Millennials and Generation Z. The previous chapter provided a thorough review of the literature, creating the theoretical and conceptual framework that guides this study. This chapter is dedicated to describing the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. It begins by presenting the overall methodological approach, followed by a detailed description of the research instruments and the sample. The methods used in analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data are also covered in this chapter, hand in hand with the ethical considerations and possible limitations of the study. In addition, the chapter presents the findings of the study and provides a critical discussion of the results in relation to the research objectives and questions.

2. Research Methodology Design

This comparative study seeks to identify and analyze the differences and similarities in the use of language styles and visuals between two generational cohorts, Millennials and Generation Z, on Instagram and TikTok. The comparison is fundamental to understanding how generational identity shapes communication behaviors across various distinct digital platforms. A sequential mixed-method approach is employed, in which the research is conducted in three phases.

First, quantitative data are collected through a structured survey to capture broad patterns in language and visual preferences. This instrument is designed to gather information from a broad sample regarding their patterns of language and visual use, platform preferences, and generational perceptions of communication. The data help in creating measurable insights into users' behaviors across generational lines.

In the second phase, qualitative data are collected through semi-structured focus group interviews. These discussions allow participants to elaborate on their preferences and practices regarding language styles and visual content on social media platforms. By having a direct engagement with members of each generational group, the study was able to capture their perspectives on digital communication behaviors, platform-specific choices, and generational tendencies. This phase adds depth to the statistical findings by contextualizing how participants use their digital communication practices in online interactions.

Finally, the third phase involves content analysis of real-life social media posts. A predetermined coding framework is used to analyze a sample of Instagram and TikTok posts made by Millennial and Generation Z users in Algeria. Through this approach, the researchers investigate the use of language styles and visuals, focusing on how tone, stylistic choices, engagement strategies, and cultural cues vary between generations and across platforms. By triangulating data from surveys, interviews, and content analysis, this research offers a thorough and grounded understanding of intergenerational digital communication in the Algerian context.

2.1. Methods

To collect data for the present study, three main tools are employed: a close-ended online survey, a set of semi-structured focus group interviews, and content analysis of selected social media posts. Each tool is designed to address specific research objectives and to enable both a quantitative and qualitative exploration of how Millennials and Generation Z use language styles and visuals on Instagram and TikTok.

The survey is used to collect quantitative information about the attitudes, behaviors, and preferences of participants with regard to language and visual communication on social media. To gain better understanding of the reasons behind participants' communication preferences, generational differences in meaning-making, expression, and identity on digital

platforms, focus group interviews are undertaken. Then, content analysis is applied to a selected sample of Instagram and TikTok posts created by both Algerian Millennials and Generation Z users to examine the actual language and visual styles used in posts, enabling a direct comparison between the two generations in their natural digital environments. The integration of these three complementary methods enables methodological triangulation, which strengthens the credibility, reliability, and depth of the research findings. Although the tools examine overlapping variables, each contributes a unique perspective: The survey is used to collect quantitative information about the attitudes, behaviors, and preferences of participants with regard to language and visual communication on social media, and to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing participants' communicative choices, including generational variation in language style and visual representation, focus group interviews are undertaken, the content analysis on the other hand reveals how these behaviors are manifested in authentic social media contexts. Combined, these approaches offer a richer, more multidimensional understanding of intergenerational communication on Instagram and TikTok.

2.2. Description of Instruments

2.2.1. Survey

The survey is developed as a close-ended instrument delivered via Google Forms, and is used to collect quantitative data from a larger sample regarding patterns of language use and visual communication on Instagram and TikTok. To ensure ease of response and consistency in interpretation, the survey consists primarily of multiple-choice questions along with a set of open-ended questions used to enable the participants to express their attitudes and perceptions in a better manner. The survey is divided into six thematic sections, each designed to get specific types of data related to the goals of the study.

The survey is organized into six sections to comprehensively capture various aspects of social media communication (Appendix A). It begins with Section One, which gathers

demographic information such as age group and social media usage habits, enabling clear classification by generational cohort. Building on this, Section Two explores language styles, focusing on the use of formal and informal language, slang, abbreviations, emojis, and platform-specific linguistic choices. Section Three then examines participants' preferred methods of interaction on Instagram and TikTok, including liking, commenting, posting, and sharing. Following this, Section Four investigates the frequency, purpose, and communicative impact of visual elements in posts, such as images, GIFs, and memes. Section Five shifts focus to participants' perceptions of how language and visuals shape digital communication and contribute to generational identity. Finally, Section Six concludes the survey by inviting participants to reflect on the overall influence of language and visuals on social media communication, offering space for open-ended responses and additional insights. The survey is shared online through academic online groups and social media and is open to participants who are either Millennials (born 1981–1996) or Generation Z (born 1997–2012) while ensuring that the responses are collected anonymously and voluntarily.

2.2.2. Focus Group Interviews

To gain deeper qualitative insights into the reasons behind language and visual preferences, semi-structured focus group interviews are conducted. Each focus group is stratified by generation to ensure peer comfort and homogeneity of digital experience, and participants are asked open-ended questions designed to complement the survey's topics. The interviews consists of open-ended questions designed to complement the survey topics and are organized around three thematic sections (Appendix B). The first section focuses on language styles, exploring aspects such as formality versus informality, the use of slang, and differences in language use between Instagram and TikTok. The second section examines visual communication, investigating how GIFs, memes, emojis, and images function emotionally, culturally, and communicatively. The third section addresses generational perceptions,

evaluating how participants perceive the communication identity of their own generation alongside the influence of social norms, trends, and platform features. These focus groups are conducted online via video conferencing tools, with sessions lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes and recorded with participants' consent. The recordings are subsequently transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo, with coding guided by the study's predefined research categories. The analysis followed an inductive approach, allowing themes to emerge naturally from the participants' responses rather than being imposed by predefined categories. Transcripts were coded manually using NVivo, and recurring patterns were grouped into higher-order themes. These themes included stylistic motivations (e.g., informality, humor, authenticity), platform-specific norms, emotional expression through visuals, and generational identity markers. Direct quotes were used in the results chapter to support interpretation, but personal identifiers were anonymized.

2.2.3. Content Analysis

The third instrument used in this study was a content analysis grid (Appendix C), which was designed to assess actual Instagram and TikTok posts created by Millennials and Generation Z users respectively. This will involve analyzing natural digital discourse, that recognizes the visual and linguistic features that naturally occur together. Content analysis is ideal for comparative analyses that allow for the observation of meaningful stylistic and communicative patterns across specified generational categories.

Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) was an option for this study, but it was not used because CMDA focuses primarily on structural and interactional aspects of online text, which does not relate to this research's focus on language style, generational identity, and visual-symbolic expression. Therefore, this research employed Thematic Analysis (Brown and Clarke, 2006), as it is a method of identifying and interpreting themes of meaning within

qualitative data—a good fit for analyzing social media contents as many users construct meaning not only through language but visuals as well.

The analysis examined three key dimensions of the social media posts:

Language style: the tone of the post (for example humorous, sarcastic, narrative), formal or informal structure, any slang or jargon, and the use of emojis;

Visuals: the type of media (for example images, memes, GIFs), the integration of media and captions or overlays, and aesthetic features of the media (for example, color, and the overall mood)

Interaction and engagement: likes, shares and comments, to assess whether language and media stimulated reactions from audiences.

A total of 20 public posts were purposefully sampled to achieve demographic representation that is well-balanced:

• Five posts from Millennial users on Instagram

• Five posts from members of Generation Z on Instagram

• Five posts from Millennial users on TikTok

• Five posts from members of Generation Z on TikTok

Decisions were made to select solely posts in English to be able to be consistently, and therefore comparably, analyzed across both platforms. This decision may not capture the multilingual reality of Algeria as there are likely multilingual users contributing in Arabic, French, and English, on the public platforms, but a choice needed to be made to minimize translation bias, and to ensure coherence in thematic coding throughout. The data obtained

from the content analysis was used to confirm, and triangulate findings from the survey questionnaires and focus group interviews.

2.2.4. Piloting Phase

The efficacy, trustworthiness, and reliability of the assessment tools were ensured through a piloting phase conducted prior to data collection. The three instruments the survey, focus group guide, and content analysis grid were reviewed and piloted with a PhD holder (MCB) in the field, whose expertise provided constructive feedback on the clarity, content, and appropriateness of the tools. An additional faculty member was contacted for consultation, but no response was received. Insights from the piloting process informed the refinement and finalization of each instrument to ensure validity, contextual relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives.

The piloting phase was conducted in full alignment with ethical research standards. All individuals involved in the pilot were informed of the purpose of the process and gave their verbal consent to participate. They were assured that their input would be used solely to improve the research instruments and that their identities would remain anonymous and confidential. Feedback was collected respectfully and voluntarily, with no academic or professional pressure. The involvement of a qualified academic further ensured that the instruments were evaluated with integrity and professional rigor, upholding the principles of transparency, respect, and responsible academic practice.

2.3. Participants and Sampling

The participants of the present study are drawn from two generational cohorts: Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012). The total sample consists of 209 individuals, all active users of Instagram and/or TikTok. The participants are Algerian social media users recruited primarily through online platforms, academic networks, and social circles.

The study uses a stage sampling technique to obtain a representative sample of each generation. Participants are first divided based on their age group into either the Millennial or Generation Z cohort and are selected through stratified sampling. Each group's respondents are then chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate through convenience sampling. Given the restricted resources and the requirement for a focused generational comparison, the chosen sampling strategy is appropriate. In later stages, when random selection was not feasible, volunteer participation was used, allowing participants to opt into the study. This shift helped ensure sufficient and relevant representation for each generational group.

Of the 209 participants, all completed the online survey, which was distributed via Google Forms. To gain further qualitative insights, two focus group interviews were conducted—one with Millennial participants and another with Generation Z participants. Each focus group included eight participants, initially identified through convenience sampling and subsequently included based on their voluntary willingness to participate. Additionally, 20 social media posts were selected for content analysis. These posts were purposefully sampled from public profiles of users from each generational group, resulting in a balanced selection. This participant and sampling structure ensures a comprehensive comparison of generational language and visual communication across both platforms.

All participants in this study are multilingual Algerians native speakers of Arabic (Algerian dialects and/or Modern Standard Arabic), which serves as their mother tongue. Additionally, they possess high proficiency in French as a second language due to Algeria's colonial and educational history. English is their third language, learned formally in school and widely used in academic and online contexts. This multilingual background plays a significant role in their digital communication, shaping their language preferences, slang use, and cultural expression on social media platforms.

2.4. Data Analysis Procedures

To meet the objectives of this comparative study, three types of data are analyzed: quantitative data from the survey, qualitative data from focus group interviews, and observed data from content analysis of social media posts. Procedures that match the format and purpose of the research are utilized to analyze each type of data.

2.4.1. Survey Data

Data collected from the survey are analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Responses are compiled and processed using SPSS, enabling the researchers to calculate frequency distributions and mean scores for each item. The use of descriptive statistics is important for identifying general trends and preferences across the two generational groups. The results are visualized in the form of bar graphs and pie charts to highlight the comparative findings between Millennials and Generation Z.

2.4.2. Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews are firstly transcribed, making sure that all participant responses are captured accurately; then thematic analysis is used to create interpretations of the qualitative data. This method involves several stages:

• **Initial Coding:** Transcript segments are coded according to recurrent themes and trends that are pertinent to the study questions.

• **Categorization:** Related codes are grouped into broader categories reflecting themes like language formality, generational slang, use of emojis, meme culture, identity expression, and platform influence.

• **Interpretation:** The final themes are interpreted to contextualize the statistical findings from the survey and draw conclusions on generational communication styles.

The analysis is made easy using NVivo (Appendix D), which is software for systematic coding and thematic organization of the responses.

2.4.3. Social Media Posts

Content analysis is used to examine a sample of 20 posts from Instagram and TikTok, selected based on user generation and platform. The posts are analyzed using a predefined coding structure and codes that are categorized under:

• **Language Style:** Including tone (formal/informal), use of slang, abbreviations, and emojis.

• **Visual Elements:** Type (e.g., meme, image, GIF), format (text overlay, caption), and mood/design.

• **Engagement:** Likes, shares, comments, and use of hashtags.

Table 1.

Interpretation of engagement levels

Interaction Type	**Low Engagement**	**Moderate Engagement**	**High Engagement**	**Very High Engagement**
Likes	0–50	51–200	201–500	501+
Comments	0–5	6–20	21–50	51+
Share	0–10	11–50	51–100	101+

To interpret audience engagement levels across social media posts, interactions are classified into four categories—low, moderate, high, and very high—based on the number of likes, comments, and shares. Posts with 0 to 50 likes are considered to have *low engagement*; 51 to 200 likes indicate *moderate engagement*; 201 to 500 likes reflect *high engagement*, and 501 or more likes are classified as *very high engagement*. Similarly, for comments, *low engagement* ranges from 0 to 5, *moderate from 6 to 20*, *high from 21 to 50*, and *very high engagement* is anything above 51 comments. For shares, posts with 0 to 10 shares were deemed to have *low engagement*, 11 to 50 show *moderate engagement*, 51 to 100 suggest *high engagement*, and anything above 101 shares is categorized as *very high engagement*. These

thresholds are calibrated specifically in relation to the dataset analyzed, ensuring they reflect the real-world interaction patterns observed across the collected posts.

To compare the variations in content creation, aesthetic preferences, and interactions between the two generations, each post is manually coded, and the results are tabulated. Content analysis helped triangulate the findings from the survey and focus groups by providing real-world examples of communication styles in practice.

2.5. Integration of Methodological Tools

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining survey, focus group discussions, and content analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of intergenerational communication on Instagram and TikTok. These tools are not used in isolation but are strategically integrated to triangulate findings and deepen the analysis. The survey provides broad quantitative insights into generational preferences regarding language styles and visual content. These findings are then enriched through focus group interviews, which explore the motivations, cultural influences, and perceptions behind the patterns identified in the survey data. Finally, content analysis of actual social media posts adds a contextual and behavioral dimension to the study by illustrating how language and visuals are applied in real-life digital interactions. Together, these tools offer a layered and interconnected framework that captures both the what and the why behind generational communication differences, ensuring both breadth and depth in the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results of the Survey

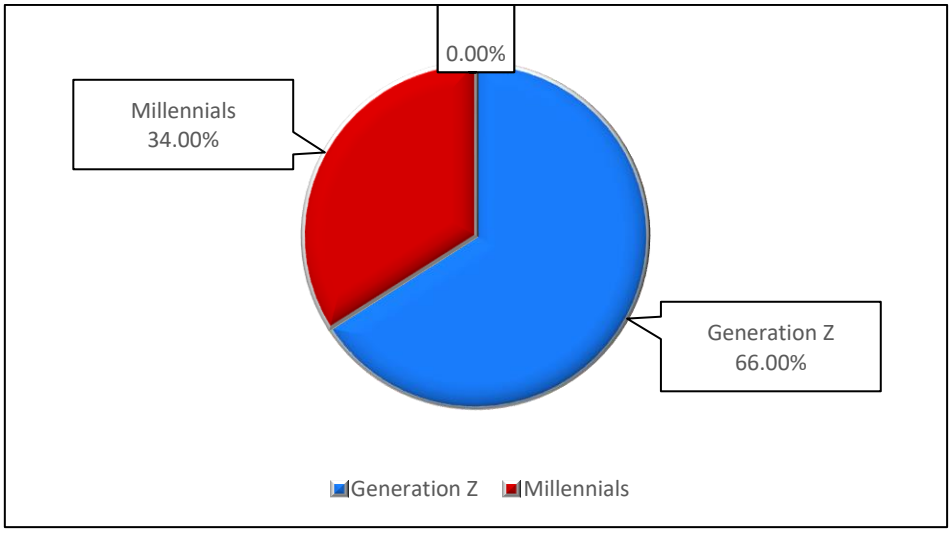
Section One: Demographic Information

1. Age range:

Participants are categorized into Millennials (born (1981–1996) and Generation Z (born ~1997–2012).

Figure 1.

Participant demographics by generation— Millennials (1981–1996) and Generation Z (1997–2012) (n=209)

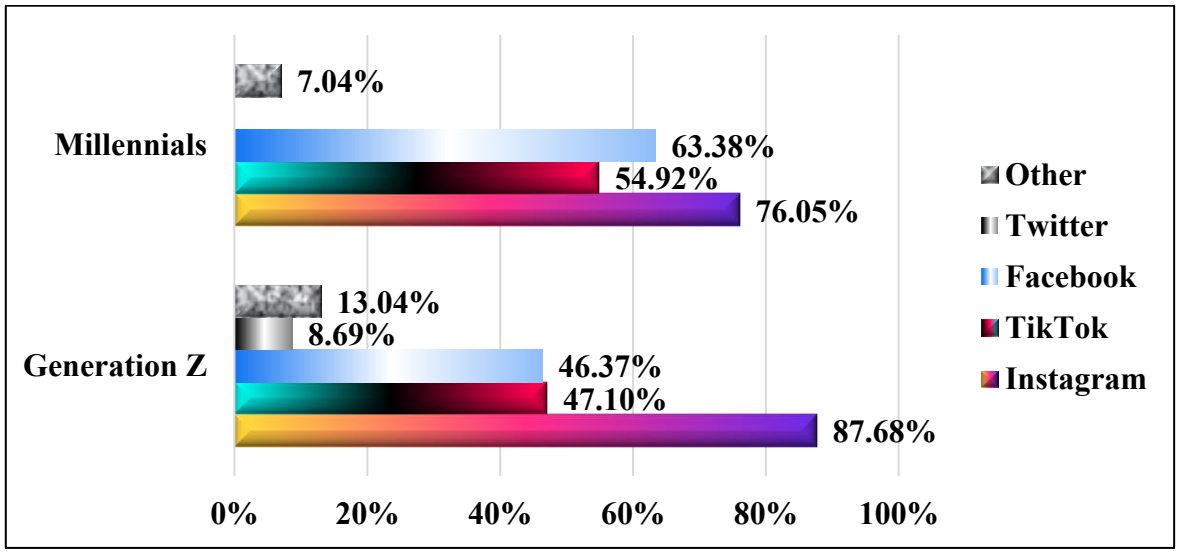


Note. This graph illustrates the generational composition of the study sample, and results reveal a significant skew toward younger respondents, with Generation Z constituting 66% (n=138) of the sample, compared to Millennials at 34% (n=71)

2. Which social media platforms do you use regularly?

Figure 2.

Generational differences in social media platform usage



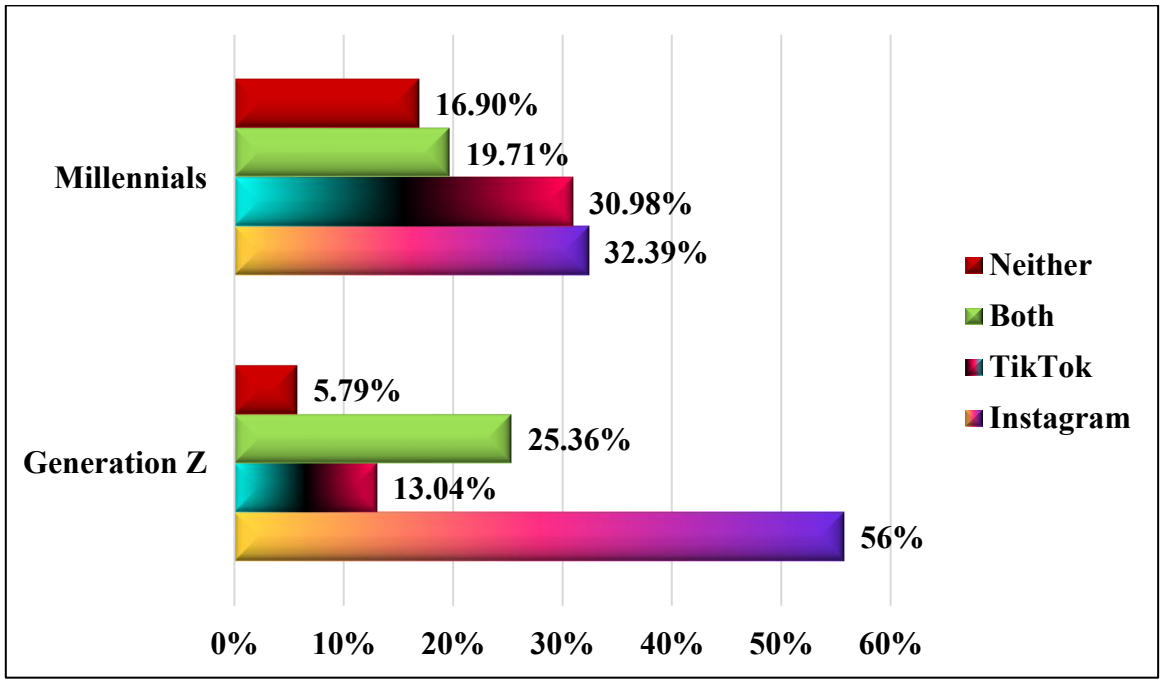
Note. Figure 2 compares social media preferences between Millennials and Generation Z, revealing distinct generational patterns. For Millennials, Instagram emerges as the dominant platform with 76.05% usage, followed by Facebook at 63.38%. In contrast, Generation Z shows overwhelming preference for Instagram (87.68%), with TikTok ranking second at 47.10%. Twitter has a moderate engagement among Generation Z at 8.69%, while "Other" platforms see minimal adoption (7.04% for Millennials and 8.69% for Generation Z). Notably, TikTok's 87.68% usage among Generation Z and Millennials at 32.39%, highlighting the platform's stronger appeal to younger users. These disparities underscore how platform preferences diverge along generational lines, with Millennials favoring established networks and Generation Z leaning toward visually-driven, newer platforms.

Section Two: Social Media Preferences

1. Which platform do you find more suitable for informal communication (e.g., casual chats, memes, slang)?

Figure 3.

Preferred platforms for informal communication by generation

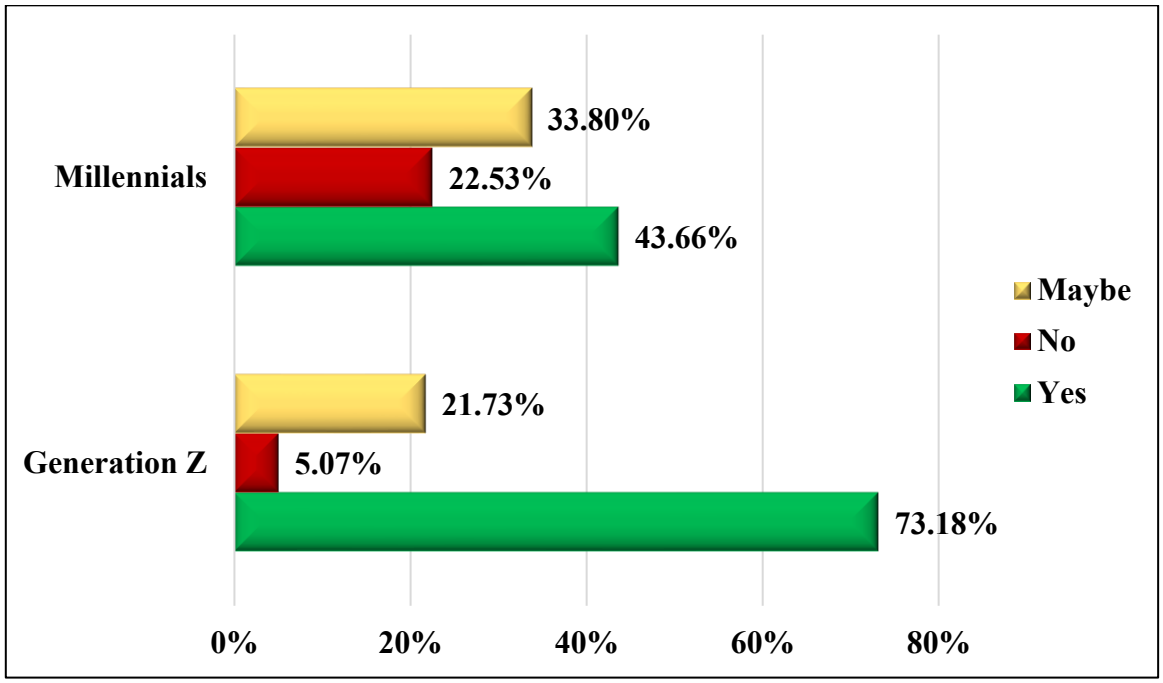


Note. Results indicate a significant generation gap in communication platform preferences for informal communications. The statistic of Instagram as the overall informal preferred platform (56% combined) has a considerable caveat: While 32.39% of Millennials prefer to use Instagram as their platform for informal communication, its percentage almost doubles to 56% for Generation Z. In contrast, we note TikTok's preference is also a little inverted, being preferred by 30.98% of Millennials and only 13.04% of Generation Z (which is noteworthy considering the youthness of TikTok). We note that 25.36% of respondents from Generation Z chose "Both", indicating that they incorporate both platforms for different informal communications compared to the 19.71% from Millennials. The "Neither" choices are minimal, (5.79% Generation Z and 16.90% Millennials), demonstrating conclusively that those platforms are the chosen leaders for informal communication in the digital sphere. Based on these patterns, while there is some overlap in Instagram as the general "informal" platform, generational differences present themselves with flexibility in platform usage and alternates.

2. Do you feel more connected to others when using casual language and visuals (memes, emojis, etc.)?

Figure 4.

Perceived social connection through informal digital communication

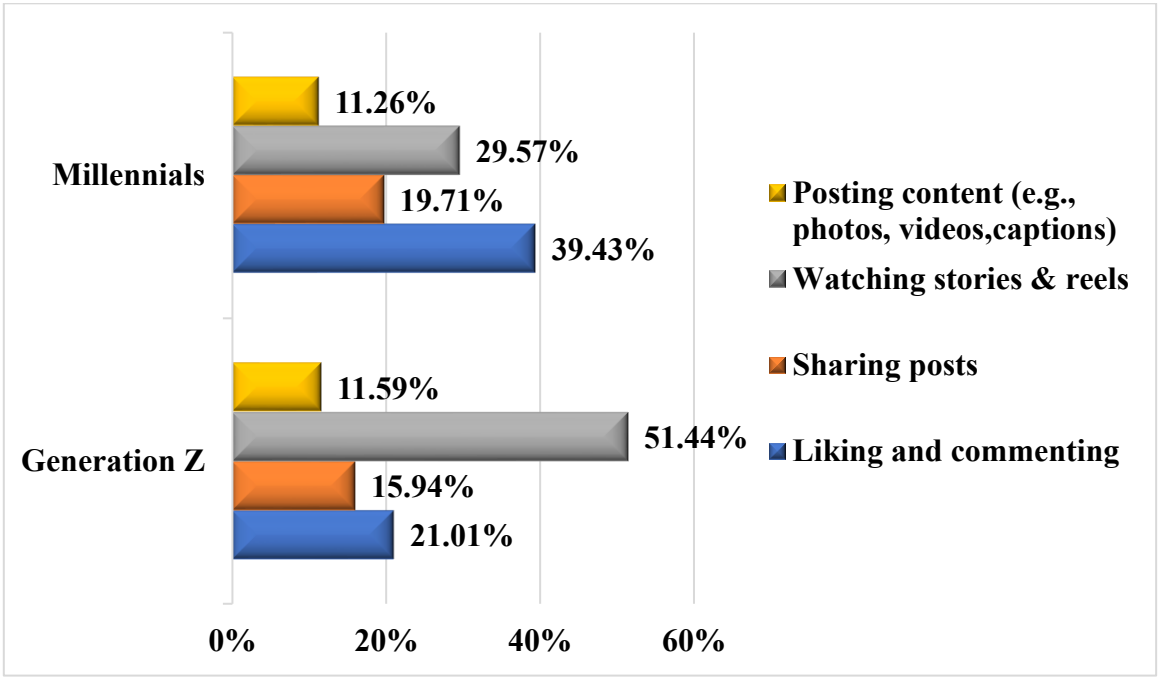


Note. The research indicates a significant generational association between informal communication styles (i.e., memes, emojis, and informal language) and the experience of social connection. Overall, 73.18% of respondents in Generation Z feel connected to others with informal communication, while 43.66% of Millennials feel so. Only 5.07% of Generation Z do not feel connected, compared to 22.53% for Millennials. It seems that younger individuals overwhelmingly associate informal digital communication with social meaningfulness, whereas Millennials are much more ambivalent with their response of "Maybe" (33.80%), compared to Generation Z (21.73%). The generational separation is consistent with the stronger dependence of Generation Z on visual/linguistic informality for social capital and relationship building in some of these communication contexts. This could reflect their digital native development where visual/linguistic informal communication has become a normalized tool for building (or perhaps maintaining) social ties with others.

3. What is your preferred way to interact with content on social media?

Figure 5.

Generational preferences for social media interaction styles



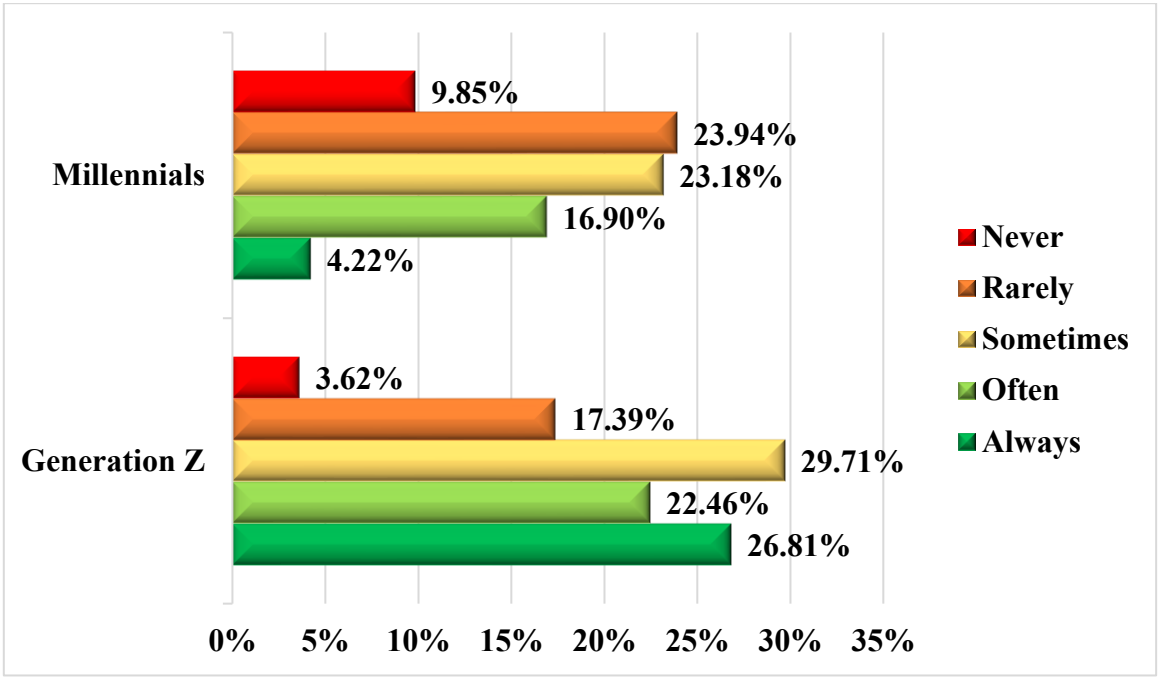
Note. Figure 5 shows very different generational behaviors in how they consume social media content. Generation Z very much enjoys passive consumption, with 51.44% preferring to watch stories/reels, almost double that of Millennials' consumption at 29.57%. Generation Z's preference for passively consuming content contrasts very much from Millennials, whose tendency is to actively consume with 11.26% stating they prefer to post original content (photos/videos), compared to only 11.59% of Generation Z. While both generations exhibit moderate engagement with liking/commenting (Millennials: 39.43%; Generation Z: 21.01%) and sharing posts (Millennials: 19.71%; Generation Z: 15.94%), at best these are second behavior. This suggests that Generation Z prefers ephemeral, low-cost time interactions with social media that align with platforms like Instagram and Tik Tok while Millennials tend to create more content which some may interpret as an inclination to make more permanent digital expressions of self (e.g., a Facebook post).

Section Three: Language Styles

1. How often do you use informal language (e.g., slang, abbreviations, and contractions) in your social media posts?

Figure 6.

Frequency of informal language use on social media by generation



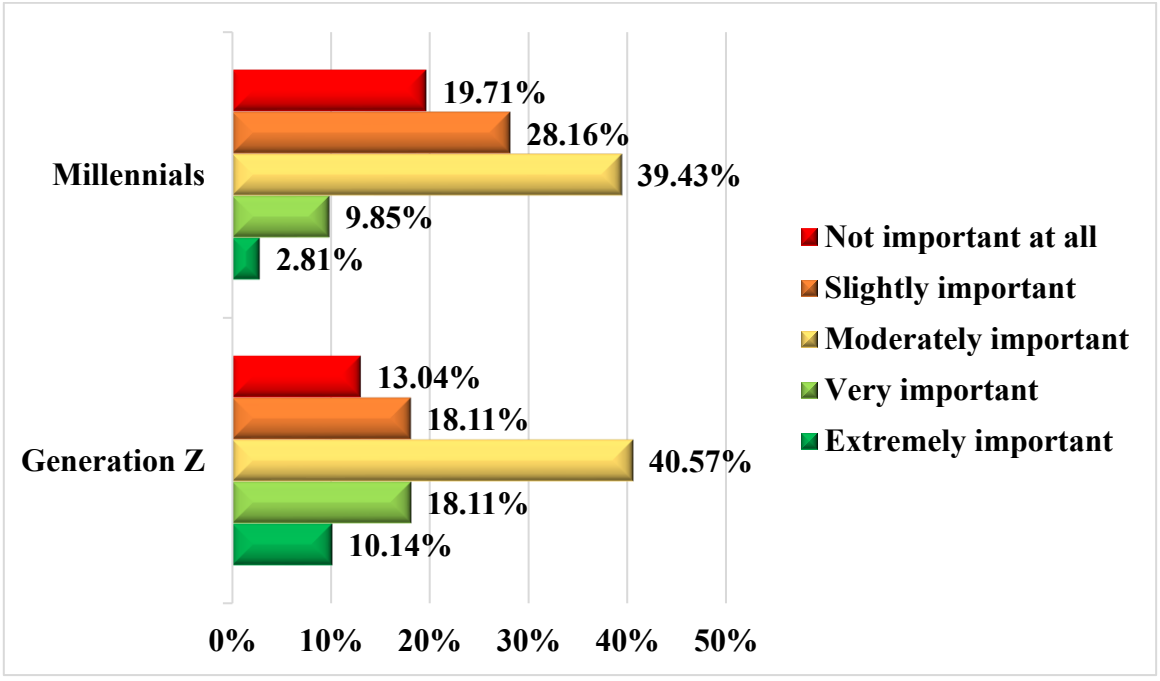
Note. Generation Z is leading with 26.81% saying they use informal language 'Always,' and 22.46% said they used it 'Often'…. Over 56% of Generation Z consistently use informal language. Millennials have more moderate use where only 4.22% said they 'Always' use informal styles; 16.90% said they 'Often' use this style, and almost a quarter (23.18%) is in the 'Sometimes' category. However, 9.85% of Millennials said they 'Never' use informal language, compared to Generation Z (3.62%). Given that almost all Generation Z are in this 'Always' and 'Often' category, any adoption of informal language as a Millennial means that Millennial adoption is much less than Generation Z's. A further divide can be articulated in the 'Rarely' category (Millennials – 23.94%; Generation Z –17.39%), which suggests that Generation Z's linguistic norm is fundamentally more informal than Millennials. It seems reasonable to postulate that Generation Z is a product of digital native socialization, where their

language/appropriation uses slang and abbreviations peripherally, not in a sense of intentionally using and trying it.

2. How important is the use of slang or internet-specific language in connecting with others on social media?

Figure 7.

Perceived importance of emojis in digital communication across generations



Note. Figure 7 displays the responses from both Millennials and Generation Z regarding their belief of how important emojis are in digital communication. For Millennials, 39.43% of them believe emojis are moderately important; 28.16% believe they are slightly important; and 19.71% consider them to be unimportant at all. A little walk-a-way of 9.85% of Millennials believe that emojis are very important, and finally, only 2.81% of Millennials rated emojis as extremely important. Generation Z, however, values emojis even more. 40.57% of them rate emojis as moderately important; a further 18.11% believe they are very important; and 10.14% believe they are extremely important. The responses indicating emojis are slightly important (18.11%) and that they do not hold any importance (13.04%) are drastically lower than Millennials.

3. In your opinion, how does the use of slang differ between Instagram and TikTok?

Most Generation Z respondents recognize an absolute difference in the usage of slang between TikTok and Instagram. They describe TikTok as a fluid platform where slang shifts quickly, is often driven by viral content and trends, and heavily shaped by Generation Z's sense of humor and fast-paced culture. Terminology such as "delulu," "rizz," and "pmo" are even specifically highlighted as stereotypical slang of TikTok, the example used to indicate just how closely the language within TikTok is reflective of the young, meme-based user group. Instagram itself is then pictured as slower in adapting to an incorporation of slang use, fashion- and style-based, or lifestyle-based. Overall, Instagram is more appealing to the older user and therefore a less slang-centric culture. Some Generation Z users also stated that switching between the two apps wants to switch languages—both have different slang and voice. Notwithstanding such difference, most declared that it still feels fun and interesting to use slang on either platform. Other members of Generation Z, though, admitted that they do not really see that much of a difference in terms of slang being used on different platforms, or just are not knowledgeable about TikTok enough yet to compare. In several cases, Generation Z users expressed confusion or unfamiliarity with TikTok, despite being its core target audience. "I don't know" or "I don't use TikTok" are responses that appeared frequently, which means that not all Generation Z users are actively using both platforms—even though they are typically assumed to be.

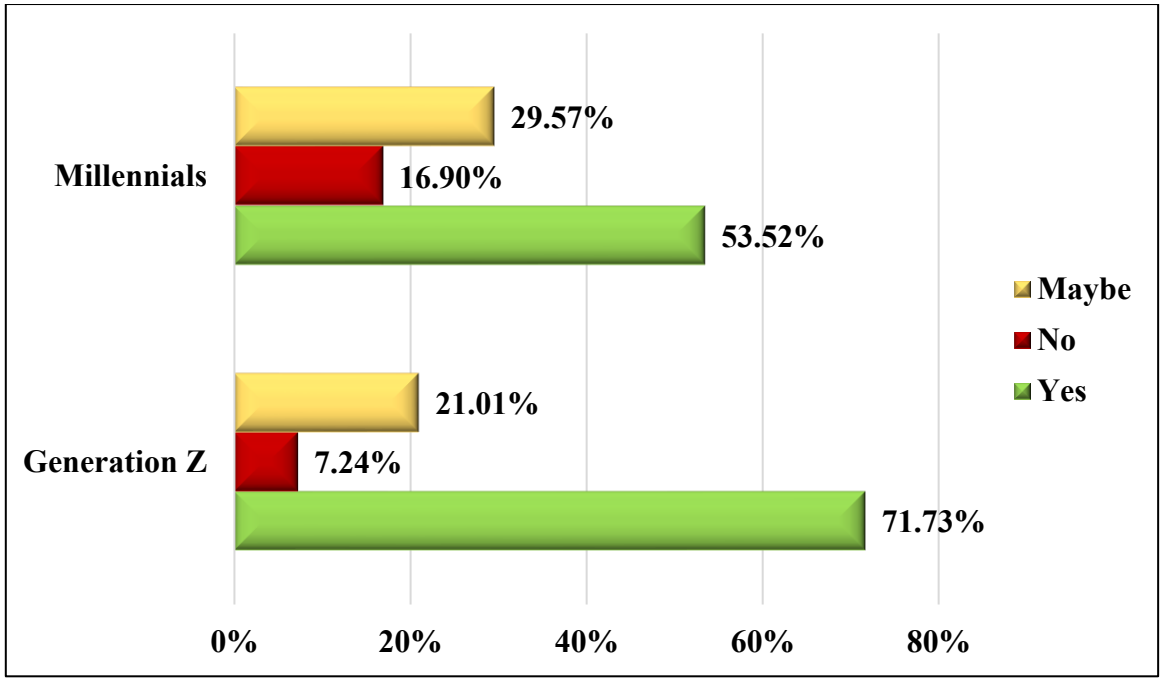
Millennial responses are far more reserved or uncertain. The majority indicated that they do not use TikTok, or do not notice a difference in the use of slang between the two sites. Those who answered are likely to rely on general assumption or hearsay—such as assuming TikTok would be fuller of slang, or that Instagram is less complex to follow linguistically. Interestingly, even while some of the Millennials did concede TikTok likely has more slang, they also said they are not familiar enough with it to make strong comparisons. One of the

participants simply stated using the platforms for completely practical purposes, i.e., communicating with vendors or asking—thus not employing slang or colloquial language much at all. Overall, Millennials are less willing or disconnected from the evolving culture of internet slang. Their form of online communication is more utilitarian or observational, not so much participatory in trend-focused conversation.

4. Do you prefer to use emojis in your posts?

Figure 8.

Preference for using emojis in posts among Millennials and Generation Z

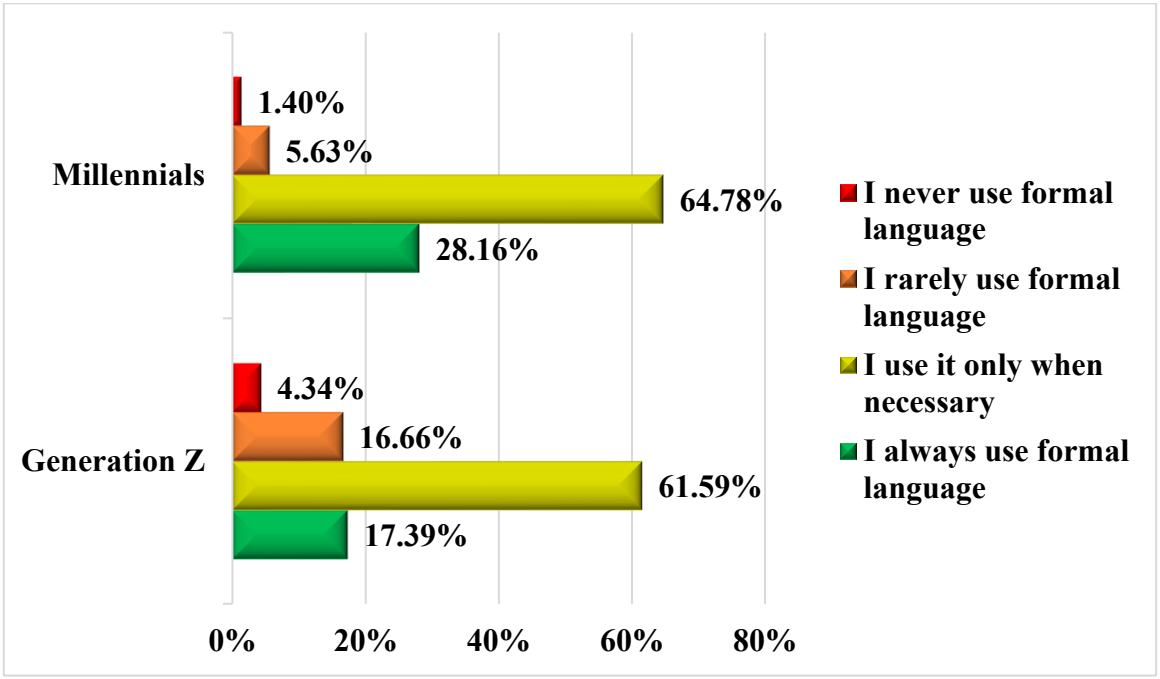


Note. Figure 8 depicts the generational preference in the use of emojis in social media post content. A compelling majority of Generation Z (71.73%) answered "Yes," indicating a strong preference for using emojis, while only 7.24% answered No, and 21.01% answered "Maybe." Millennials have a total of 53.52% who prefer emoji use; however, this figure is not nearly as substantial as Generation Z. In addition, 29.57% of Millennials have a Maybe response, while 16.90% responded "No." Therefore, results show both groups have a positive leaning towards the use of emojis, but Generation Z clearly demonstrate a stronger and definite preference.

5. How do you feel about using formal language in social media posts?

Figure 9.

Frequency of formal language usage in online communication

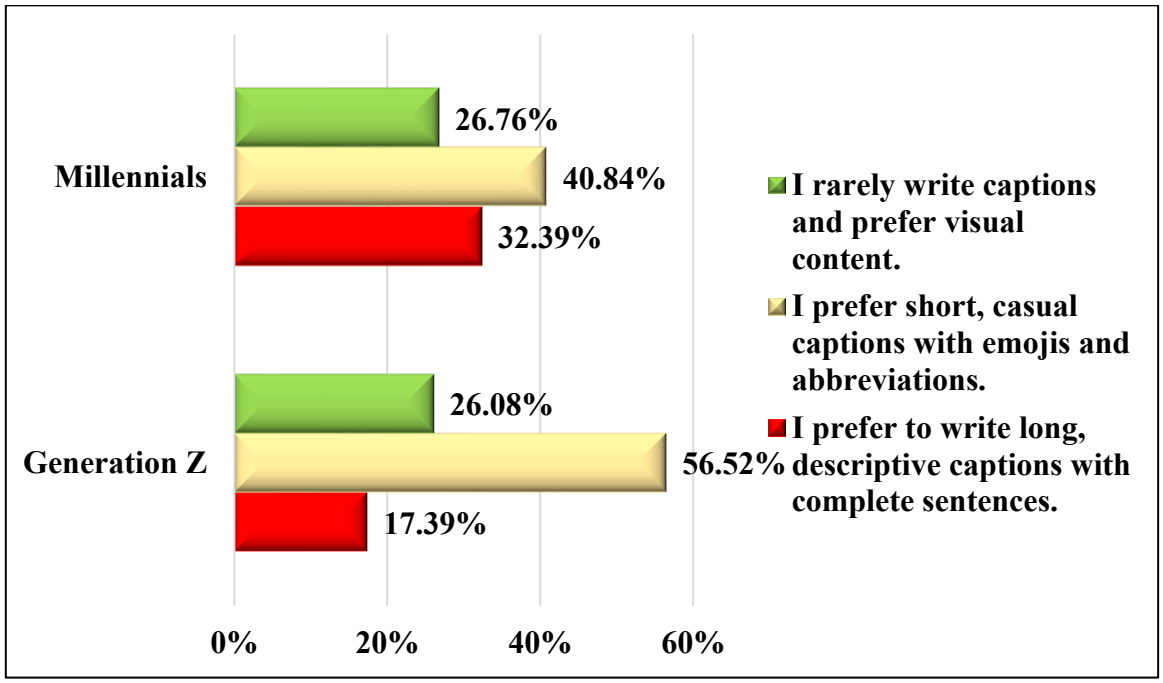


Note. Figure 9 considers Millennials and Generation Z in terms of how often they use formal language online. Most of both groups only use formal language when they need to, with Millennials at 64.78% and Generation Z at 61.59%. Yet, Millennials are also more likely to always use formal language at 28.16%, compared to Generation Z at 17.39%. Generation Z also have higher percentages in both rarely use formal language at 16.66% and never at 4.34%, while Millennials are less likely to not use formal language, with only 5.63% stating they rarely use formal and 1.40% stating they never use formal. Overall, results indicate that Millennials tend to use a slightly more formal tone with regard to digital communication.

6. Which of the following best describes your language use on Instagram?

Figure 10.

Preferred caption styles on Instagram by generation

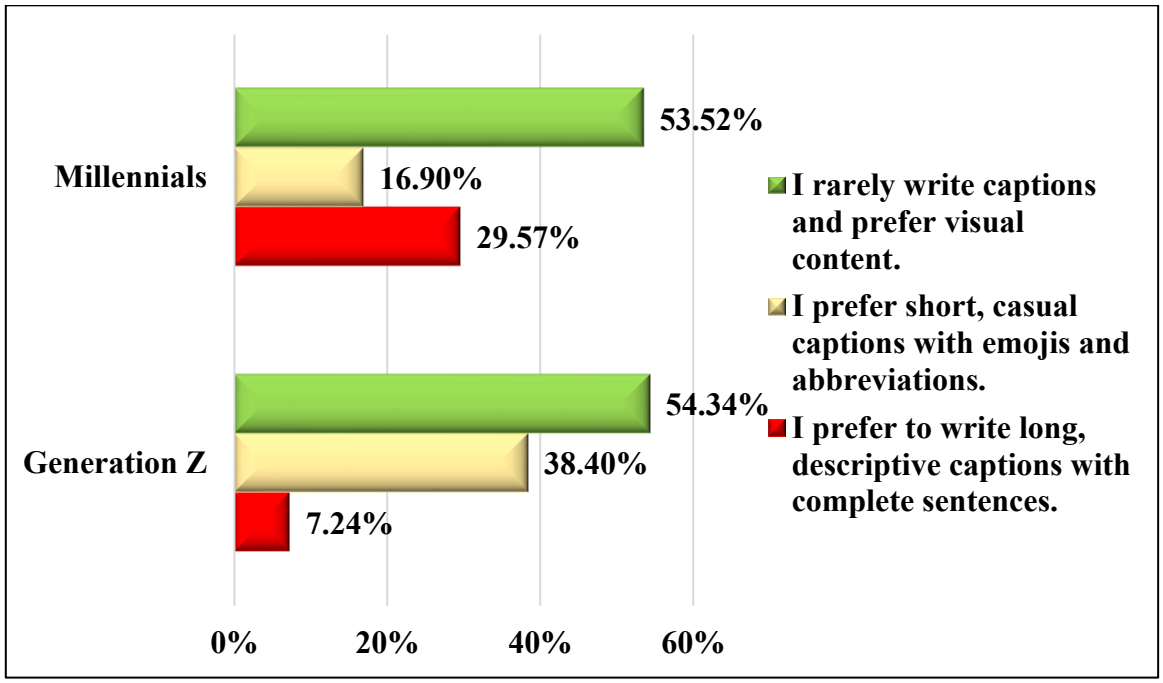


Note. As shown in Figure 2.10, there is a difference in preference in caption-writing styles between Millennials and Generation Z. The majority (40.84%) of Millennials choose short and casual captions that use emojis and abbreviations, while 32.39% of them write long, detailed captions that consist of full sentences. Only 26.76% of Millennials use no captions and stick to photos and videos. There is a significant difference in short caption preferences as we compare Generation Z. In fact, for Generation Z, 56.52% chose short, casual captions for their preferred style. 26.08% of Generation Z write captions very rarely, and only 17.39% chose long, detailed captions that make full sentences. Clearly, Generation Z are more casual and visual in communicating compared to Millennials.

7. Which of the following best describes your language use on TikTok?

Figure 11.

Language use preferences on TikTok by generation



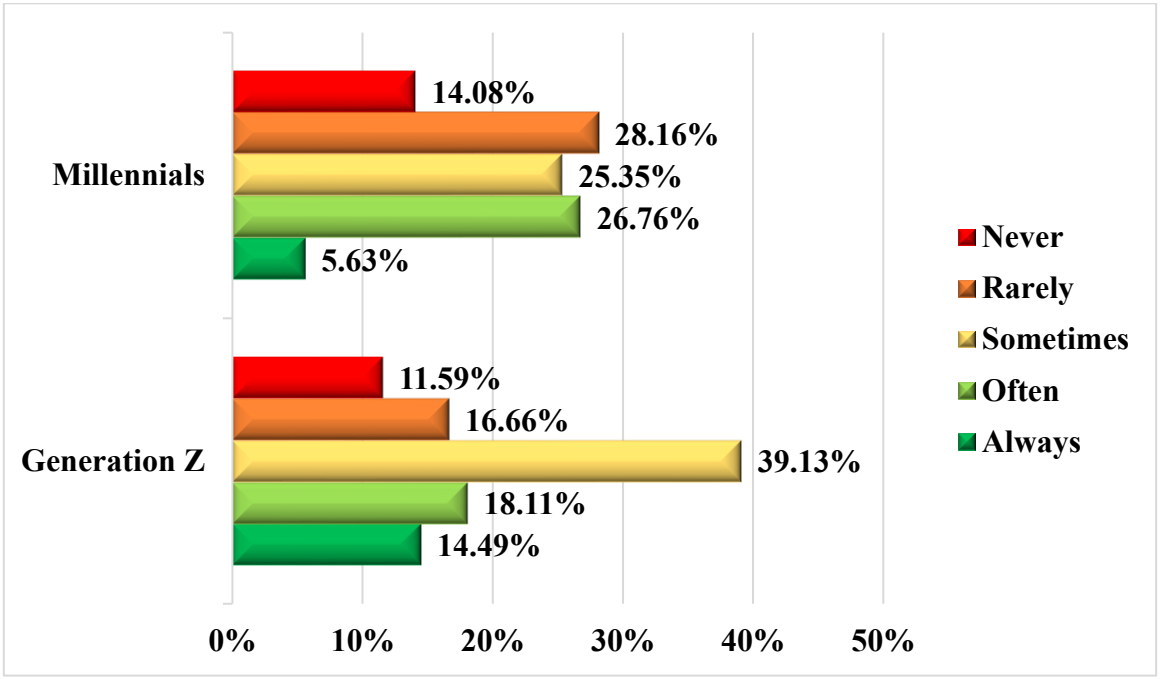
Note. Figure 2.11 depicts how Millennials and Generation Z describe their use of language on TikTok. For the most part, most of both generations state they rarely write captions because they like visual content. For example, the visual response was chosen by 53.52% of Millennials and 54.34% of Generation Z. Both generations prefer not to write captions, but Generation Z favors simple short captions, emoji, and abbreviations. This is no shock when 38.40% of Generation Z chose this option, and only 16.90% of Millennials selected the same option. Interestingly, 29.57% of Millennials chose to write lengthy, descriptive captions, while only 7.24% of Generation Z wrote lengthy captions. This shows a likeness between both generations' preference of using little text and visual communication, with Generation Z slightly favoring casual emoji captions.

Section Four: Use of Visuals

1. How often do you use images, GIFs, or memes in your posts on Instagram and TikTok?

Figure 12.

Frequency of visual content use (images, GIFs, memes) on Instagram and TikTok by generation

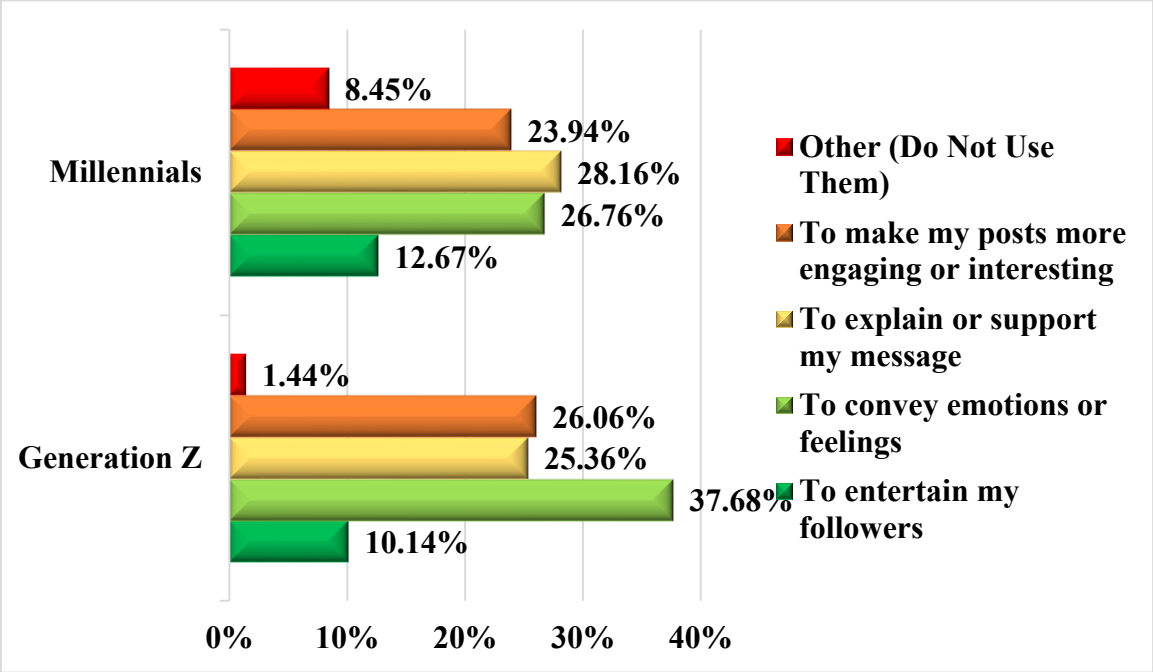


Note. Figure 2.12 shows the frequency with which Millennials and Generation Z use images, GIFs, or memes in their Instagram and TikTok posts. For Millennials, the consumption is relatively evenly distributed: 25.35% use them "sometimes,"5.63% use them "always," and 26.76% use them "often." A small percentage use them rarely (28.16%) or never (14.08%). Conversely, Generation Z displays a higher preference for regular usage of image, GIFs, or memes, with 39.13% using them "sometimes," 18.11% using them "often," and 14.49% using them "always." A smaller percentage of Generation Z use images, GIFs, or memes with less frequency (16.66%) or not at all (11.59%). This shows that both generations prioritize visual content, even though Millennials demonstrate slightly more consistency with their level of frequent usage over the variety of habits displayed by Generation Z.

2. What is your primary reason for using visuals in your posts?

Figure 13.

Primary motivations for using visuals in posts by generation

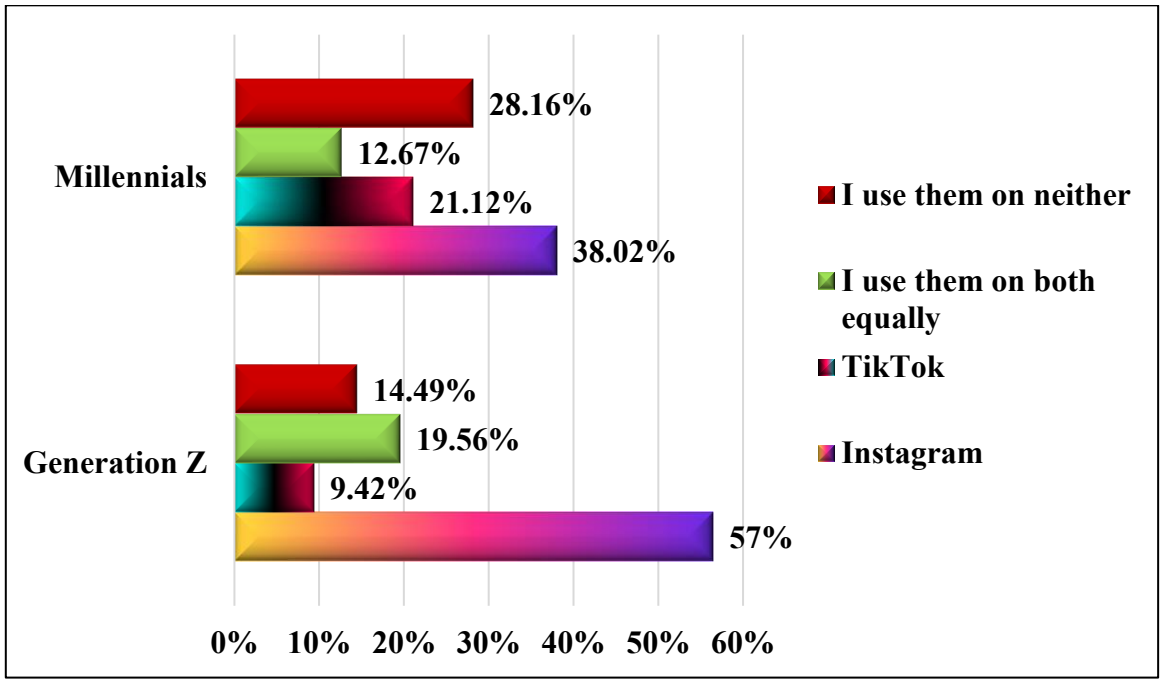


Note. Figure 2.13 illustrates generational differences in the motivations behind visual usage on social media. While a small portion of participants indicated they do not use visuals—8.45% of Millennials compared to only 1.44% of Generation Z, the majority identified clear communicative purposes. A common reason cited by both groups is to make posts more engaging or interesting, with 23.94% of Millennials and 26.06% of Generation Z expressing this preference. Similarly, using visuals to directly explain or support a message is acknowledged by 28.16% of Millennials and 26.06% of Generation Z. Emotional expression also emerged as a key motive, with 26.76% of Millennials and 37.68% of Generation Z employing visuals to convey feelings. Lastly, the intent to entertain followers is reported by 12.67% of Millennials and 10.14% of Generation Z, highlighting subtle differences in how each generation engages with their audiences.

3. On which platform do you prefer to use memes and GIFs?

Figure 14.

Preferred platforms for using memes and GIFs by generation

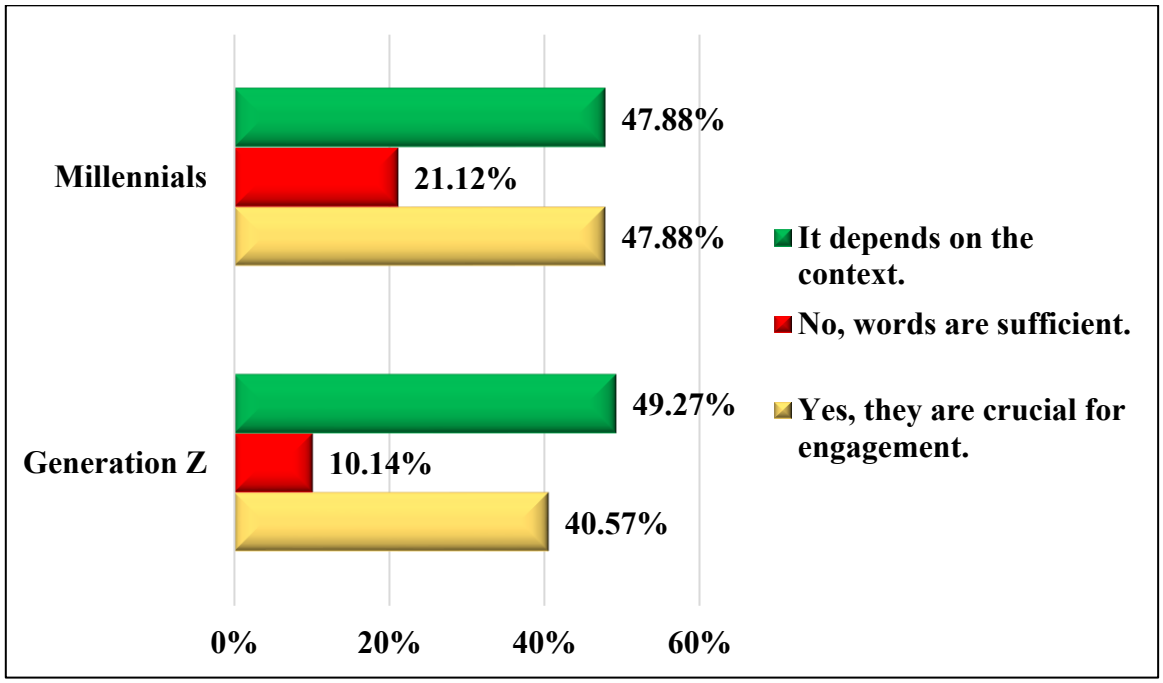


Note. Figure 2.14 assesses the preferences of Millennials and Generation Z for platforms to use memes and GIFs. With Millennials, Instagram is the preferred platform (38.02%), while TikTok is less favored (21.12%). Fewer preferred using no memes and GIFs on neither (28.16%) or using them both equally (12.67%). The preferred platform among Generation Z meme/GIF users is Instagram (57%), and Millennials preferred TikTok (9.42%). Also, a notable share of Generation Z meme/GIF users prefer using memes and GIFs on both equally (19.56%) or on neither (14.49%).

4. Do you believe visuals (such as memes and GIFs) are essential for communicating effectively on TikTok or Instagram?

Figure 15.

Perceptions of visuals as essential for communication on TikTok and Instagram by generation



Note. Figure 2.15 explores the opinions of Millennials and Generation Z in relation to visual communication (memes, GIFs, etc.) importance for engaging content on TikTok and Instagram. Among Millennials, 47.88% report that visuals are critical for engagement; 47.88% say it depends on the context; but 21.12% of Millennials respond that words are enough to communicate. Conversely, Generation Z's attitudes align differently: 40.57% agree that visuals are critical for engagement; 49.27% indicate it depends on the context; but a few of them declare that words are enough 10.14%. This demonstrates the differences in perceptions of the importance of visual content for social media communication that serve different purposes between Millennials and Generation Z.

5. How do you think visuals like memes and GIFs influence the way you communicate with your followers or friends?

Data evince clear-cut generational differences between Millennials and Generation Millennial respondents reflect a more cautious and deliberate use of visual elements such as memes and GIFs. While they acknowledge the effectiveness of these tools, they often

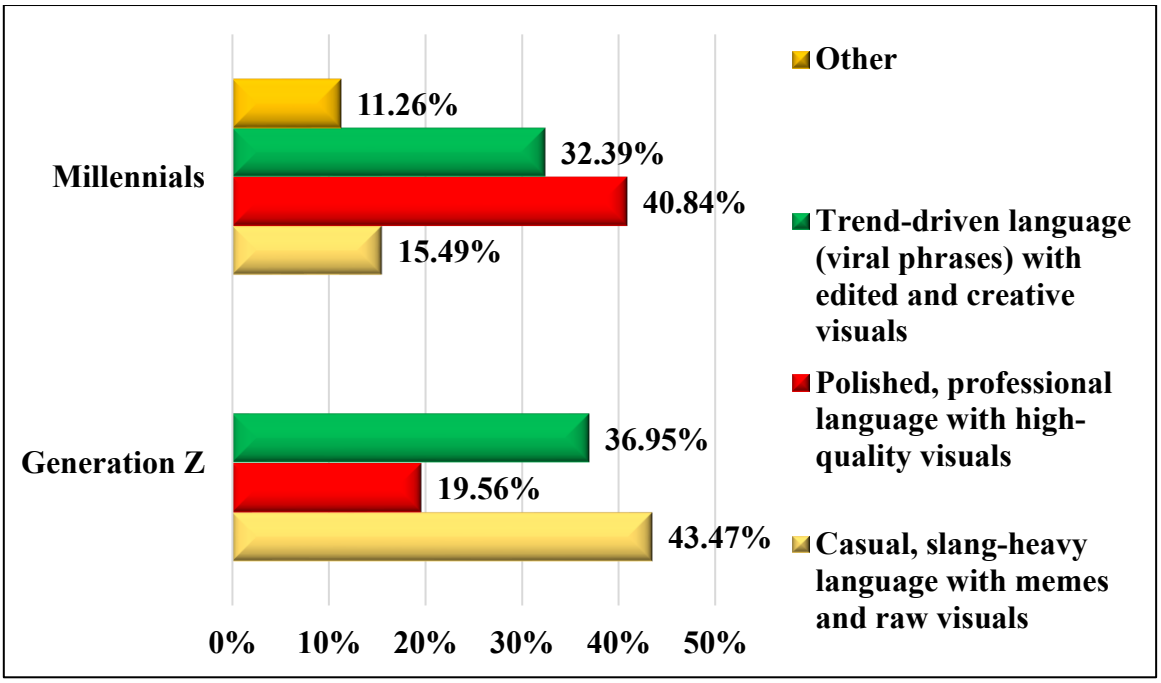
emphasize the value of richer, more nuanced verbal expression—particularly in contexts requiring depth, sensitivity, or serious reflection. Visuals are used where appropriate, but words are preferred for conveying complex or substantive messages. In contrast, Generation Z respondents overwhelmingly view memes and GIFs as dynamic and essential tools that enhance communication, attract attention, and express emotions quickly and effectively. To them, these visuals are not merely entertaining; they serve as a globally recognized, impactful language that fosters immediate emotional connection. However, Generation Z also recognizes that visual content may not always be suitable, especially in contexts requiring a more reflective or serious tone. Overall, while Millennials tend to be more selective, prioritizing verbal depth over visual shorthand, Generation Z gravitates toward visual language for its immediacy and emotional appeal.

Section Five: Perceptions of Communication

1. What kind of posts (language style and visuals) do you think are more common among your generation on Instagram or TikTok?

Figure 16.

Common language and visual styles on Instagram and TikTok by generation

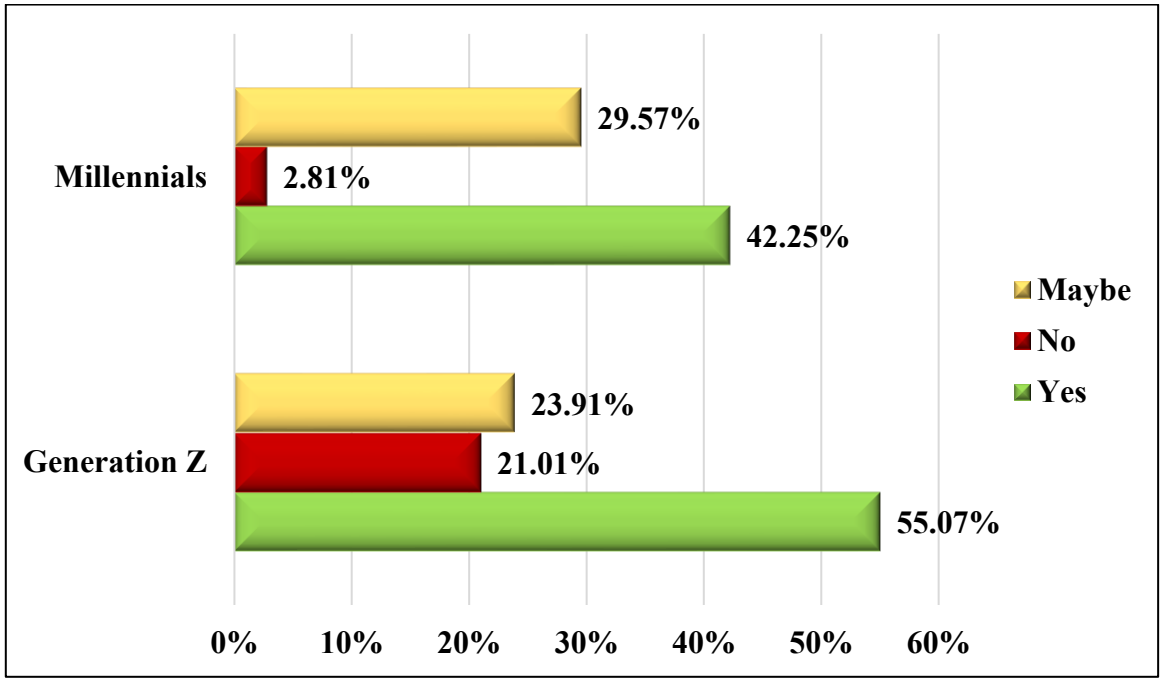


Note. Figure 2.16 examines the preferences of language style and visuals of the two generations of Millennials and Generation Z on Instagram and TikTok. Among Millennials, 11.26% chose "Other," and 32.39% chose "Trend-driven language (edited and creative visuals)." An additional 40.84% of Millennials prefer "Polished, professional language with memes and raw visuals," and a somehow small preference for the "casual and slang language" with 15.49%, reflecting their personality and identity. Preferences of Generation Z are 19.56% for polished, professional language; 36.95% for "Trend-driven language;" and 43.47% for casual, slang heavy language combined with memes. This demonstrates the differences in preferences for communication styles between the two generational cohorts.

2. In your opinion, does the use of language and visuals on Instagram differ from TikTok?

Figure 17.

Perceived differences in language and visual use between Instagram and TikTok by generation



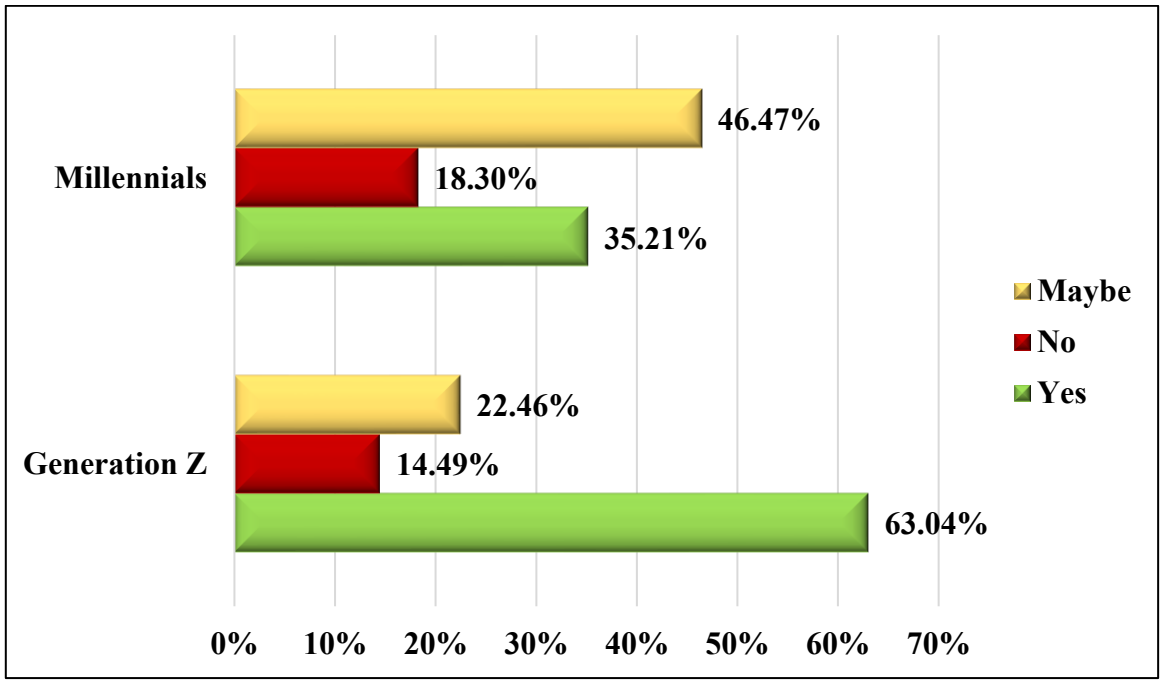
Note. Figure 2.17 shows how Millennials and Generation Z perceive the differences in language and visuals on Instagram and TikTok. Among Millennials, 42.25% perceive a difference, 29.57% are unsure, and 2.81% perceive no difference. Among Generation Z, 55.07% agreed that there is a difference, 23.91% are unsure, and 21.01% disagree. This shows

that Generation Z is likely to perceive more of a difference, while Millennials demonstrate a greater proportion of uncertainty.

3. Do you feel that the use of slang and visuals helps your generations express their identity on social media?

Figure 18.

The role of slang and visuals in identity expression on social media

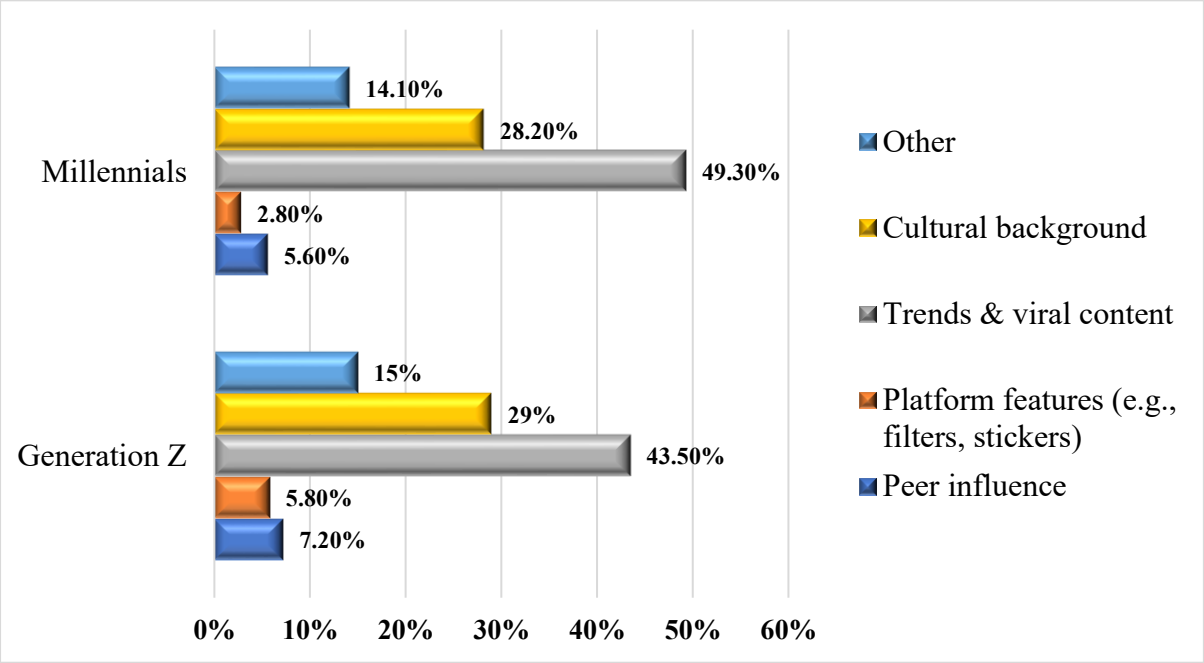


Note. Figure 2.18 examines if slang and visuals assist Millennials and Generation Z in expressing their identity on social media. The results show that just under half (35.21%) of Millennials agree that it helps them express their identity, while 46.47% are unsure, and 18.30% disagree. The results also show that 63.04% of Generation Z believe that it helps them express their identity, while 22.46% are unsure, and 14.49% disagree. It is noteworthy that Generation Z has a clearer belief that slang and visuals help express their identity. Millennials appear to show more uncertainty regarding this question.

4. What factors influence the way you choose to communicate on social media?

Figure 19.

Key influencing factors in social media communication



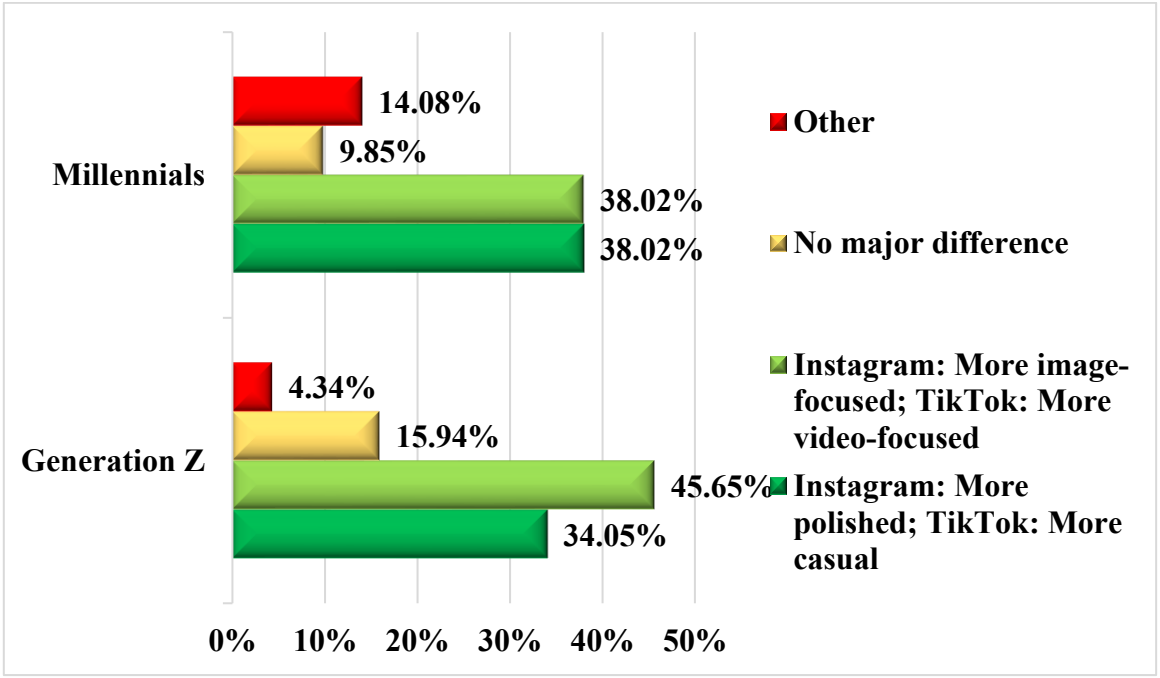
Note. Figure 2.19 examines the influencing factors behind social media communication for both Millennials and Generation Z, focusing on categories such as peer influence, platform features, trends and viral content, cultural background, and other. For Generation Z, 43.5% believe that trends and viral content have the most influence on their communication on social media. Another 29% think that cultural background plays a major role. In addition, 7.2% pointed to peer influence, while 5.8% selected platform features such as filters and stickers. A further 15% chose 'Other' (Such as: Influencers or celebrities, personal identity exploration, Gaming culture) as their influencing factor. Among Millennials, 49.3% consider trends and viral content to be the most significant factor in shaping their communication, slightly higher than Generation Z. Cultural background follows closely, with 28.2% choosing it as an important influence. 5.6% of Millennials selected peer influence, while only 2.8% saw platform features as impactful. Finally, 14.1% selected 'Other' (Like: Professional image or work-related norms. Also, the lifestyle habits. Or even sometimes Cultural expectations from family) as their response. In conclusion, while both generations agree that trends and cultural

background are key influences, Millennials are more strongly aligned with viral content as the primary driver of communication.

5. How would you describe the difference in communication between Instagram and TikTok in terms of visuals and language?

Figure 20.

Perceived differences in communication styles between Instagram and TikTok



Note. Figure 2.20 examines Millennials' and Generation Z's opinions about the differences in communication methods between Instagram and TikTok in visual vs. language. For Millennials, 38.02% think that Instagram is more image-focused and polished and TikTok is video-focused and casual. The other 9.85% generally reckon no real difference in methods of communication across the platforms. In addition, 14.08% of Millennials picked 'Other,' and 38.02% treated both platforms based on their appearance: One as an image focused (Instagram) vs a more video focused (TikTok). For Generation Z, 34.05% consider Instagram more polished and TikTok more casual, while 45.65% think there is a clear difference as TikTok is a video-based platform while Instagram is an image-based one. Further, 4.34% chose 'Other,' and 15.94% believe there is no difference in communication methods. In conclusion, the results

indicate that both generations recognize the distinct approaches to Instagram and TikTok, with Generation Z clearly aligned and Millennials less aligned.

Section Six: Closing Questions

1. What changes would you like to see in how language and visuals are used on Instagram or TikTok?

Millennials and Generation Z demonstrate overlapping preferences yet express unique variations in their recommendations. One Millennial individual requested a clear separation between entertaining material and educational content, which reflects Generation Z's opinion yet emphasized different methods of organizing information. Millennials identified another common point when they supported enhanced language etiquette which a single person associated with communication courtesy. Research demonstrates that both age groups consider respectful communication essential within digital discussions. Younger Millennials demonstrate a strong preference for innovative content on Instagram because they feel frustrated with the platform's repetitive trends and excessive use of slang. Millennials desire Instagram content that highlights original ideas instead of repeating common themes that are prevalent on the platform. A single Millennial user requested TikTok to reintroduce past creative content, including the dances and challenges that were popular during the platform's beginning. TikTok's original essence has been lost according to popular opinion because the platform shifted from creative purpose towards fleeting viral sensations that diminished user experience. The Millennial population expressed their desire for improved filtering tools that enable users to discover high-quality content beyond trending material. Thus, they show their interest in platforms that value quality content above widespread popularity. One Millennial user demanded TikTok to provide additional educational materials alongside academic content, showing their interest in platforms that serve learning and knowledge exchange besides entertainment purposes.

Generation Z respondents have a wish for more inclusive and diverse content to be created on Instagram and TikTok. One respondent mentioned that the usage of clearer visual and language would ensure the establishment of positive and respectful communication. The statement gives a push towards content to be represented but at the same time to encourage healthier and inclusive interaction. Generation Z also stressed that content needs to be more authentic and meaningful. Most respondents felt that the current social media trend is often too staged or fake, whereas an authentic medium of expression about real-life experiences and real emotions is preferred. This again shows their preference for more meaningful, less superficial content. A few other respondents also added that there needs to be balance between fun trends and meaningful content, and fun trends should never undermine the importance of serious or valuable content. Generation Z also feels that separating entertainment from serious content would enhance the way content is consumed and help users distinguish between light-hearted and serious discussions. Additionally, another respondent felt that meme and GIF culture should enhance, not substitute, dialogue. Whereas some believed that these visuals should enrich the conversations, away from the idea that the images overtake the conversations, respect for language is another theme expressed by one participant, who felt that respect should be applied to communication on the Internet. Creative energy should come back to Instagram and stop being sucked away by tired slang like "Delulu" and "Rizz," around which some say all creativity has calcified. It looks like there is a demand for new, innovative content that speaks to individuality and creativity as opposed to blindly towing the same old lines.

Both Millennials and Generation Z want genuine, respectful, and creative content on Instagram and TikTok. This research reveals that Millennials concentrate more on content filtering and creative trends that are not superficial while Generation Z emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and meaningful engagement. Both sets of users promote balanced content between fun and valuable material to create a respectful and inclusive digital space.

2. Is there anything else you would like to share about how language or visuals impact communication on social media in general?

Millennials exhibit similar enthusiasm for how language and visuals affect communication, though they view it from a unique standpoint. Social media platforms have developed their own language patterns which users have adopted according to respondents. Their comments suggest that online conversations should maintain clear value-driven communication instead of following trends, thus showing their preference for substantial content over superficial messages. People want their communication to maintain deep connections instead of turning into trendy phrases and visuals because they value meaningful dialogue. Millennial participants identified communication styles that differ across generations as their second major theme. Millennials demonstrate their understanding of changing communication practices through their role of merging older communication styles with modern digital platforms to create meaningful online voices. The study identifies the value of emojis because they surpass sentence-based communication by using visuals to express clarity and emotional depth.

Generation Z participants provided numerous ideas about the impact of language and visuals on their social media communication. Most respondents stated that memes possess greater communication depth compared to paragraphs because they deliver complex concepts rapidly through visual elements. The research demonstrates that Generation Z finds memes to be better tools for communication compared to traditional text-based methods. An individual from the survey illustrates that an emoji or filter changes the way people interpret messages because they show how visual elements hold emotional communication value. The analysis of the survey evinces that social media users currently prefer visual content because it enables efficient communication without extensive written language.
The younger Generation Z values visual communication for its convenience, yet one participant

observed that excessive visual and slang usage prevents meaningful connections. The use of visuals could sometimes limit communication depth by weakening genuine interactions between people, thus indicating a potential issue with visual communication dependency. Young generations who use Instagram and TikTok predominantly might create new language and visual trends that shape digital communication since they determine content sharing and consumption practices.

The two generations of Millennials and Generation Z value social media communication through both visuals and language, yet they maintain different perspectives. When it comes to communication values, Millennials value clarity and moral foundations in their messages because they seek substance beyond fleeting popularity. Millennials understand that emojis and basic images assist in emotional communication, yet they show worry about the fast-paced and shallow nature of online communication. Through their interactions, Millennials understand the diverse communication methods between different age groups while positioning themselves to unite conventional and modern communication approaches. However, Generation Z consider visual elements, such as memes, emojis, and filters, essential methods to effectively transmit intricate thoughts and deep feelings in digital conversations, but they warn against excessive visual usage for creating meaningful connections. The younger population maintains strong influence on modern content sharing and consumption patterns according to their observations.

Generation Z participants provided numerous ideas about the impact of language and visuals on their social media communication. Most respondents stated that memes possess greater communication depth compared to paragraphs because they deliver complex concepts rapidly through visual elements. The research demonstrates that Generation Z finds memes to be better tools for communication compared to traditional text-based methods. An individual from the survey illustrates that an emoji or filter changes the way people interpret messages

because they show how visual elements hold emotional communication value. The analysis of the survey evinces that social media users currently prefer visual content because it enables efficient communication without extensive written language.

The younger Generation Z values visual communication for its convenience, yet one participant observed that excessive visual and slang usage prevents meaningful connections. The use of visuals could sometimes limit communication depth by weakening genuine interactions between people, thus indicating a potential issue with visual communication dependency. Young generations who use Instagram and TikTok predominantly might create new language and visual trends that shape digital communication since they determine content sharing and consumption practices.

Millennials exhibit similar enthusiasm for how language and visuals affect communication though they view it from a unique standpoint. Social media platforms have developed their own language patterns which users have adopted according to respondents. Their comments suggest that online conversations should maintain clear value-driven communication instead of following trends, thus showing their preference for substantial content over superficial messages. People want their communication to maintain deep connections instead of turning into trendy phrases and visuals because they value meaningful dialogue. Millennial participants identified communication styles that differ across generations as their second major theme. Millennials demonstrate their understanding of changing communication practices through their role of merging older communication styles with modern digital platforms to create meaningful online voices. The study identifies the value of emojis because they surpass sentence-based communication by using visuals to express clarity and emotional depth.

The two generations of Millennials and Generation Z value social media communication through both visuals and language, yet they maintain different perspectives.

Generation Z members consider visual elements, such as memes emojis and filters, essential methods to effectively transmit intricate thoughts and deep feelings in digital conversations, but they warn against excessive visual usage for creating meaningful connections. The younger population maintains strong influence on modern content sharing and consumption patterns according to their observations. When it comes to communication values, Millennials value clarity and moral foundations in their messages because they seek substance beyond fleeting popularity. Millennials understand that emojis and basic images assist in emotional communication, yet they show worry about the fast-paced and shallow nature of online communication. Through their interactions, Millennials understand the diverse communication methods between different age groups while positioning themselves to unite conventional and modern communication approaches.

3.2. Results of Focus Groups Interviews

This section compares the language practices and visual preferences of Generation Z and Millennial participants on Instagram and TikTok using focus groups as the method. The aim is to explore how these two generational cohorts engage with and respond to social media, particularly in terms of language choices and content preferences. The qualitative research provides insights into how online behaviors are indicators of generational identity, values, and media literacy. To start, participants are asked to introduce themselves and tell us which social media platforms they use and prefer, Instagram or TikTok. This question established the basis for exploring their platform use and the trends in media consumption across generations. The focus groups have 16 participants, 8 from Generation Z (aged 13-28) and 8 from the Millennial generation (aged 29-44). Participants have diverse educational and professional backgrounds, students, educators, marketers, and graphic designers and are all consistent and active users of social media platforms, Instagram, and TikTok.

Among the Generation Z participants, TikTok is the dominant platform for most. Participant 3 said “TikTok is just more fun and also more real,” while Participant 5 described it as “where people are more expressive and creative; you can post a video of yourself crying or a silly joke and both are okay.” While most participants, like Participant 1, still use Instagram extensively, their use is mainly for specific features like stories or messaging. “Instagram just seems more curated,” said Participant 2 “while TikTok shows your real self even in the chaos.” Participant 6 said Instagram “has become a showcase” while TikTok is more spontaneous and less polished sharing.

Millennial participants have a more mixed view of the two platforms. Some like Participant 1 mentioned that Instagram is “where my friends are and I’m comfortable,” while others like Participant 5 said “I spend more time on TikTok but don’t post.” Participant 3 said TikTok is their “go to for creative entertainment and humor,” but Instagram is for “keeping up with friends and aesthetics.” Participant 4 felt a sense of generational disconnection: “On TikTok I feel like a visitor — it is a Generation Z space. Instagram feels more personal to me.”

Within each group participants chose platforms based on their communication style, generational expectations, and level of emotional comfort.

3.2.1. Language Styles

3.2.1.1. Language Styles on Instagram and TikTok

Generation Z often reported that they enjoy using slang in both environments. People reported using internet slang, emojis, and short codes such as “LOL” often. This informal fashion choice is associated with feeling relaxed, showing emotions, and getting closer to friends. They believe that dressing down is not a deliberate choice but an impulsive way of presenting themselves, which arose from regular usage of social media. The sample explained that friendly chat is a social signal of closeness or cultural affiliation. For instance, several participants mentioned that they use a familiar TikTok phrase or joke so that they could

instantly identify people within their cultural online community. In educational institutions, some admitted that their writing occasionally inadvertently copied the informal ways they communicate online. However, some individuals mentioned that they alter how they communicate in public forums or with strangers, proving that they are aware of the context of the situation. Some younger Generation Z individuals alter to a middle ground perspective, judging too much slang or less conciseness. They choose easier or more direct words to ensure that everyone understand, but they do not talk too formally unless absolutely required.

Millennials like casual conversation but with purpose. While casual conversation is common, especially in comments or direct message, most participants stressed the importance of being well-spoken and clear. They are more careful now of what they talk about and with whom, especially on Instagram, which is considered more professional or public. Millennials are more conservative with language than Generation Z, who quickly adopted new slang and trends. Millennials' way of speaking shows a mix of casualness and self-awareness trying to be friendly while still being clear. Casual phrases are okay, sometimes even better, but slang that are too popular or short-lived are chosen carefully. A Millennial mentioned handling things in a laid-back manner, but keeping things organized. Additionally, some young adults mentioned that their skill in switching between formal and casual language comes from their upbringing during the time when digital communication evolved from formal emails and online discussions to the relaxed style of today. This adaptability is viewed as a strength and a marker of generational identity.

In essence, both young and older generations prefer casual language on the Internet. The younger Generation Z does so more naturally and without hesitation, whereas Millennials are more careful and considerate of their context. For Generation Z, casual language is a way to be real and connect with others, while for Millennials, it is a method to reach out and share their thoughts within certain limits.

3.2.1.2. Slang and Internet language usage

Generation Z teens tend to use slang on Instagram and TikTok. Some of their words are "slay," "it's giving," "brain rot," and "I can't," which are co-opted from popular TikTok videos, Twitter (X), and memes. People look at these facial expressions as a common cultural language that makes it easy to connect and feel like they belong to something. The knowledge or usage of these words typically serves as a litmus test for whether someone belongs to their online subculture. Many participants talked about inventing their own slang for their groups, modifying popular sayings to fit their group's funny jokes or favorite tales. Making one's web experience personal makes them feel closer and connected as part of a community. Some of the sample said that the fast and innovative spirit of internet slang is more authentic than daily language. Even emoji pairings are seen as ways of conveying emotions that act as image-based shortcuts.

Despite all this, however, several young Generation Zer's lacked impulsiveness. They avoid either using excessive amounts of slang lest they become muddled or simply do not overly identify with new slang terms. These individuals found plainer or more neutral-sounding terms, and they believed that speaking too much slang might confuse more than a handful of people.

Millennials employ a mix of old and new internet slang, which reflects their previous experiences on websites like MSN Messenger, Tumblr, and the early Twitter. Common expressions that are widely used include "LOL," "BRB," "on fleek," "squad goals," and more recent ones like "low-key" or "vibe check." They have begun employing some of the most popular words and phrases among Generation Z. The code-mixing is one of the most significant characteristics that Millennials' responses emerged with. Most of the participants code-mix English, French, and Arabic slang based on the context provided and to whom they are talking in Algerian online communities. This code-mixing of language switching highlights their active

language environment as well as their complete online social life. In comparison to Generation Z, Millennials are more vigilant and introspective regarding their use of slang. They love the expressiveness that the usage of internet language affords them but also worry about whether it is suitable and durable.

It is here that the comparison between the two generations comes in to accentuate how Millennials strive to achieve an intervention as well as continuity, whereas Generation Z appears to opt for rapidly changing and ephemeral linguistic trends. Lastly, Generation Z views online lingo as an organic, developing means of communication that is central to the development of identity and to building relationships. Millennials, though familiar and skilled, embrace it more complicatedly, weaving it into a richer, multilingual approach with an ear for context.

3.2.1.3. Platform-Specific Language Use: Instagram vs. TikTok

When we asked Generation Z and Millennials whether they change how they speak on Instagram versus TikTok, the answer was a resounding yes. Both generations agreed that each app has its own vibe, dictated by how people engage with it, who is watching, and what kind of content ends up there. To Generation Z, TikTok is all about being casual, fast, and slangy. One person even called it “chaotic and expressive,” which is why language there is so loose. Another said TikTok is all about inside jokes, trends, and off-the-cuff posting, while Instagram is picture-perfect, polished captions.

Others cited their audience as an important element: Instagram is likely to include classmates, family, or even coworkers, so they keep an eye on their tone more. However, on TikTok where they are mostly talking to strangers or internet friends, they are comfortable to let loose. One of them explained that Instagram promotes consistency like keeping captions in the same tone, while TikTok’s ever-changing trends mean overnight-new slang and phrases. Others explained that Instagram is more personal because it is linked to their in-person

relationships, so they are more careful with what they say. TikTok is more of a virtual playground because it is computer-generated and faceless; there is less pressure to put on a show for people they know.

Millennials saw the rift too, though with a twist. One said they still write “full sentences” and “thoughtful captions” on Instagram, like it is holding onto the early days of social media etiquette. TikTok, though, makes them forgot the properness jumping into comments with quick-fire replies, slang, and a whole lot more impulsivity. Participant 6 referred to the historical evolution of Instagram among Millennials: having been on it for a longer period, they feel more attuned to its structured and intentional use of language. Participant 1 provided a metaphorical comparison, situating Instagram as a “digital living room” where users clean up before inviting visitors over, and TikTok as a more “disorganized but real” personal living area.

Audience composition again became a prime concern. Participant 2 said that seeing coworkers and family on Instagram influences them to be more polished. On TikTok, where interactions are typically with strangers or niche communities, they feel more comfortable using trend-driven or unpolished modes of expression. Multilingualism is also observed in millennial responses: Participant 5 talked about how they alternate between using a mix of Arabic, French, and English on Instagram due to their domestic audience, but shift to using English slang when they are on TikTok, where content circulates globally. This is proof not only of linguistic adaptability but also of an awareness of algorithmic visibility and scope.

Across both cohorts, the linguistic dichotomy between Instagram and TikTok, thus, appears to result from a mix of platform culture, audience expectation, and generational media habits. For Generation Z, TikTok is linguistic experimentation and social trends, while Instagram is more semi-formal, socially rooted in tone. Millennials likewise are bifurcated this way, albeit sometimes higher in legacy norms and strategic self-presentation.

3.2.1.4. Motivations behind Formal and Informal Language Use Online

Participants in both generations show strong inclinations towards the use of informal language on the Internet, and generational variation is evident in their reasons and attitudes about what is appropriate. Informal language — slang, abbreviations, emojis, and internet-originated expressions — is widely viewed as more effective, more comfortable, and more socially nuanced for Internet communication, particularly in settings like TikTok and Instagram.

Generation Z participants explained that informal language not only mirrors the relaxed tone of social media but also establishes emotional connection and group identity. Participant 3 emphasized how this style makes speech "easier and more comfortable," helping users not to sound "stiff or robotic." For Participant 2, slang and abbreviation usage is a form of "code," a shared system of language that defines a belonging sense in online peer groups. This was reiterated by Participant 5, who noted the importance of emojis to portray sarcasm, tone, and emotional nuance, something often hard to be portrayed with words.

Efficiency is another prominent theme. Participant 1 mentioned that informal language is quicker and more representative of oral communication: "No one wants to type out complete, formal sentences when a quick 'LOL' or 😭 can say it all." Participant 6 related this to the larger function of social media, describing it as a "casual" setting, not one where strict or formal linguistic conventions are to be used.

However, not every Generation Z viewpoint is entirely in concord. Participant 7 acknowledged the benefits of informality but went on to say that people vary with regards to being at ease with such language use, that some users still want more formal language. Participant 8 focused on informality as a bridge-builder, particularly when communicating to new or distant acquaintances, suggesting that it reduces interpersonal barriers and makes interaction feel more attainable.

Millennial participants offered the same sentiments but with an awareness of audience and context. Participant 6, for example, underscored that informality is typically reserved for business or when part of one's audience are employers among others. In private messages or comment threads with friends, though, colloquial language — including emojis and abbreviations — dominates. Participant 1 underscored the organic development of such sites as everyday areas, suggesting that "formality comes off as unnatural unless it's for a special something like a brand collab." Like their Generation Z counterparts, most Millennials based their use of language on simplicity and functionality. Participant 3 observed that individuals have gotten adept at conveying tone and sense with limited words or symbols, banking on others to catch the underlying sentiment.

Informality also functions for some as an emotional modulator. Participant 7 explained how emojis and slang function to "mellow" out criticism or sarcasm and prevent misunderstanding. Others, like Participant 5, discussed the double existence of their generation caught between prior norms of writing and the current, visual-centered mode of today's internet culture. The ability to code-switch, or shift language, appears central to the way Millennials navigate digital communication within different contexts. Finally, there were a few millennial participants who associated informal lexicon with cultural similarity and generational proximity. Participant 2 openly confessed that using more recent colloquialism makes Millennials "feel connected to youth culture" yet remain somewhat detached from it. Such a requirement to be current or appear to be so, especially on fast-paced sites like TikTok, tends to dominate their linguistic behavior.

Overall, both sets of individuals prefer informal language online but for very different reasons. Generation Z lurches into it as an instinctive expressive and community-bonding tendency, whereas Millennials step into it more calculatingly balancing social appropriateness

versus situational suitability. In either case, informal language is an indispensable tool for connection, usability, and control of tone on the web.

3.2.1.5. Slang and Casual Language as a Tool for Connection

Answers from both generations leaned heavily toward the idea that slang and casual language promote connection in interpersonal communication. However, their answers also showed nuanced attitudes toward what is authentic, what is off limits, and what is at risk of being overdone.

Participants of Generation Z said this informal language minimizes social friction and makes interactions feel more organic. A casual statement "breaks the ice," said Participant 3, creates a lighter tone and enables easier conversation. Participant 1 also noted that casual language allows others to "let their guard down," building an atmosphere of comfort and openness. For these individuals, formality is frequently associated with emotional distance, whereas informality creates the potential to "just be yourself" (Participant 6).

Slang and emojis were also pointed out by a minority of Generation Z participants as means of social signaling. For Participant 2, slang acts as a "filter" wherein social bonding accelerates once the knowledge of references enables individuals to decipher them and feel cultural identification or shared experience immediately. Slang, therefore, in Participant 5's understanding, is a "short cut to togetherness," particularly where it is being used facetiously or within modern formats inviting an instant sensing of belongingness. Language, in this instance, is used for the singular aim of signaling belongingness within extensive online subcultures rather than solely as a means of communication. However, Generation Z participants cautioned against excessive reliance on common-sense language. As Participant 7 described it, applying slang excessively or falsely would be negative and make communication seem hurried or muddled. Participant 8 agreed, stating that mundane speech is best applied when it is used to "break the ice," not as the standard means of communication.

Likewise, many of the same mindsets are repeated among millennial participants, but with a focus on intention and tone. Colloquialisms and slang are explained as weapons for building relatability and closeness for this group. Participant 2 made the connection between slang and an "inside joke," the implication being that common uses of language create a sense of belonging and imply one belongs. As Participant 1 had mentioned, informal responses like "sameee 😂" are better because they feel more genuine and emotional compared to perfectly crafted, pre-thought-out comments. Informality is also believed to lower the bar for participation. As Participant 3 stated, informal language permits free-flowing conversations without any pressure of developing "perfect" answers. The social function of informality is also borne out by the fact that Participant 7 saw that informal or joking speech seems to prompt more interaction (e.g., more responses or comments).

Yet authenticity issues resonate most with Millennials. Several respondents, such as 5 and 6, cautioned that merely using slang just to seem "cool" risks coming across as fake or aloof, especially when used to span generations. As Participant 6 insisted, "authenticity matters," though relaxed speak can make relating easier. The relationship one is trying to create can be undermined if one simply imitates younger users without knowing the tone or context. In both generations, colloquial language is seen as both relational strategy and stylistic choice. Its strengths social connections, deepen vulnerability, and enables gap closure. However, the respondents also concurred that delivery, context, and a degree of cultural savvy have an impact on how effective it is. Colloquialisms and slang work best when they are not only up-to-date and identifiable but also occurring naturally to the speaker. It serves to bring home the observation that tone and intent are as important in electronic communication as is the content.

3.2.2. Visual Communication

3.2.2.1. Visual Preferences: Memes, Images, and Expressive Media

Although the form and function of the visuals are very varied, respondents from both generations pointed to the prominence of visual content in their online communication. Platform conventions, audience demand, and the affective or social purpose of the post all influence liking for memes, GIFs, photo editing, and beautiful photography. For Generation Z, GIFs and memes are the preferred modes of visual communication. Their potential to convey humor and emotion effectively is emphasized by Participant 3, who said they were means that "express a lot without having to write paragraphs" and "catch eyes immediately." Memes, particularly in stories, are "snappy, engaging," and less likely to make people discuss them than regular text, Participant 2 opined, reiterating the same. For this age group, reaction GIFs, therefore, have the twin function of generating engagement and of being expressive. Participant 5 described the efficacy of reaction GIFs as pinpointing a precise feeling, to which she said they are disposed to convey the same feeling "perfectly without spelling it out." This displays the general Generation Z preference to opt for looks-provocative, meaning-provocative, and recognizably familiar images. Whereas others, including Participant 7, preferred fewer complex images or graphics to "too many memes," they generally agreed on GIFs and memes as prevailing visuals in informal and social communication, particularly comments and direct messages. Generation Z respondents are not without visual flexibility, however. Participant 6, as an example, employed memes and images strategically, utilizing images for older or more personal material and memes for less serious material. Participant number 1, also, discussed the dual use of art photography and brief video clips as a demonstration of an approach to visual narrative that differs according to mood or message presented.

On the other hand, Millennials have a bit more organized and thought-out approach to images, tending to follow what Participant 6 humorously referred to as "the Millennial look.""

Particularly for main feed posts, visually appealing images, carousel posts, and well-organized photography are preferred. In making moments like events, food, or travel appear presentable and engaging, participant 1 explained the use of images. Though they are mostly reserved for Stories, group chats, or DM's where the atmosphere is more casual and less melodramatic—memes and GIFs are still ubiquitous.

Millennials' visual preferences are fueled primarily by emotional resonance and storytelling. As Participant 3 put it, "one picture can convey a mood better than a paragraph," invoking the idea that images have more agency to communicate ideas than language. For some, such as Participant 5, their emphasis is on the connective strength of images, setting forth that their posts must evoke meaning or nostalgia rather than strict aesthetics. Although having more sophisticated visual strategies, there is still space for informality, especially as a rapid affective reaction use of visuals such as in the use of Participant 2 utilizing GIFs in reactions. Audience awareness featured prominently across Millennial participants. Some of the participants, like 1and 7, claimed that modifying their visual strategies depends on by who views the content. For example, they might use visually curated images for more public or general updates and memes for daily interactions. This is one part of a larger Millennial trend of platform compartmentalization, where social expectations and personal identities inform visual preferences.

In brief, the two generations (Millennials and Generation Z) consider visuals as a strategical tool in online expression, but their main difference is in where and how they use them. Generation Z is immersed in meme culture and affective response media for instantaneity and relatability, while Millennials are invested in curation, narrative, and visual continuity without totally abandoning the meme-based humor that increasingly defines online communication. Across both age groups, the shift from plain text is apparent: Images are not

simply ornamental, but communicative devices are tailored to context, desired social effect, and social media platforms.

3.2.2.2. Visuals as Emotional and Contextual Amplifiers

Both Generation Z and Millennial respondents strongly concurred that, especially in casual, speed-of-light internet conversation, images especially GIFs and memes can be more expressive than words. Survey respondents pointed out that pictures add to internet conversation and bonding through immediacy, emotional specificity, and communal cultural reference. Visuals are identified as being the emotional tools of Generation Z, usually used instead of text due to their power to express emotions simply and effectively. Reaction GIFs, claimed participant 3, “say everything” to a joke or a news report, making elaborate explanations unnecessary. Equally, Participant 2 demonstrated the speed and clarity memes express mood through sharing a self-narrated experience of applying a “crying baby meme” to express tiredness. Pictures are usually described by participants as less open to multiple readings and more experiential compared to text. Participant 1 highlighted that even though text is subject to misinterpretation or misunderstanding, a well-deployed sarcastic GIF makes tone clear. Others, such as Participant 5, underscored the comedic and therapeutic value of pictures, explaining how an efficiently (and laughably or funny) collapsing figure meme conveys post-finals fatigue more effectively rather than a ranted-out rant.

The idea that bubbled up again and again is well summarized by Participant 8: "words just didn’t cut it” and particularly where emotions are difficult to articulate or have many facets. Images are multi-layered emotional shorthand for Generation Z, who tend to use them because of their compactness, humor, and immediacy. Placing even more stock in nuance, social context, and tone, Millennials said roughly the same things. As an example of how memes can encapsulate shared emotional experience and foster understanding via cultural reference, Participant 6 explained using the ubiquitous “this is fine” meme to cope with workplace stress.

Images are more likely to be correctly interpreted in participant 3's view because they naturally convey an emotional tone, making them less likely to be misinterpreted and more relatable. Several Millennial participants emphasized the situational appropriateness and timing of the images. Participant 7 explained how reaction GIFs such as "Kermit sipping tea" convey sarcasm or irony so much better than ordinary text does. Participant 1 also liked the aspect of relatability, mentioning that substituting a melodramatic GIF for the phrase "I'm so done" does not just convey the message, yet conveys it more interestingly and entertainingly than the original.

In addition, one meme may be completely self-explanatory to the reader, since Participant 2 (Millennial) explained that "sometimes visuals are the whole message." This is in close association with how Generation Z tends to use memes in a narrative or in a direct message to engage or deliver an emotional response without needing full sentences. Both age cohorts, by and large, appreciated that images help users move through the performative, quick, and emotionally rich spaces of digital communication by giving them a richer and more powerful emotional lexicon than what words may give. Although Generation Z has a greater tendency towards casual, frequent visual consumption, Millennials likewise has a deep love for the communicative and connective function of GIFs and memes when irony, sympathy, or tone is involved.

3.2.2.3. The Interpretive Power of Visuals on Instagram and TikTok

Generation Z and Millennial respondents alike insisted that GIFs and memes are not merely deployed as visual garnishes but in fact serve as an integral component of framing, interpretation, and emotional uptake of messages in visual-first media such as Instagram and TikTok. These images revolutionize meaning, tone, and user engagement. Generation Z consider images as tools that give digital messages definition, personality, and mood. Memes can make something "harsh or dull" become something "humorous or dramatic," as respondent

3 suggested, which makes communication look more expressive, engaging, and personalized. Under the same perspective, Participant 2 mentioned that memes contextualize and render it less possible for misunderstandings to happen, particularly in communicating sarcasm, which is famously hard to convey in text form. Participant 5 mentioned TikTok's distinctive communicating atmosphere, using images as "the language" of the application. Video, images, and audio deliver meaning; these are necessary features. Participant 8 and others stated the same by explaining that images "form the entire tone" and play a crucial role on platforms where they incite user interaction far more than individual text or captions.

Participant 1 said that Instagram stories with memes get significantly more replies compared to plain-text ones, which proves that images not only construct perception but also increase interaction. Likewise, Participant 6 stated that images augment even dull messages by giving them more emotional depth. Millennial participants concurred, while Participant 2 stated that images, particularly memes forms, have "cultural values," so dull messages are good examples of shared culture. Millennials are more concerned with the referential and communal interpretation of memes in comparison to Generation Z, who see them emotional shorthanded. As participant 3 explained, memes have the capacity and ability to introduce humor or sarcasm, making sensitive matters easier to consume. Participant 5 further clarified by saying that Millennials strategically employ visuals to help frame sensitive discussions in a less combative and more congenial tone. Visual use is also influenced by platform conventions. Participant 7 said that TikTok is extremely reliant on motion visuals, meaning timing, sound, and cuts, which consequently become the crux of communication. Instagram, on the other hand, appears more polished and static. This indicates how visual communication is getting influenced for various platforms by each generation.

Together, both generations regard visuals as central to meaning-making and delivering. They impact tone, convey emotion, and enhance clarity and engagement. Generation Z uses

them natively as part of the shared language, while Millennials employ them with greater intentionality driven by context and platform.

3.2.2.4. Emotional Resonance and Connection: The Role of Visuals in Shaping Engagement

Visuals, specifically memes, GIFs, and emotional pictures, are essential elements influencing emotional connection and participation on social media, according to what members from both the Generation Z and Millennial groups clarified. Participant 2 characterized such content as a matter of personality expression and facilitating interaction, whereas Participant 3 clearly explained how memes can stop scrolling dead in its tracks and create personal connection. Visuals are said to be part of Generation Z. Participants 1 and 5 described how relatable memes make the user feel heard and understood, and how visual elements can be used to intensify emotions and develop social bonds. Participant 8 agreed with Participant 6 that visual material is much more compelling than written content, and that photographs make a post an emotional one. The same sentiments are shared by Millennials, who cared less about the authenticity and emotional validation that images convey. Participant 6 said she felt “seen” when a meme represents one person’s experience, and Participant 1 said that images initially grab users’ attention and determine whether they continue engaging.

Participant 3 indicated the intentionality of visual content when one uses a significant GIF with text; it conveys emotional richness and human labor, making the post seem more genuine. Participant 7 mentioned emotional memory, stating that visuals tend to lead to a closer association or even force them to save or share the material. It is not merely for looks but for emotional significance. Participant 2 agreed, suggesting that visuals, even in the absence of participation, increase passive engagement and post retention. Participant 5 emphasized the power of an instant emotional connection: visuals, especially funny or familiar ones, engage attention that thoughtful words alone might not.

Both communities described visuals invariably as enhancers of emotions and drivers of attention, adding tone, context, and immediacy that pure text cannot provide. While Generation Z uses visuals as first-order means for identity, expression, and affiliation, Millennials use visuals in a way that adds depth to meaning, amplifies resonance, or asserts shared cultural knowledge. In either case, visuals are not optional; they are part of the way users engage and make sense of social media postings.

3.2.3. Generational Differences and Communication Preferences

3.2.3.1. Shaping Style: Influences on Language and Visual Choices across Generations

Respondents within both Generation Z and Millennials described a complex system of influence—peer actions, trendiness, influencer culture, affective contexts, and norms surrounding culture around which the members of both cohorts determine they present visual and verbal elements upon media like TikTok and Instagram. Gen Zer's such as Participant 3 noticed trends and fashion influencer Dom as emergent features in their discourse with how easily adopted them, and often unconsciously, noted Participant 2. Peer influence is relevant, too; Participant 1 explained how group use of memes or slogans produces a shared digital language, and Participant 6 highlighted the usage of popular formats to express feelings.

Although trend-driven, Generation Z responses are not simplistic: Participant 7 commented on how cultural or personal values can create limits to trend adoption, and Participant 8 discussed the need for remixing and personalization to make trends appear identity-based and authentic. Millennials also made the same drivers but with greater restraint and audience awareness. Participant 2 agreed on the pleasure of trend-following, but for Participant 5, the emphasis is on cultural conservativism as a filter, especially in nations like Algeria.

Influencers similarly shaped Millennials' tone. Participant 3 talked about taking cues from the tone of cheeky creators while Participant 6 pressed the importance of tone adaptation

per platform, a more casual voice on TikTok and a finer one on Instagram due to crossover audiences. Emotive and nostalgic factors also bore on Millennials' content choices, Participant 1 said, and Participant 7 echoed Generation Z's peer-to-peer dynamics with a greater emphasis on more inward-looking, deliberative application of shared humor. In brief, Generation Z's communication is trend-relevant, emotion-based, and often intuitive, while Millennials communicate more strategically, adapting content to social norms and personal values. Trends in both groups are forms of expression shaped by emotion, identity, and context.

3.2.3.2. Expressing the Self: Digital Communication as a Mirror of Identity

Both Generation Z and Millennials agree that their online interaction on Instagram and TikTok reflects and represents their personality, but to different extents of planning and spontaneity. Generation Z members described their online presence as an instant, spontaneous reflection of their sense of humor, mood, and identity. For example, Participant 3 determined that their selection of language, memes, and emojis shows them what they are like, and Participant 2 equated emotional state to choice of content — posting disordered memes on bad days and quotes on quiet days. Some other participants, including Participants 5 and 1, saw their internet voice as a continuation or magnification of their offline identity. Even minor posting, Participants 6 and 7 indicated, transmits personality traits like introversion or cool. Participant 8 further noted that authentic expression may evolve organically, not necessarily always calculated.

Millennials were more deliberate and platform-neutral in online persona. Participant 1 utilized images and memes as carriers to blend authenticity with humor, and Participant 5 discussed tonal transition from TikTok to Instagram. Cultural identity is similarly found in Millennial commentary; Participant 3 utilized the integration of slang and cultural references to determine heritage; while Participant 2 called social media a "digital version" of themselves. Others, including Participant 6, described using visuals to tone and express warmth or sarcasm.

Participant 7 used stories as the location for being genuine through engaging aspects like polls and GIFs.

In general, both cohorts use digital platforms as expressive extensions of self, with Generation Z leaning toward spontaneous, mood-driven sharing and Millennials toward strategic, audience-aware communication. In both generations, by extension, social media are not merely a location for content sharing but also a living archive for personality, emotion, and identity. For Generation Z, identity will be affect-driven, expressive, and fluid. For Millennials, it is more strategic, frequently platform-, context-, and culture-dependent but still highly personal.

3.2.3.3. Reflecting Values through Digital Trends and Aesthetics

Millennials shared many of these same values but expressed them differently, with a focus on nostalgia, resilience, and cultural synthesis. Participant 5 spoke about the trendiness of retro aesthetics and ‘90s references as comfort points, whereas Participants 2 and 6 referred to burnout humor and sarcastic takes on “adulting” and work culture. Participant 1 described a more soothing and designed mental health expression, showing calm visuals and affirmations. Both groups acknowledged cultural hybridity, but while Participant 3 (Millennial) emphasized language mixing as a postcolonial identity claim, Participant 7 noted a shift towards realness that aligns with Generation Z values but with more restraint.

Members of both the Millennial and Generation Z generations recognized that linguistic and visual trends on TikTok and Instagram are not simply stylistic — they reflect underlying values, emotional imperatives, and generational worldviews. Humor, specifically dark humor or self-deprecating humor, is a main coping strategy for Generation Z, with Participant 3 describing it as a way to address stress and mental health, while Participant 2 explained that sarcasm typically cushions criticism of societal norms. Authenticity through imperfection is another common thread, with Participant 5 describing the type of trends that celebrate

emotional openness and uncut content, and Participant 6 noting how irony enables users to speak truths while also protecting themselves. Participants 1 and 7 detailed Generation Z's new, fluid forms of communication talking hybrid languages and stylized images. Participant 8 emphasized their spontaneity in emotions, using trends to express emotional states in the moment.

Overall, however, while both generations use online trends to express emotion and identity, Millennials exhibit more structured, reflective expression tempered by nostalgia and life experiences, and Generation Z is attracted to raw, comedic directness.

3.2.4. Closing Reflections on Social Media Communication across Generations

3.2.4.1. Desired Changes in Digital Communication

Millennials are no different in values but more so in the systems and tools driving online engagement. Participant 3 criticized platforms that prioritize clicks and "engagement bait" over meaningful conversation. Others, such as Participants 2 and 4, suggested thoughtful solutions to fill communication gaps — like offering explanations to popular audio clips or creating summaries for TikTok answers to allow people of different ages to keep pace. Participants 5 and 6 spoke of how tech features, like robotic voiceovers or overly simplistic memes, can become lost in subtlety and meaning. They suggested improvements like text-to-speech that better reflects tone or programs that render content creators evidently creditable — signifying their attunement to fairness and digital responsibility. Even Participants 1, 4, and 8's more playful suggestions — like a "generation tag" for emojis or a "cultural spellcheck" — have an ulterior motive: that beneath the joke is a genuine desire to make the Internet more inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Representatives of both Millennial and Generation Z groups desire more real, respectful, and more honest communication on the Internet — albeit what that means to them is different depending on their generation-based experiences. Members of Generation Z often

spoke of being under pressure to perform online, with such things as filters, viral challenges, and inauthentic humor making it impossible to just be themselves. Participant 5 explained how it feels exhausting and unnatural always having to be funny or entertaining. They wanted something more laid back and real, where they could just be themselves without always trying to impress. Some of the Generation Z voices (Participants 3, 5, and 8, for example) also explained problems of toxic comment spaces, where meme culture and sarcasm are used to put people down rather than build community. Participant 2 called for more compassion and kindness, while others like Participants 6 and 7 merely wished for more accurate, more universal language — an acknowledgment that creative slang or meme-filled language sometimes excludes some people, especially on cultural or generational grounds.

3.2.4.2. The Role of Language and Visuals in Social Connection

For Generation Z and Millennials, pictures and words reign supreme in their interactions and communication on Instagram and TikTok. All the participants in Generation Z talked freely about the possibility of these tools as expressers of emotion and personality. As Participant 3 so succinctly stated, “language and visuals make or break a post” — showing quite how much attention a well-crafted meme, emoji, or phrase can receive. Others spoke about how it is not always about saying something — it is about making someone feel something. Participant 1 described, “it’s not communication — it’s connection,” and Participant 6 described how a mix of words and pictures creates “a whole vibe.” To Generation Z, what they are sharing — the tone of a caption or the type of meme — reflects who they are being in the moment. It is the way they express personality, tone, and connection to a breakneck digital environment where subtle, measured self-expression is valuable.

Millennials coalesce on language and imagery but employ them slightly more considerately, typically platform-specific. Participant 1 had just said, “Instagram is a visual résumé,” where the quality of images matters, while “on TikTok, language governs through

trends." For most Millennials, first impressions are visual, but meaning and tone are constructed from captions, sound, and text. Participant 3 also mentioned that slang words like "delulu" or "adulting" are like little flags that tell one what generation one belongs to. They also saw images as some kind of emotional shorthand — the way one meme can represent a shared sentiment in an instant. Several participants talked about how the layout of platforms themselves govern the way they post. Instagram's clean grid or TikTok's scroll feed, these layouts determine the way that people balance images and text. Participant 8 joked that "we're all amateur semioticians now," constantly making and interpreting meaning through every post, emoji, or audio clip.

In short, both generations agree that language and visuals are key to digital connection, but while Generation Z leans into emotional authenticity and fast-moving cultural trends, Millennials bring a more thoughtful take, shaped by how each platform invites different forms of expression

3.2.4.3. Key Takeaways for Researchers on Intergenerational Communication

When asked what researchers should be aware of when it comes to how people are communicating across generations on social media, Generation Z participants emphasized context, cultural competency, and adaptability. Participant 3 claimed that slang or memes can appear empty to other generations but that they do hold meaning in the communication setting of Generation Z. Participant 2 also added that the speed of trends is important; it is cool today but obsolete next month, and so researchers must stay up-to-date. Some participants, including 5 and 1, argued back that digital communication is rich and multi-layered, not superficial because memes, images, and emojis can say more than standard text. This generation prompted researchers to look beyond social media as mere entertainment, but as the primary platform for cultural expression, identity formation, and emotional communication. Most notably, Participant 6 called for unjudgmental participation, with a warning not to dismiss newer

platforms as second-rate. Some, like Participant 8, emphasized communication styles within and between generations — there are some who prefer text, others photos, and all this work.

Millennial subjects, however, underscored the complex sociotechnical dynamics shaping intergenerational communication. Participant 4 explained "context collapse" as the main issue; the same message can be profoundly interpreted differently across generations due to temporal and cultural frames of reference. Participant 2 underscored the significance of platform migration, where Millennials migrated to TikTok not because they liked it but because they had to, which affects communication norms. Others, like Participant 6, explained residual internet practices (e.g., over-explaining) as being generational traces in relation to original digital trauma. Participant 1 was structural in style, warning that algorithms of platforms mirror but exaggerate generational gaps for engagement, prompting performative strife. Others also cited the emergence of visual and symbolic literacy — i.e., emojis meaning something different to different generations — and suggested real-time semantic mapping as a solution. Participants 3 and 8 also highlighted code-switching and effort at communication. Millennials may code-switch tone and content by platform, while younger users often use memes as shorthand for what older users would type out in full text.

Together, the two generations invite scholars to consider social media communication in terms of sensitive, nuanced, and platform-aware understanding. While Generation Z seeks comprehension of their visual-driven, dynamic, and self-expression styles, Millennials underscore infrastructure, history, and algorithmic processes as contextures of generational activities. The takeaway here is that social media communication is not solely generational but also contextual, adaptive, and deeply rooted in platform cultures.

3.3. Results of Content Analysis

This section presents a post-by-post analysis of visual and textual content across selected social media entries. The procedure adheres to a structured coding framework as outlined in

the accompanying tables. Each post is evaluated in terms of language style, tone, emoji usage, visual elements, and user interaction, providing insights into how users communicate and engage with their audience across different platforms.

3.3.1. Five posts from Millennial users on Instagram

Table 2.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Millennial on breast cancer awareness during Pink October

The First Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	October is Pink, a month of strength, hope, and unity. Let's raise awareness, support one another, and keep fighting for a future without breast cancer. Early detection saves lives-get checked, spread the word 💕 📸 by @altiusservices 💗
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is mostly formal, using motivational and emotionally supportive phrasing ("strength, hope, unity," "spread the word"). No slang or casual abbreviations are used, maintaining a professional tone throughout.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	There are no slang terms or abbreviations. The message is straightforward, clear, and appropriate for the serious nature of the cause.

Emojis	• The heart emoji 💕 symbolizes care, femininity, and camaraderie, lending an emotional appeal. • This pink-heart emoji 💗 accentuates the values of support, love, and openness, underscoring the feelings of association and empathy. • The camera emoji 📸: A quirky acknowledgment of the photographer (@altiusservices) complementing the post with a personal note relating to the artistic side of the photograph.
Tone	The tone is encouraging, hopeful, and compassionate, centered around uniting people to act. Whereas it offers emotional support to the viewers, it simultaneously encourages them to get tested and create awareness.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post has a portrait-style photo featuring a smiling woman, making it realistic and relatable since it makes the message personal and inviting and there are no memes or GIFs.
Integration with Language	The text sits underneath the photo, preserving the visual clarity of the image. The message itself is in the caption, so the image does not need to carry the message with it; the image merely supports the message indirectly.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Soft pastel pinks and blues are used for the design of the post, typical of breast cancer awareness, creating a soothing and supportive ambiance. • **Design:** Clean and unobtrusive, with the blurred background drawing the eye to the woman, standing for clarity and hope.

	• **Mood:** Warm and optimistic, armed with a feeling of strength and resilience and crowned by a hopeful grin from the subject.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	This post has 373 likes, 23 comments, and one share, so the engagement is moderate to high. Such interactions demonstrate how emotionally connected the viewers are with the cause-the thing which might not have stayed viral, though. Also, interaction shows how followers resonate with the message and want to participate in engaging with it.
Engagement with Visuals	Viewers seem to react emotionally to the visual and meaning, and this combination of a visual and language experience gives the audience a sharper experience where it is easier to connect to the content.

Table 3.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Millennial that is a digital artwork displaying an inspirational quote about learning from mistakes

The Second Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	My favorite quote ❤️
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is informal and personal, with a casual, reflective tone ("My favorite quote ❤️"). It conveys a sense of personal connection and emotion, rather than a formal or authoritative tone.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	There are no slang terms or abbreviations used in the caption. It is simple and direct, focusing on the emotional appeal of the quote.
Emojis	• ❤️ **(Heart emoji):** Adds a personal touch, expressing affection and emotional connection to the quote. It reinforces the positive, uplifting tone of the post and emphasizes personal attachment to the message.
Tone	The tone is motivational, uplifting, and encouraging, with a focus on self-acceptance and personal growth. The message suggests that mistakes are natural and part of the learning process, encouraging viewers to keep trying and embracing failure as part of the journey.

Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post features digital artwork of an inspirational quote, designed to convey a sense of elegance and creativity. The visual is simple but powerful, drawing attention to the motivational message.
Integration with Language	The quote is the central element of the artwork, with the message expressed through the elegant calligraphy. The caption complements the visual by adding a personal reflection on the quote ("My favorite quote ❤️"). This connection helps the audience resonate with the message both visually and personally.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Soft transitions from light green to teal, blue, and purple, creating a calming and harmonious effect. The colors are soothing, evoking a sense of peace and encouragement. • **Design:** The watercolor effect gives a hand-painted feel, providing an organic, creative look. The stripes enhance the aesthetic without overwhelming the message. • **Mood:** The gentle, fluid colors and elegant design contribute to a sense of calm and encouragement, reinforcing the theme of growth through mistakes.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 131 likes and 3 comments, indicating a moderate level of engagement. While the post does not have high interaction, the engagement suggests that the message resonates with a smaller, more engaged audience.

Engagement with Visuals	Viewers likely engage with the artistic design and the motivational message. The simplicity of the visual paired with the quote likely draws emotional responses, encouraging followers to reflect on the meaning behind the message.

Table 4.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Millennial asking viewers what advice they would give to their younger selves

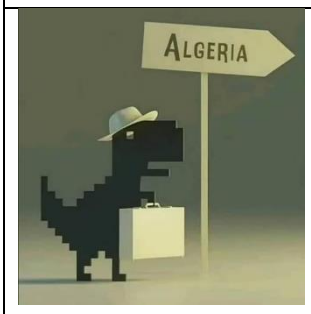
The Third Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	Tell me in the comment 👇
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is informal, using a conversational tone ("Tell me in the comment 👇") to directly engage the audience. This informal approach encourages interaction and invites followers to share their personal thoughts in a casual manner.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	There are no slang terms or abbreviations in the caption. The phrasing is clear, simple, and intended to foster genuine engagement.

Emojis	• (Downward pointing hand emoji): Used to guide users towards the comments section. It enhances the informal tone of the post, signaling where the audience should respond to the question.
Tone	The tone is introspective, thoughtful, and reflective, with an emphasis on self-reflection. The post invites followers to contemplate their past experiences and share their personal advice. There is a slightly melancholic feeling, evoked by the question mark and muted colors, which encourages deeper thought.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post uses a photograph of a person holding a question-marked paper in front of their face. This visual creates a sense of mystery and self-inquiry, visually reinforcing the idea of uncertainty and reflection. The blurred background adds to the mood of contemplation.
Integration with Language	The text overlay on the image reads: “What advice would you give your younger self?”, which is central to the post's message. The bold, simple font makes the question stand out, and the image visually reinforces the theme of self-reflection. The caption below ("Tell me in the comment 👇") encourages users to share their responses, further prompting engagement with the question.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** The muted, dark tones create a serious, contemplative atmosphere. The overall color scheme gives the image a more subdued, reflective tone, setting the stage for a serious discussion about self-advice.

	• **Design:** The question mark covering the face symbolizes uncertainty and the search for answers. The minimalist design and bold font draw attention to the central question. • **Mood:** The design evokes feelings of uncertainty, self-reflection, and melancholy, aligning with the introspective nature of the question.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 73 likes and 13 comments, suggesting moderate engagement. While not extremely viral, the post has sparked interaction among viewers who are likely reflecting on their own experiences and providing personal insights in the comments.
Engagement with Visuals	Viewers are likely engaging with the visual elements, especially the question mark obscuring the face, which visually invites them to ponder their own answers. The simplicity and reflective nature of the visual encourages deeper thought, while the text overlay directly engages the audience.

Table 5.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian millennial on a satirical critique of Algeria's policy of nationwide Internet shutdowns during the BAC exam

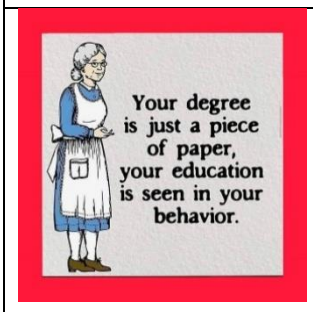
The Fourth Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	So, For them the only alternative is blocking the whole country for BAC exam. What are your thoughts?
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is informal, conversational, and slightly sarcastic. The caption reads: "So, For them the only alternative is blocking the whole country for BAC exam. What are your thoughts?" This phrasing is casual and critical, aimed at provoking thought and sparking discussion about an issue.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	The abbreviation "BAC" (referring to Algeria's baccalaureate exams) is used without explanation. It is informal and regionally specific, which helps connect directly with Algerian viewers who understand the implications.
Emojis	None used. The absence of emojis adds a more serious, deliberate, and reflective tone, allowing the image and text to speak without visual embellishments. This helps underscore the underlying critique in the post.

Tone	The tone is satirical, ironic, and frustrated. It uses humor (a pixel dinosaur with a suitcase heading to "ALGERIA") to comment on a serious issue — the government shutting down the internet for exam security. The absurdity of the visual combined with the exasperated caption creates a tone that is both humorous and sharply critical.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The image is a digital illustration/meme featuring a pixelated dinosaur (inspired by the Chrome offline game), with a hat and briefcase, heading toward a signpost labeled "ALGERIA". This is a meme-like visual used to creatively comment on the topic.
Integration with Language	The visual and text work together to form a satirical narrative: the dinosaur's journey toward Algeria symbolizes the disruption caused by national internet blackouts. The caption explicitly connects the visual to real-world frustration over drastic policies, enhancing the critique. The visual stands on its own but becomes more pointed with the accompanying text.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Dominated by dark grays and muted greens, creating a serious, somber mood. • **Design:** Minimalist and pixelated, evoking retro gaming aesthetics and the Google Chrome no-internet screen. The white hat and briefcase add personality and symbolism (e.g., a traveler or worker obstructed by system failures). • **Mood:** A blend of absurdity and melancholy, visually reinforcing the theme of unintended consequences or bureaucratic absurdity.
Interaction	

Level of Interaction	The post has 455 likes, 20 comments, and 180 shares, showing high engagement, especially in terms of shares. The number of shares reflects that the post resonates with users and is being used as a vehicle for collective expression, particularly around frustration with internet shutdowns.
Engagement with Visuals	The visual is memeable and symbolic, with 180 shares indicating strong user connection. The image is easy to understand and share without extensive explanation. The pixelated dinosaur is a recognizable cultural reference, used here to humorous and ironic effect, making the post instantly relatable while encouraging social critique.

Table 6.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Millennial on a quote comparing formal education to personal behavior

The Fifth Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	None
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	

Formal vs. Informal Language	The quote, "Your degree is just a piece of paper, your education is seen in your behavior," uses informal but reflective language. While the sentence structure is simple and conversational, the theme is serious, encouraging personal growth and introspection. This mix makes it accessible while still carrying depth.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There are no slang terms or abbreviations in the post. The language is clear and straightforward, which keeps the tone respectful and helps reinforce the seriousness of the message.
Emojis	None. The lack of emojis keeps the tone reflective and mature. This stylistic choice supports the post's message about values and wisdom, without the distraction or emotional cues that emojis might introduce.
Tone	The tone is motivational, reflective, and slightly educational. It encourages the viewer to think critically about the difference between formal education and personal character, promoting behavior as the true measure of one's learning.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post uses a cartoon-style digital illustration. It features an older woman with gray hair, glasses, a blue dress, and a white apron. She stands calmly with hands clasped, conveying a sense of wisdom. The accompanying text is prominent, bold, and displayed beside the character. This combination creates a thoughtful, visually grounded composition.
Integration with Language	The cartoon woman is positioned to the side of the quote, appearing to emphasize or present it. This setup helps connect the visual with

	the message. The text is central and takes visual priority, reinforcing that the focus is on the meaning of the words.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Light gray background with black text and a bright red outer border, providing contrast and visual framing. • **Design:** Minimalist and clear, using a simple cartoon figure with no complex details. The focus is on the message rather than visual flair. • **Mood:** The mood is calm and serious. The soft illustration combined with a bold quote sets a reflective and instructive tone.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 493 likes and 8 comments. This represents moderate engagement — enough to show interest and resonance, but not viral. The interaction levels suggest the message appealed to a thoughtful, niche audience.
Engagement with Visuals	The image acts as a subtle but effective enhancer of the quote. Viewers are likely drawn more to the message than the illustration, but the visual of the wise elderly woman reinforces the theme of lived experience and behavior as signs of true education.

3.3.2. Five posts from Millennial users on TikTok

Table 7.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Millennial on a science education outreach event for children, expressed with honesty and humor

The First Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	Today me and the electronics community of Algerian women in science were invited to the American institute here in Algiers to do a small presentation to talk about electricity. I had so much fun preparing and presenting even though most of the kids weren't interested and were straight up rude, but some of them were really smart and responsive. Maybe i do like teaching!
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language used in both the on-image text (“We (Algerian women in science) were invited by the American institute to do a presentation for kids let me take you through the day”) and the caption is informal and conversational. It uses personal storytelling to connect with viewers, and the tone is open and authentic rather than polished or formal.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	The phrase “straight up rude” is informal slang, and this helps ground the post within the TikTok ecosystem and appeal to a younger, social-media-savvy audience.

Emojis	None. No emojis appear in either the caption or in-image text. The absence of emojis allows the post to retain a more sincere, personal tone, prioritizing narrative over performative emotion.
Tone	The tone is candid, honest, and lightly reflective. While the caption includes frustration over the kids' disinterest, it ultimately ends on a positive note: "Maybe I do like teaching!" This shift suggests growth and introspection, delivered in a casual and accessible voice.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post features a close-up photograph of a person's hands gently holding a fluffy orange kitten. The kitten's soft fur and striking blue eyes are the visual focal point. Overlaid text provides context about the speaker's participation in a STEM presentation. The image is a still frame from TikTok, combining real-life visuals with text narration.
Integration with Language	The on-image text briefly introduces the event, while the caption provides the detailed story. The kitten does not directly relate to the educational experience but creates a warm, emotional contrast to the story, making the post more engaging and visually inviting.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Natural, soft colors. The orange of the kitten and green background evoke warmth and gentleness. • **Design:** Casual snapshot with shallow depth of field, giving a cinematic and cozy aesthetic. Text is overlaid clearly for readability.

	• **Mood:** The visual mood is affectionate and calm, helping soften the disappointment expressed in the caption. The kitten image serves as a visual emotional anchor.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 39 likes, 6 comments, 1 save, and 34 shares. The low like count contrasts with the high share rate, suggesting the content was valued more for its relatability or message than for immediate popularity. Shares may reflect support for women in STEM or the relatability of the teaching experience.
Engagement with Visuals	The kitten image likely drives the visual interest. Though unrelated to the presentation itself, it adds emotional weight and approachability. The combination of an emotionally resonant visual and a personal story increases viewer engagement, especially in terms of shares.

Table 8.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Millennial on a lighthearted review of a favorite snack, featuring a simple sweet product

The Second Post	
Visual Elements	**Caption**
	Just a very good snack, nothing personal
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is casual, simple, and personal. Phrases like "If you ask me about Dulcesol carré décoré fourré I'd say it's a very good snack" and "Just a very good snack, nothing personal" reflect informal, spoken-like language. It feels like a low-stakes, honest opinion shared in a friendly tone without formality.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	There are no slang terms or abbreviations in the caption. The phrasing is clear, simple, and intended to foster genuine engagement.
Emojis	None used. The absence of emojis maintains a clean and minimal aesthetic. It places more emphasis on the product and written text without adding emotional or humorous symbols.
Tone	The tone is relaxed, light-hearted, and mildly humorous. There is a subtle self-aware exaggeration in phrases like "nothing personal,"

	which adds charm without veering into sarcasm. It reads like a spontaneous personal endorsement rather than a polished review.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The image is a close-up photo showing a hand holding a single packaged chocolate snack (Dulcesol Carré Décoré Fourré). The wrapper is transparent, highlighting the dark chocolate square inside. The branding is clearly visible on the packaging, emphasizing product recognition.
Integration with Language	The text overlay directly addresses the snack being held in the image, establishing a clear visual-textual link. The overlay acts as an informal statement, while the caption repeats and slightly reframes the sentiment — reinforcing the casual praise.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Neutral tones — natural hand color and dark brown chocolate against a blurred indoor background. • **Design:** Realistic and minimal; the product takes center stage. No added effects, graphics, or filters are present. • **Mood:** Simple and authentic, evoking the everyday joy of a favorite snack. The unedited style makes the recommendation feel personal and sincere.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 18 likes, 2 comments, 1 save, and 6 shares. This reflects modest engagement, typical of niche product appreciation posts. It

	resonates with a small but interested audience, likely those who are familiar with the snack or brand.
Engagement with Visuals	The visual appeal lies in the snack itself. The clear packaging, visible texture, and handheld perspective make it relatable. While not overly artistic or stylized, the image functions well as a simple, visual endorsement that is easy to understand and repost.

Table 9.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Millennial on a humorous and confident declaration about having many opinions if the user had a podcast, with a casual selfie-style visual

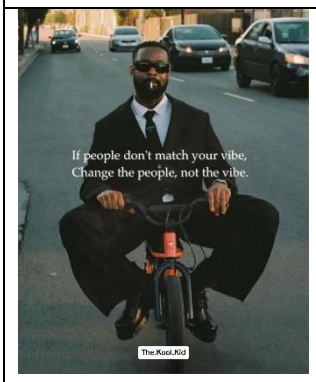
The Third Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	None
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	

Formal vs. Informal Language	The text overlay — "Everyone is so lucky that I don't own a podcast, I've got a lot to say" — uses informal, conversational language. The sentence mimics casual speech, making it relatable and humorous.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There are no slang or abbreviations, though the phrasing is colloquial. The humor lies in tone and delivery, not in internet-specific language.
Emojis	None. The lack of emojis does not detract from the post's impact. The humor is carried entirely by the phrasing and facial expression.
Tone	The tone is cheeky, self-aware, and humorous. It leans into light sarcasm and playful exaggeration, typical of meme-like or personality-driven content.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	A casually dressed young woman in a car, delivering a facial expression that matches the witty overlay text.
Integration with Language	The expression on her face (a knowing smirk) directly supports the message of the text. Her confident posture and eye contact imply that she is in on the joke, reinforcing the humorous tone.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Cool tones dominate — teal sweater, navy blazer, and neutral car interior. • **Design:** Simple and spontaneous, with natural lighting and minimal staging.

	• **Mood:** Playful and confident. The combination of expression, setting, and caption works to create a post that feels humorous and personality-driven.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 3,037 likes, 84 comments, 90 saves, and 85 shares, indicating strong engagement. The high save and share count suggest that users found the content both funny and relatable — something worth revisiting or spreading.
Engagement with Visuals	The visual supports the humor of the text perfectly. Viewers likely connect with both the attitude and the aesthetic, which mimics the "podcast girl" or "hot take" trope in social media culture.

Table 10.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Millennial on a bold visual of a suited man on a small bike used to emphasize a quote about authenticity and self-confidence

The Fourth Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	**None**
Criteria	**Analysis**

Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is casual and motivational. The sentence sounds like a modern quote that might be seen shared online. It has a style of someone giving a confidence advice.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	No heavy slang or abbreviations, but “vibe” is modern, informal vocabulary.
Emojis	There is no use of emojis in this post, due to what it delivers. Pieces of advice usually do not require emojis usage.
Tone	Bold, confident, and slightly rebellious. It encourages self-confidence and standing your ground.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	A man in a suit riding a small bike in the middle of the road, unusual and eye-catching, while smoking a cigarette.
Integration with Language	The quote is placed over the image, and both match the message: don’t change for others, be cool your way.
Visual Style	Urban, stylish, and a bit humorous. It has a “cool but different” vibe.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	533 likes with 15 comments in addition to 5 shares, implying a medium level of interaction. People may react or comment, but the creator does not directly ask for it.
Engagement with Visuals	The strong image grabs attention and supports the quote well, encouraging users to watch and share.

Table 11.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Millennial using a meme format of an office worker wearing sunglasses to humorously highlight themes of self-worth, sarcasm, and playful arrogance

The Fifth Post	
Context 	
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is playful, confident, and humorous. The caption "sorry for being always funny, pretty and right idk what's wrong with me" feels like a tongue-in-cheek self-praise. It is relatable and intentionally exaggerated to create a sense of charm and light arrogance in a non-serious, entertaining way. The language is fully informal. Phrases like "idk" and "what's wrong with me" are part of everyday digital speech, mimicking how someone might joke with friends. It is casual, offhand, and designed for relatable humor rather than polished expression.

Use of Slang and Abbreviations	The phrase "idk" (I do not know) is a common internet abbreviation, making the tone more conversational. The choice of words reflects TikTok culture—short, fast, and funny, aimed at younger audiences familiar with this digital slang.
Emojis	None used. The lack of emojis does not reduce the meme's expressive impact because the humor is carried by the text and the visual of the character from The Office, whose body language and sunglasses do the expressive work.
Tone	The tone is ironic, self-assured, and humorous. It mimics a "fake modesty" style that is trendy online—saying something bold while pretending to be humble. It invites users to laugh both at the confidence and the fact that the speaker knows it is exaggerated.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals	The visual is a screenshot from a popular sitcom (The Office), which adds to its comedic appeal. It is not a random person but a known fictional character, used to enhance the humor and relatability. His confident pose and wide grin support the text's exaggerated self-praise.
Integration with Language	The text overlay is humorously mismatched with the visual. The line "sorry for being always funny, pretty and right…" contrasts with the awkward energy of the character, enhancing the joke through visual-text irony. The words and image together build a playful, sarcastic message.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Neutral office tones—gray blinds, dark suit, and a colorful desk toy add contrast. • **Design:** The style is unfiltered, casual, and meme-like. • **Mood:** Sarcastic and relatable. The use of a known pop culture figure makes the post feel familiar and instantly funny to fans.

Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 128 likes, 7 comments, 2 shares, and a save. This suggests a moderate level of engagement. While not viral, it resonates with people who enjoy self-aware humor and references to TV culture. The save suggests that at least some users found it worth revisiting or resharing. The interaction level shows that it appeals to a niche group—likely fans of The Office or users who enjoy witty, lighthearted content. It is not designed to stir debate or go deep—just to make people laugh and maybe share it with friends.
Engagement with Visuals	The appeal lies in the fusion of well-known TV character imagery with bold, ironic text. The familiarity of the character plus the universal theme of exaggerated self-praise makes it shareable. It is humorous, easy to understand, and fits perfectly into meme culture.

3.3.3. Five posts from Generation Z users on Instagram

Table 12.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a promotional graphic for an English-speaking club event, designed to energize student engagement

The First Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	@thehivespeakingclub IS LANDING AT ENSM! real conversations, and a unique experience you won't forget! The wait is over - hit play and find out WHEN and WHERE it all begins. This is your chance to boost your English like never before! Let's speak English - together!
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is informal and promotional, aiming to energize and motivate viewers. Phrases like "This is your chance to boost your English like never before!" and "Let's speak English – together!" reflect a conversational, upbeat tone suited for student engagement. The caption blends excitement with clear event details, balancing casual phrasing with key logistical information.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There is no slang or abbreviations

Emojis	None. The absence of emojis keeps the focus on the graphic's bold visual elements and event messaging, maintaining a clean and professional look.
Tone	The tone is enthusiastic, motivational, and slightly urgent. It aims to inspire action and participation, emphasizing opportunity ("unique experience," "do not miss it") and community.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	A digital promotional poster featuring a bright, graphic design and an embedded photo of a past event. The bold layout includes text-heavy information, a QR code, and minimal symbolic imagery (e.g., the bee). The single real-life photo adds credibility and relatability.
Integration with Language	The visuals and language work together effectively. "LET'S SPEAK UP!" acts as a call to action, visually reinforced by the bright color scheme and directional layout. The QR code provides a functional element, while the caption enhances the narrative by appealing to the viewer's desire for self-improvement and community engagement.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Bright yellow background with black text — eye-catching and energetic. • **Design:** Bold, graphic layout with clean lines and clear hierarchy of information. The poster is organized for quick scanning: title, event details, and CTA are all prominent. • **Mood:** Energetic and inclusive. The contrast of yellow and black suggests excitement and alertness, while the small image of participants adds warmth and credibility.

Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post received 80 likes, 1 comment, and 29 shares — suggesting strong interest and community-driven promotion. The high number of shares reflects the post's effectiveness in spreading awareness and its appeal as a collaborative student event.
Engagement with Visuals	The graphic design draws attention, while the embedded image of participants adds authenticity. Viewers are likely drawn to the bold colors and headline, while the smaller photo and QR code increase practical engagement. The combination of visual variety and useful information enhances shareability and relevance.

Table 13.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a vision board appreciation post celebrating student creativity and goal-setting

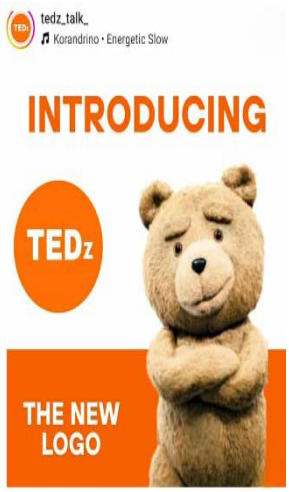
The Second Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	Appreciation post for their creativity and manifestation for their dreams to become reality
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	

Formal vs. Informal Language	The caption — "Appreciation post for their creativity and manifestation for their dreams to become reality ✨🫶" — uses informal, uplifting language. It is written in a supportive tone common to social media encouragement, making it accessible and emotionally resonant.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. The language is clear and free of slang or abbreviations, which helps keep the tone positive and inclusive without casual distractions.
Emojis	✨🫶 — The sparkles and heart-hands emojis enhance the post's tone of celebration and encouragement. They support the message of appreciation and personal growth, adding emotional warmth to the caption.
Tone	The tone is hopeful, supportive, and motivational. It celebrates creativity and goal-setting while affirming the power of self-belief and manifestation.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The visual is a close-up photograph showing someone holding a handmade vision board filled with text, images, and symbolic cutouts. The individual is partially hidden, focusing attention on the vision board. It is a candid, real-life shot taken in what looks like a classroom.
Integration with Language	The text "2025 MY VISION BOARD" directly anchors the visual in time and purpose. Other visual text like "NEW JOB" and "No time for toxic people" ties directly into the caption's theme of dream manifestation. The visual and language support each other seamlessly.

Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Muted tones with some bright elements (e.g. yellow sticky notes). • **Design:** DIY collage with photos, sticky notes, and magazine cutouts. • **Mood:** Personal, hopeful, and goal-oriented. The dim background contrasts with the vibrant, intention-filled board, emphasizing a journey toward positive change.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post received 81 likes, 4 comments, and 12 saves. The high save count suggests that viewers found it personally inspiring or worth revisiting — a sign of deep engagement.
Engagement with Visuals	The handmade vision board acts as both inspiration and a visual prompt. Its detailed, relatable contents invite viewers to reflect on their own goals, encouraging emotional and personal connection.

Table 14.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a brand identity reveal for "Tedz," conveyed with energetic, emoji-rich language and a bold teddy bear visual

The Third Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	We're proud to officially unveil our brand new look 👀 🔥 Bold, refreshed, and simple! Full of Tedz energy you know and love ❤️ We've evolved, and our look has too. Same Tedz, bigger dreams ✨ We hope you love the new Tedz as much as we do! We will always, do it better 💯
Context	A brand refresh announcement for “Tedz,” featuring a cartoon bear and energetic tone. Emojis and catchy phrases build community excitement around the rebrand.
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is informal, enthusiastic, and brand-driven. Phrases like “We’ve evolved,” “you know and love,” and “do it better 💯” lean heavily into a casual and friendly brand voice meant to build emotional connection.

Use of Slang and Abbreviations	Mild use of informal expressions like "👀 🔥 " and "💯" implies a digital-savvy tone. Phrases such as "Tedz energy" and "Same Tedz, bigger dreams" reflect branded slang, reinforcing identity and community.
Emojis	Multiple emojis are used (👀 🔥 ❤️‍🔥 ✨ 💯), adding vibrancy and emotional cues. They amplify excitement and celebration, aligning well with the tone of a rebrand reveal.
Tone	The tone is celebratory, proud, and upbeat. It emphasizes evolution and brand growth while maintaining a sense of playful familiarity with the audience.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	A graphic-style, digital illustration. The focal point is a cartoonish brown teddy bear with arms crossed, confidently posed, reminiscent of the pop-culture *Ted* bear.
Integration with Language	The design includes bold, stylized phrases: "INTRODUCING" at the top and "THE NEW LOGO" in a wide orange banner below the bear. The visual and textual elements work seamlessly to announce and draw attention to the rebrand.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Dominated by bright orange, with white and brown for contrast. The palette is energetic and warm, evoking friendliness and modernity. • **Design:** Clean and bold, using sharp contrasts and simple shapes. The bear's pose and facial expression add personality.

	• **Mood:** Warm, celebratory, and slightly cheeky. The confident bear combined with bold text gives a rebranding moment that is playful but serious about its growth.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	With 42 likes, 11 comments, and 4 shares, engagement is modest but focused. The above-average comment count (relative to likes) may indicate that followers are offering feedback, showing interest or emotional investment in the new visual identity.
Engagement with Visuals	The visual element — especially the unique bear logo — is central to the interaction. Followers are likely reacting to and evaluating the new design. The personality of the bear drives the engagement as much as the caption.

Table 15.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a club announcement for a game night featuring "Mafia," combining themed visuals and community engagement

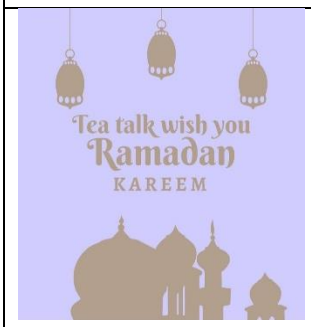
The Fourth Post	
Visual Element	**Citation**
	Greetings Teatalkers! Join us this Thursday at @smarti.school as a last session before eid to play Mafia or The Werewolves of Millers Hollow, a social deduction game where players take on secret roles as either villagers or werewolves. The werewolves try to eliminate

	villagers at night, while the villagers must identify and eliminate the werewolves during the day. The game involves strategy, deception, and discussion, making it a fun and engaging party game. • This session is exclusive, do not waste it 💜 ✨
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is casual with a slight formal edge, suitable for a club announcement. Phrases like "Greetings Teatalkers!" and "do not waste it 💜 ✨" blend enthusiasm with a light promotional tone. It is clear and informative while maintaining a friendly, welcoming style.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	No slang or abbreviations are used. The wording remains accessible and direct, prioritizing clarity in explaining the event.
Emojis	Two emojis are used: 💜 and ✨, which enhance the inviting and celebratory feel. Their soft, cheerful tone fits well with the club's branding and the playful nature of the game.
Tone	The tone is excited, inclusive, and slightly mysterious. It emphasizes fun and interaction while also presenting the game's strategic aspects to attract both casual players and critical thinkers.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The graphic features a stylized cartoon figure dressed in purple, holding pistols, and wearing a fedora — visually referencing the classic "Mafia" trope. The character adds a dramatic and fun tone to the post.

Integration with Language	The visual complements the title “THE MAFIA GAME” and sets the thematic tone of mystery and roleplay. Text elements like “JOIN US TO PLAY” and “TEATALK SPEAKING CLUB” are clearly readable and well-positioned.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Dominantly purple and white, which conveys mystery while keeping the tone friendly rather than dark. • **Design:** The graphic is bold, clean, and iconographic, with a focus on the Mafia character, making it instantly recognizable. • **Mood:** Fun, mysterious, and socially engaging. The character art and purple theme draw viewers in with curiosity while the clean design maintains clarity.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 31 likes, 4 comments, and 8 shares. While modest, the share count suggests viewers found it worth spreading — likely among peers or club members. The comment count implies moderate community engagement.
Engagement with Visuals	The Mafia figure is visually striking and central to the post’s success. Viewers likely engage with the image first, then follow through on the detailed caption to understand the event. The design invites curiosity and builds anticipation.

Table 16.

An analysis table of an Instagram post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a warm Ramadan greeting to followers, accompanied by soft, celebratory visuals

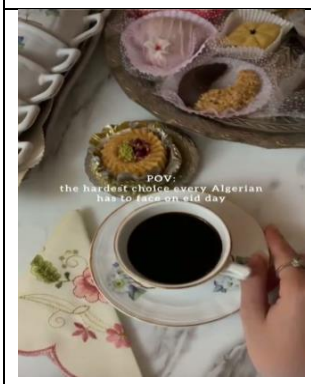
The Fifth Post	
Visual Element	**Citation**
	Ramadan Kareem 🌙tea talkers, May Allah is always there to bless in each endeavor of your life. Warm greetings on Ramadan to you and your family 💜 ✨
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	Warm and friendly with a touch of formal language (for instance, "May Allah bless..."). It is a mixture of both: informal when addressing "tea talkers" but formal when giving wishes and blessings of the holy month of Ramadan.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	No slang or abbreviations are used; the language is clean and respectful in addition to its clarity and directness.
Emojis	Emojis are used to add a friendly and warm feeling — 🌙 💜 ✨, and to make an aesthetic touch.
Tone	Respectful, warm, and positive. It matches the spiritual and festive occasion of Ramadan, showing the happiness of celebrating it.
Visuals	

Type of Visuals Used	Illustrative graphics, lanterns, and mosque outlines to represent Ramadan and what it represents.
Integration with Language	The visual message “Tea talk wish you Ramadan Kareem” matches the caption and enhances the greeting.
Visual Style	Simple, soft, and elegant with pastel colors that feel peaceful, calm, and suitable for Ramadan.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post holds 25 likes, with a low level of interaction. Followers are not asked to comment or share; it is more of greeting than a conversation.
Engagement with Visuals	Visuals are meaningful and supportive of the message. They attract attention and give the post a themed look.

3.3.4. Five posts from Generation Z users on TikTok

Table 17.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on Eid featuring Algerian sweets and a humorous overlay about difficult holiday decisions

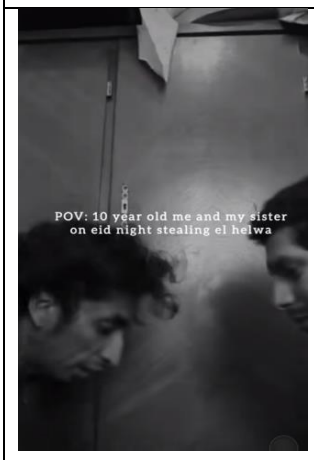
The First Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	Eid mubarak to you all, May the blessings of Allah be with you and your family forever and always.
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The post mixes informal phrasing with a touch of poetic formality. The overlay text — "POV: the hardest choice every Algerian has to face on Eid day" — uses a humorous and relatable tone typical of social media. In contrast, the caption "Eid Mubarak to you all, May the blessings of Allah be with you and your family forever and always" is more formal, reverent, and traditional, fitting the religious and cultural context.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	There are no slang terms or abbreviations. The phrasing is clear, simple, and intended to foster genuine engagement.

Emojis	None used. The absence of emojis maintains a sincere and warm tone. Rather than inserting playful or decorative visuals, the post relies on the image and words to express sentiment.
Tone	The tone blends celebratory warmth with a hint of humor. The text overlay is lighthearted and culturally specific, reflecting a common Eid experience in Algeria. The caption is respectful and well-wishing, aligning with the spirit of the occasion. Together, they strike a balance between playful and heartfelt.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The image is a well-composed, close-up photograph of a coffee cup surrounded by traditional Algerian pastries, taken from a high angle. The inclusion of a person's hand holding the cup adds a human, relatable touch, suggesting presence and intimacy.
Integration with Language	The overlay text enhances the scene by giving context and humor to the visual abundance of pastries. The caption complements this with traditional Eid blessings, deepening the cultural and emotional resonance. The text does not distract from the image but adds meaning and emotional framing.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Soft, light tones dominate the image, from the table to the floral china, creating a calm and inviting atmosphere. • **Design:** Elegant and clean. The pastries are arranged with care, and the floral crockery adds a traditional, almost vintage aesthetic.

	• **Mood:** The mood is joyful and reflective, typical of festive gatherings. The careful presentation of food and drink speaks to the hospitality and warmth of Eid.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post received 85 likes, 2 comments, 2 saves, and 1 share. Engagement is modest but indicates a positive reception within a close-knit or niche audience, especially among those familiar with Algerian Eid traditions.
Engagement with Visuals	The image's strength lies in its relatability and cultural specificity. The visual is likely to evoke memories for Algerian viewers, encouraging engagement through nostalgia and shared experience. Though not highly shared, the post invites quiet appreciation and personal connection.

Table 18.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a nostalgic reenactment of childhood Eid memories, delivered with humor and black-and-white aesthetics

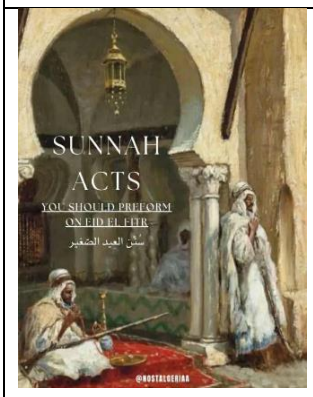
The Second Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	What's your favorite eid night memory?
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language is informal and nostalgic. The overlay text "POV: 10 year old me and my sister on eid night stealing el helwa" uses casual, playful phrasing that mimics spoken memory. The use of "POV" (Point of View) reflects current social media storytelling trends and invites viewers into a shared, personal experience.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There are no slang or abbreviations
Emojis	None used. The post relies on tone, visual style, and language to convey emotion, avoiding emojis to preserve a more reflective, cinematic feel.

Tone	The tone is sentimental and mischievous. It captures the innocence of childhood and the thrill of small rebellious moments, particularly those tied to cultural rituals. The caption “What's your favorite eid night memory?” reinforces the nostalgic and inclusive tone, inviting interaction.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post is a screenshot of a TikTok video presented in black and white. It features two figures (presumably young girls) crouching or sneaking in a dim interior space. Their body language and obscured faces suggest secrecy and playfulness, reminiscent of childhood antics.
Integration with Language	The overlay text directly sets the scene, giving the viewer immediate narrative context. Without the need for additional explanation, the combination of imagery and text instantly communicates the cultural moment being depicted — Eid night and childhood nostalgia.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Black and white. This stylistic choice evokes a sense of memory and nostalgia, enhancing the emotional undertone. • **Design:** Minimalist and shadowy. The lack of color draws focus to posture, expression, and atmosphere rather than visual detail. • **Mood:** Playful and reminiscent. The darkness and partial anonymity of the subjects give the video a cinematic quality, reinforcing its theme of mischievous yet innocent childhood memory.
Interaction	

Level of Interaction	The video has 81 likes, 1 comment, 2 saves, and 3 shares. This represents moderate engagement, showing resonance with a small but appreciative audience — likely those who share similar cultural or childhood experiences.
Engagement with Visuals	The post's relatability, especially among viewers familiar with Eid traditions, likely drives the engagement. The choice of "POV" and the universally understood thrill of sneaking sweets as a child helps it connect emotionally, even if the post is not widely shared.

Table 19.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Generation Z member on a spiritual reminder about Eid Sunnah acts, presented with reverence and a classical Islamic painting

The Third Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	Let's revive his sunnah may peace be upon him 🤍
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language used in the overlay and caption is formal and reverent. Phrases like "SUNNAH ACTS YOU SHOULD PERFORM ON EID

	EL FITR" and "Let's revive his sunnah may peace be upon him 🤍" reflect a religious and respectful tone. The language encourages spiritual practice and tradition, aimed at promoting awareness and devotion during Eid.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There are no slang or abbreviations
Emojis	A single white heart emoji 🤍 is used in the caption. It adds a subtle emotional tone of peace and purity, aligning with the religious and contemplative mood of the post without diminishing its seriousness.
Tone	The tone is spiritual, respectful, and educational. It promotes a return to prophetic traditions with quiet reverence, inviting viewers to reflect on their religious practices during Eid. The phrasing is instructive without being forceful, aiming to inspire rather than impose.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The post features a reproduction of a painting depicting men in traditional Algerian or Islamic attire within a religious architectural setting. The figures appear engaged in ritual, prayer, or quiet reflection. The use of an artwork rather than a photo contributes to a timeless, elevated atmosphere.
Integration with Language	The text overlay is placed directly on top of the painting, presenting a clear call to action. The bilingual presentation (English and Arabic) ensures the message is accessible to a broader audience, and reinforces the Islamic context. The spiritual message complements the quiet solemnity of the scene.

Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Muted earth tones — soft beiges, whites, and reddish accents — create a warm, reverent ambiance. • **Design:** The image is composed with an arched backdrop, carpet, and traditional robes, evoking historical and cultural continuity. • **Mood:** Calm, introspective, and sacred. The setting and body language of the men encourage a reflective, worshipful response from the viewer.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post has 65 likes, 0 comments, 2 saves, and 1 share. While engagement is low overall, the presence of saves suggests a few users found the message meaningful or useful, possibly for reference.
Engagement with Visuals	The painting is aesthetically pleasing and culturally resonant, especially for followers of Islamic traditions. It visually reinforces the solemnity and significance of Eid rituals, though its classical style may limit immediate viral appeal compared to trend-based content.

Table 20.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Generation Z member capturing the sentimentality of Ramadan, visually represented through a street stall image

The Forth Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	It feels like just yesterday I was eagerly awaiting for the start of this blessed month 🥹💝
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs. Informal Language	The language used in both the text overlay and the caption is informal and emotionally expressive. The caption — "It feels like just yesterday I was eagerly waiting for the start of this blessed month 🥹💝" — evokes a sense of nostalgia and spiritual longing, using conversational phrasing and personal sentiment to connect with.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There are no slang or abbreviations
Emojis	Two emojis are used: 🥹 (pleading face) and 💝 (mending heart). These enhance the nostalgic and emotional tone, emphasizing

	tenderness and spiritual reflection. They complement the message by visually expressing feelings of yearning and reverence.
Tone	The tone is warm, sentimental, and devotional. It evokes a quiet longing for the return of Ramadan and celebrates its atmosphere without exaggeration. The casual, almost whispered nature of the message feels intimate and personal.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The image is a vertical social media screenshot capturing a photo of a Ramadan street stall in Algeria. The key elements include baskets of dates — symbolically linked with the iftar meal — and part of a mosque dome, which culturally situates the post in a religious setting. It captures a candid, real-life moment rather than a polished or staged image.
Integration with Language	The text overlay "Ramadan in Algeria without a trending audio" acknowledges the platform's culture (likely TikTok), while simultaneously presenting a sincere moment of religious and cultural life. The caption underneath adds emotional context, anchoring the image in personal memory and anticipation. The visuals and text together emphasize authenticity over trendiness.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Earthy and warm — browns from the dates, white from the building, and muted tones from the environment lend a soft, nostalgic look. • **Design:** Informal and documentary-like, resembling a snapshot from everyday life rather than a curated post.

	• **Mood:** Quiet, reflective, and grounded in cultural and spiritual tradition. It conveys peaceful anticipation more than visual drama.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post received 247 likes, 2 comments, 15 saves, and 2 shares. The high number of saves relative to comments and shares suggests the post resonated personally with viewers, prompting them to hold onto it for future reflection or re-sharing.
Engagement with Visuals	Viewers appear to connect deeply with the authenticity and nostalgia of the visual. The imagery of dates and a mosque dome immediately evokes Ramadan's atmosphere, and its cultural specificity enhances its emotional pull, especially for Algerian or Muslim audiences.

Table 21.

An analysis table of a TikTok post made by an Algerian Generation Z member marking the first week of Ramadan, visually anchored by symbolic daily rituals

The Fifth Post	
Visual Element	**Caption**
	But we still have three more wonderful weeks... May Allah Help us to reach them so we can seize every moment to make the most out of this special month 🤍 🌙.
Criteria	**Analysis**
Language Style	
Formal vs Informal Language	The language is informal yet deeply reflective. Phrases like "A moment of realization: we've reached the 1st week of Ramadan…" and "May Allah help us to reach them so we can seize every moment…" are conversational and spiritually contemplative. The style is accessible and emotionally resonant, blending everyday speech with religious aspiration.
Use of Slang and Abbreviations	None. There are no slang or abbreviations

Emojis	Two emojis are used: 🤍 (white heart) and 🌙 (crescent moon). These subtly enhance the post's peaceful and spiritual tone, visually reinforcing themes of purity, love, and the Islamic holy month.
Tone	The tone is reflective, hopeful, and spiritually focused. It combines personal introspection with collective encouragement, inviting viewers to pause and re-center their intentions for the remaining weeks of Ramadan.
Visuals	
Type of Visuals Used	The image is a soft-focus photograph or screen capture from a video, showing a hand pouring a white liquid — likely milk — into a cup. It features bright yellow gerbera daisies in a vase and possibly some dates nearby, hinting at a Ramadan setting. These visuals tie into daily rituals and symbolic foods of the holy month.
Integration with Language	The visual action of pouring, combined with the soft lighting and floral detail, mirrors the contemplative tone of the text overlay. The motion of pouring is gentle, almost meditative, enhancing the spiritual reflection expressed in the caption. The text overlays seamlessly complement the imagery rather than competing with it.
Visual Style	• **Color Palette:** Warm and muted, with pops of brightness from the yellow flowers. Creamy whites and soft shadows dominate, giving a serene, intimate feel. • **Design:** Minimalist, relying on emotional evocation rather than elaborate composition.

	• **Mood:** Peaceful, slow, and reflective — encouraging mindfulness and spiritual presence.
Interaction	
Level of Interaction	The post garnered 42 likes, 1 comment, 1 save, and 1 share. While not highly viral, this moderate engagement suggests a personal connection with a small but attentive audience. The nature of the post invites quiet reflection more than active discourse.
Engagement with Visuals	The soft, atmospheric image supports the emotional tone of the message, enhancing its resonance. The hand-pouring gesture feels symbolic — of nourishment, giving, or spiritual renewal — subtly reinforcing the theme of Ramadan as a time for intentional living.

4. Results

The study classified generational differences in visual communication, language, and use of platform. Generation Z use TikTok (54.92%) and Instagram (87.68%) most often, and they used slang, memes, and emojis to demonstrate identity and build relationships. More than 56% of Generation Z state they wrote colloquial talk “always” or “often” when using Instagram but only 21% of Millennials did. Millennials use Instagram (63.38%) and Facebook (76.05%), and they use curated visuals and formatted captions. Content analysis of Generation Z’s TikTok content identified that the main content is humor (e.g., pixelated dinosaur memes) and unfiltered authenticity, while the content analyzed in Millennials Instagram content is characterized primarily as inspirational content (e.g., “advice to younger self”). The participation patterns are also different as Generation Z’s content is identified as passive modes of consuming content (51% of participants reported consuming passive modes like

stories/reels) whereas Millennials tend to actively participate in content they were consuming via commenting (39.43%) and longer-length posts. Both generations value imagery as a strategic resource: Millennials use imagery to create an expressive story whereas Generation Z choose imagery that is an affective shortcut. However, Millennials' use of formal photography (25.35%) compared to Generation Z who uses memes more (39.13% usage).

5. Discussion of Findings

This research investigates how Algerian Millennials and Generation Z navigate online communication across Instagram and TikTok. Survey data, focus group insights, and real-world post analysis revealed rich contrasts in generational behaviors, all of which are shaped by cultural context, platform design, and intergenerational identity.

Millennials' digital practices reflect structured storytelling and a curated presence. Their Instagram posts embody traditional self-branding, often echoing professional tones and thematic cohesion. This supports previous findings in the Account analysis where Millennials were seen to favor a style akin to "digital professionalism," employing complete sentences, formal punctuation, and audience-aware phrasing. Their captions were often informative, using emojis and images as rhetorical supplements rather than expressive devices.

Generation Z, by contrast, exhibits a fluid, spontaneous style. This generation relies on digital shorthand slang, emojis, GIFs as their primary expressive mode. The Account analysis confirms that "a meme equals a full emotional message," revealing how Gen Z treats visual language as integral, not decorative. Their content often forgoes formality for emotional resonance. For instance, a TikTok post might simply include the caption "delulu is the solulu 💅" to encapsulate humor, identity, and sentiment in one phrase. This strategy aligns with Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1973), whereby linguistic divergence (in this case, from Millennials) is used to assert group identity and in-group solidarity.

CAT also explains why Gen Z's platform behavior leans into linguistic convergence when aiming for virality (using mainstream sounds and trending hashtags) while maintaining stylistic divergence in casual or personal posts. This dual strategy reveals Generation Z's cultural agility: they can switch between internet mainstream and peer-group niche with ease, a trait not commonly observed among Millennials.

Visual preferences further illustrate this divide. Gen Z frequently uses memes, absurd humor, and lo-fi aesthetics to create multi-layered messages. They prefer TikTok, a platform where brevity, visual effect, and spontaneity dominate. In contrast, Millennials tend to favor Instagram for its polished visual layout, treating images as symbolic or narrative tools. The Account data shows Millennials' image use is more purposeful—e.g., carefully framed photos during "Pink October" campaigns to communicate awareness and care—while Gen Z would encode the same message in a reaction meme, remix, or TikTok trend.

Both generations, however, show a keen awareness of performance. Millennials aim for identity control through impression management, while Gen Z blends irony and authenticity in a curated chaos. Emotional depth persists across generations, though expressed differently: Millennials rely on long captions, while Gen Z uses visual irony (e.g., eye-roll emojis, exaggerated TikTok sounds) as affective shorthand. Multilingualism was more stylistically fluid among Gen Z, often mixed for expressive play or ironic tone. Millennials also employed code-switching but more purposefully, such as framing a post in English but ending with an Arabic phrase for resonance.

Finally, the platform algorithms reinforce these patterns. TikTok's virality-based system rewards Gen Z's short-form, relatable content. Instagram's curated feed supports Millennials' reflective, aesthetically-driven storytelling. This combination of structural, generational, and cultural factors creates a complex matrix of identity expression across Algerian youth.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore how Algerian Millennials and Generation Z utilize language styles and visual communication on Instagram and TikTok. Through mixed methods surveys, focus groups, and content analysis it uncovered profound intergenerational differences in tone, structure, platform use, and identity performance.

The findings confirmed that Millennials prefer structured, professional-style communication with intentional aesthetic choices. Their use of language aligns with digital linguistic conventions that prioritize clarity and connection. They are more likely to use visuals as symbolic or informative tools and write longer, narrative captions. These traits confirm prior assumptions about digital migrants who learned to integrate online communication into their offline identity management.

Generation Z, in contrast, relies on a visual-first, emotionally resonant, and linguistically innovative approach. Memes, emojis, TikTok sounds, and hybrid codes (e.g., “delulu,” “rizz,” trilingual slang) are not secondary supports to language but the language itself. In many cases, Gen Z expresses full emotional narratives in a meme or GIF, requiring the audience to decode shared semiotic and cultural knowledge. As noted in the Account.pdf, their posts are not chaotic but rather “curated chaos,” built from micro-trends, visual shorthand, and algorithm-savvy content design.

This behavior supports Communication Accommodation Theory, particularly divergence, where Gen Z marks its identity by intentionally straying from formal linguistic norms. Their communication is playful but deeply expressive, often balancing irony and sincerity. While Millennials value narrative coherence, Gen Z values resonance and immediacy. They are fluent in attention economy practices, using platforms like TikTok not only for expression but for belonging, identity affirmation, and cultural negotiation.

Both generations, however, demonstrate deep care for emotional integrity and social connection. Gen Z expressed discomfort with being misunderstood in fast-paced online exchanges, while Millennials voiced concern over declining language etiquette and meme saturation. Ultimately, the study reveals that what Millennials and Generation Z do online is not superficial it is reflective of how they *feel*, *belong*, and *become*. These digital behaviors must be read not only through linguistic frameworks, but also through cultural, psychological, and technological lenses. In Algeria, where trilingualism and postcolonial identity play a significant role, these expressions become even more complex and significant. This research thus provides a foundation for understanding digital intergenerational dynamics, offering insights for educators, content creators, and policy-makers navigating youth communication in a rapidly evolving digital age.

4.1. General Conclusion

1. Summary of Key Findings

This literature review highlights the fact that there are significant differences in the generational usage of visuals and language communication as expressed in Instagram and TikTok. Generation Z appears to be more into speedy, informal, and image-based messages that frequently use emojis, memes, Gifs, and digital language to express complicated ideas in a unique manner (Basco, 2025; Azad et al., 2023). Their communication style generated primarily from a desire for authenticity and immediacy relies heavily on algorithm-driven content (especially visually based short-form event video) to express their complicated identities, particularly on TikTok. Millennials, however, are likely to mix formal and informal levels of language using their educational background and phrases shaped by the internet. For example, Millennials also use visuals like emojis, clips, and memes, but usually when more tailored (i.e. less spontaneous) on a platform such as Instagram (Dublino, 2024; Verbalplanet, 2024). These trends continue to illustrate how generational identities respond to affordances of the platform to express core values; for example, Millennials and their heightened focus on aesthetics and personal branding are consistent (at least at the superficial level) with Instagram, but TikTok allows Generation Z the spontaneity and creativity they need. Overall, the findings demonstrate how language and images are both a mode of expression and an indication of a person's generational identity in digital communication.

The focus group comments map out a complex, multi-layered landscape of online existence driven by generational experience, platform evolution, and cultural transformation. Both Generation Z and Millennials seek connection, creativity, and expression, but when using social media, they diverge on pace, tone, and platform literacy — a developing phenomenon driven by the digital conditions of their childhood (Azad et al., 2023).

Generation Z respondents valued intimacy, proximity, and emotional resonance. They would typically communicate with each other in image-oriented communication buried in memes, eye contact, and rapid-fire slang reinforcing their cultural literacy. TikTok dominated their existence as an identity performance ground and sense of belonging, where brevity and affectivity are favored over formal propriety (Zahira & Nasution, 2025; Azad et al., 2023). However, below the playfulness is a deeply attuned recognition of the strains of mental illness, toxic loops of feedback, and the performance risks of living constantly on camera. Their facility in the world online is no indicator of surface level — rather, it is an indicator of a new sort of cultural agility that scholars will have to become attuned to reading on its own terms.

Millennials who are surveyed, meanwhile, consume social media with the more literate, platform-sensitive gaze. They know how considerations of design, algorithmic biases, and platform migration have affected — and separated — their communication habits. Their responses have an enduring reserve, founded in emerging internet habits of blogging, oversharing, and context-signaling (Verbalplanet, 2024; Azad et al., 2023). While they also engage with memes and trends, their critique is about structure: internet ethics, content ownership, and the loss of nuance in platform design. They sense generational tension not just aesthetically, but in the manner that platforms themselves have evolved — too often valuing speed and virality over depth and transparency.

Across cohorts, there is a shared call for more context-aware, thoughtful, and inclusive language. There is a call for tools and norms that transcend generational lines — whether as more transparent visual credit, tone-aware features, or cultural “spellchecks” that reduce misinterpretation. Language and imagery are not seen as aesthetic tools, but as the very stuff of connection, with the power to build intimacy, signal belonging, or solidify divisions.

Lastly, participants emphasized that digital communication is dynamic rather than static. Users change tone, style, and code endlessly depending on platform, audience, and social

setting. Researchers who study intergenerational communication will have to move beyond categorical comparison of generations and become more dynamic, culturally attentive, and platform-conscious instead. Social media in the world today is not merely a site of communication; it is a site of identity making, generational negotiation, and live cultural production.

2. Implications for the Research

Based on the findings of the literature, it is evident that there are generational disparities in regards to the language and images that Instagram and TikTok provide. This research study draws implications from the findings of the literature: there is a necessity of observing both verbal and visual components together, rather than separately. Our comparative method is founded on the premise that Millennials are attracted primarily to curated and balanced forms of communication, while Generation Z is attracted to content that is quick, visual, and emotionally communicative.

The results of this research study show that there is a distinction across generations with regards to the forms of linguistic and visual communication on Instagram and TikTok. Millennials presented a preference for structured, curated content that combines formal and informal language, existing with images and emojis used to cover the full range of expressive options, which was particularly evident on Instagram. This enabled us to identify a clear contrast with Generation Z who prefer spontaneous situations with high amounts of emotional content, expressing themselves with slang, GIF's, memes, and abbreviation especially on TikTok compared to Millennials. The results are also consistent with previous literature that distinguishes between the qualities of digital communication with Millennials demonstrating more intent and guidance, and Generation Z engaging with faster, visually driven, less formal, digital communication.

The implications from our findings strengthen the need to analyze verbal and visual communication together, and not separately. The comparative analysis illustrates how each generation's digital behaviors are impacted by their identity, culture, and experience with technology. These generational considerations help us understand the nuances of social media as not only a medium for interaction, but also one of the ways both generations are projecting their generational identity and values through their interaction with social media.

3. Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights provided by this research, several limitations must be acknowledged.

First, the study's sample size, consisting of 209 participants, may not fully represent the broader population of Algerian Millennials and Generation Z. The demographic constraints limit the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the sample.

Second, the study primarily focuses on generational age as the key variable while excluding other potentially influential socio-economic factors such as education level, occupation, or digital literacy. This singular focus narrows the scope of the analysis and may overlook complex intersections that shape social media behavior.

Third, the generational comparison is limited to Millennials and Generation Z, deliberately excluding older cohorts such as Generation X and Baby Boomers, as well as Generation Alpha. While this choice allows for a more targeted investigation, it limits the broader intergenerational applicability of the results. The exclusion of Generation Alpha is also due to ethical and logistical constraints in obtaining consent from minors and their guardians.

Additionally, the research concentrates solely on images, GIFs, and memes as visual communication forms, excluding other significant formats such as videos, filters, stickers, and augmented reality elements that are prevalent on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

Moreover, cultural specificity to the Algerian context may limit the transferability of findings to other societies. Language use, cultural symbolism, and digital trends may differ significantly in other regions or cultural groups, making cross-cultural comparisons difficult. Also, the study does not isolate the effects of multilingualism, although it is likely that the use of multiple languages (Arabic, French, English) plays a significant role in shaping participants' communication styles on Instagram and TikTok.

Finally, while the comparative nature of the research provides insights into both Instagram and TikTok, these platforms differ fundamentally in design, algorithmic logic, and user interaction patterns. These inherent platform-specific differences introduce complexity when drawing direct comparisons.

Acknowledging these limitations is essential for interpreting the findings accurately and for guiding future research that may address these constraints through broader samples, inclusion of more generations, or cross-cultural analyses.

4. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could investigate how generational trends in communication are impacted by newer technological advancements, such as AI-generated content and virtual influencers. Another impactful option for future studies is to consider long term effects of social media on language, attention, and physical interaction across many generations. Another pivotal opportunity for future work is exploring Generation Alpha who are growing up with interactive media, voice assistants, and short-form video. These categories may help us understand how digital trends have influenced communication and how best generations

communicate. Early studies on their forms of communication will assist in understanding how the next generation adapts in their future understanding of digital interactions, and its future role with intergenerational communications.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey

Demographic Information

1. **Age range**:
    - [29 – 44]
    - [13 – 28]
2. **Which social media platforms do you use regularly?** (Select all that apply)
    - Instagram
    - TikTok
    - Facebook
    - Twitter
    - Others (please specify)

    ……..

Section 1: Language Styles

1. **How often do you use informal language (e.g., slang, abbreviations, and contractions) in your social media posts?**
    - () Never
    - () Rarely
    - () Sometimes
    - () Often
    - () Always
2. **On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is the use of slang or internet-specific language in connecting with others on social media?**
    - () 1 – Not important at all
    - () 2 – Slightly important
    - () 3 – Moderately important
    - () 4 – Very important
    - () 5 – Extremely important
3. **In your opinion, how does the use of slang differ between Instagram and TikTok?**
    - [Open-ended] …….

4. **Do you prefer to use emojis in your posts?**
    - () Yes
    - () No
    - () Sometimes
5. **How do you feel about using formal language in social media posts?**
    - () I always use formal language
    - () I use it only when necessary
    - () I rarely use formal language
    - () I never use formal language
6. **Which of the following best describes your language use on Instagram?**
    - () I prefer to write long, descriptive captions with complete sentences.
    - () I prefer short, casual captions with emojis and abbreviations.
    - () I rarely write captions and prefer visual content.
7. **Which of the following best describes your language use on TikTok?**
    - () I prefer to write long, descriptive captions with complete sentences.
    - () I prefer short, casual captions with emojis and abbreviations.
    - () I rarely write captions and prefer visual content.

Section 2: Social Media Preferences

1. **Which platform do you find more suitable for informal communication (e.g., casual chats, memes, slang)?**
    - () Instagram
    - () TikTok
    - () Both
    - () Neither
2. **Do you feel more connected to others when using casual language and visuals (memes, emojis, etc.)?**
    - () Yes
    - () No
    - () Sometimes

3. **What is your preferred way to interact with content on social media?**
    - () Liking and commenting
    - () Sharing posts
    - () Watching stories/reels
    - () Posting content (e.g., photos, videos, captions)

Section 3: Use of Visuals (Images, GIFs, Memes, etc.)

1. **How often do you use images, GIFs, or memes in your posts on Instagram and TikTok?**
    - () Never
    - () Rarely
    - () Sometimes
    - () Often
    - () Always
2. **What is your primary reason for using visuals in your posts?**
    - () To entertain my followers
    - () To convey emotions or feelings
    - () To explain or support my message
    - () To make my posts more engaging or interesting
    - () Other (please specify)
3. **On which platform do you prefer to use memes and GIFs?**
    - () Instagram
    - () TikTok
    - () I use them on both equally
    - () I do not use them
4. **Do you believe visuals (such as memes and GIFs) are essential for communicating effectively on TikTok or Instagram?**
    - () Yes, they are crucial for engagement.
    - () No, words are sufficient.
    - () It depends on the context.

5. **How do you think visuals like memes and GIFs influence the way you communicate with your followers or friends?**
    - [Open-ended]

……

Section 4: Perceptions of Language and Visuals

1. **What kind of posts (language style and visuals) do you think are more common among your generation on Instagram or TikTok?**
    - Casual, slang-heavy language with memes and raw visuals
    - Polished, professional language with high-quality visuals
    - Trend-driven language (viral phrases) with edited and creative visuals
    - Other
2. **In your opinion, how does the use of language and visuals on Instagram differ from TikTok?**
    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe
3. **Do you feel that the use of slang and visuals helps younger generations express their identity on social media? Why or why not?**
    - Yes
    - No
    - Maybe
4. **What factors do you think influence the way you choose to communicate on social media?** (e.g., peer influence, platform features, trends, cultural factors)
    - Peer influence
    - Platform features (e.g., filters, stickers)
    - Trends & viral content
    - Cultural background
    - Other
5. **How would you describe the difference in communication between the two platforms (Instagram and TikTok) in terms of visuals and language?**
    - Instagram: More polished; TikTok: More casual
    - Instagram: More image-focused; TikTok: More video-focused

- No major difference
- Other

Section 5: Closing Questions

1. **What changes would you like to see in how language and visuals are used on Instagram or TikTok?**
   - [Open-ended]

   ……..
2. **Is there anything else you would like to share about how language or visuals impact communication on social media in general?**
   - [Open-ended]

   ……

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Introduction:

1. Can everyone introduce themselves briefly, including which social media platforms you use most often and your favorite platform between Instagram and TikTok?

Language Styles:

2. How do you feel about the language you and your peers use on Instagram or TikTok? Do you use more formal or informal language? Why?
3. Can you describe the types of slang or internet language that you often use in your posts or comments? Where did you learn these terms?
4. Do you think the language you use on Instagram differs from the one you use on TikTok? How and why do you think this happens?
5. Why do you think some people, especially in your generation, prefer to use more formal or informal language (like abbreviations, slang, or emojis) when interacting online?
6. Do you feel that the use of slang or casual language makes it easier to connect with others on these platforms? Can you explain why or why not?

Visuals:

7. What types of visuals do you use in your posts (images, GIFs, memes, etc.), and why do you prefer them over other types of content (like text or videos)?
8. Do you think visuals (e.g., memes, GIFs) help communicate more effectively than words alone? Can you give an example of when visuals helped you express something better?
9. In your opinion, how do visuals like memes and GIFs influence the way you communicate on Instagram and TikTok? How do they change the meaning of your messages?
10. What role do visuals play in how you feel about a post? For example, do you feel a stronger connection to posts that include memes or GIFs?

Generational Differences and Communication Preferences:

13. What factors do you think influence the language and visual choices that you and your peers make on Instagram and TikTok? (For example, trends, influencer culture, personal identity, or cultural norms)
14. Do you feel that the way you communicate on these platforms reflects your identity or personality? How so?
15. Are there specific trends or themes in language and visuals on Instagram or TikTok that you think reflect the values or attitudes of your generation? Could you give an example?

Closing Questions:

16. If you could change something about the way people communicate on Instagram or TikTok (in terms of language or visuals), what would it be and why?
17. In your opinion, how important are language and visuals in shaping how users interact and connect on Instagram and TikTok?
18. Lastly, what do you think is the most important thing for researchers to understand when studying how people communicate across generations on social media?

Appendix C: The Content Analysis Criteria and Example Selection Plan

Content Analysis Criteria

Language Style:

- Formal vs informal language
- Use of slang and abbreviations
- Emojis
- Tone (e.g., casual, humorous, narrative, etc.)

Visuals:

- Type of visuals used (images, GIFs, memes)
- How visuals are integrated with language (text overlay, meme format)
- Visual style (color, design, mood)

Interaction:

- Level of interaction (comments, likes, shares)
- Engagement with visuals (e.g., reaction to memes or GIFs)

Example Selection Plan:

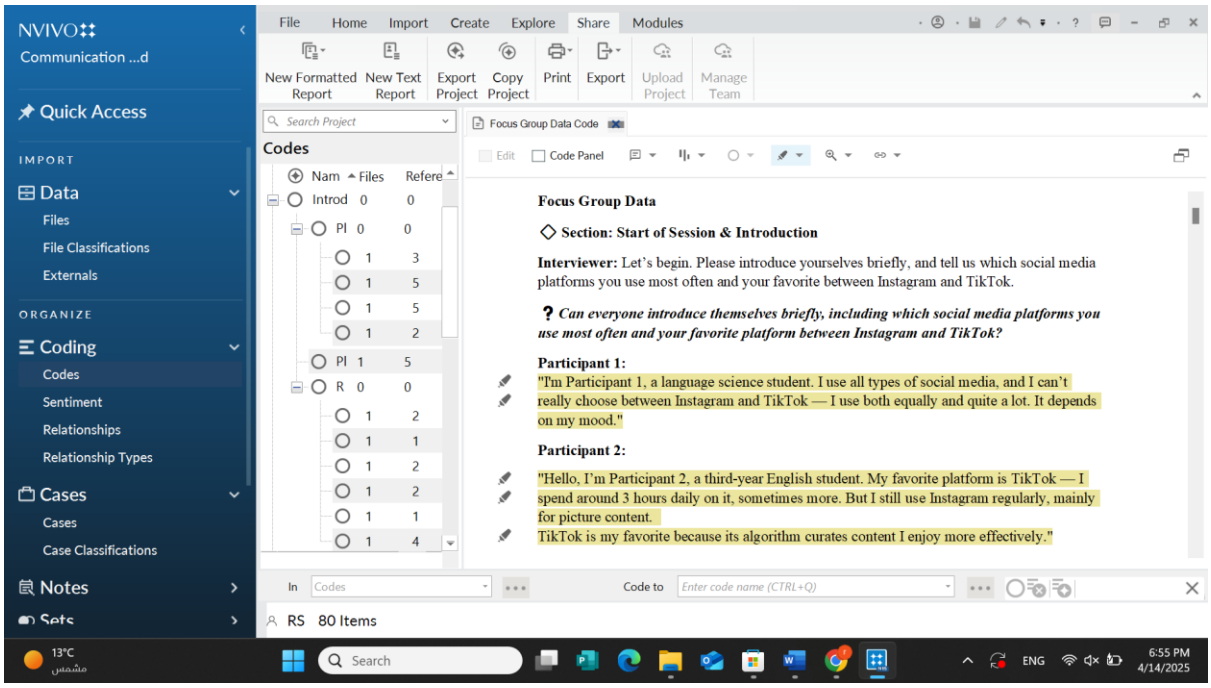
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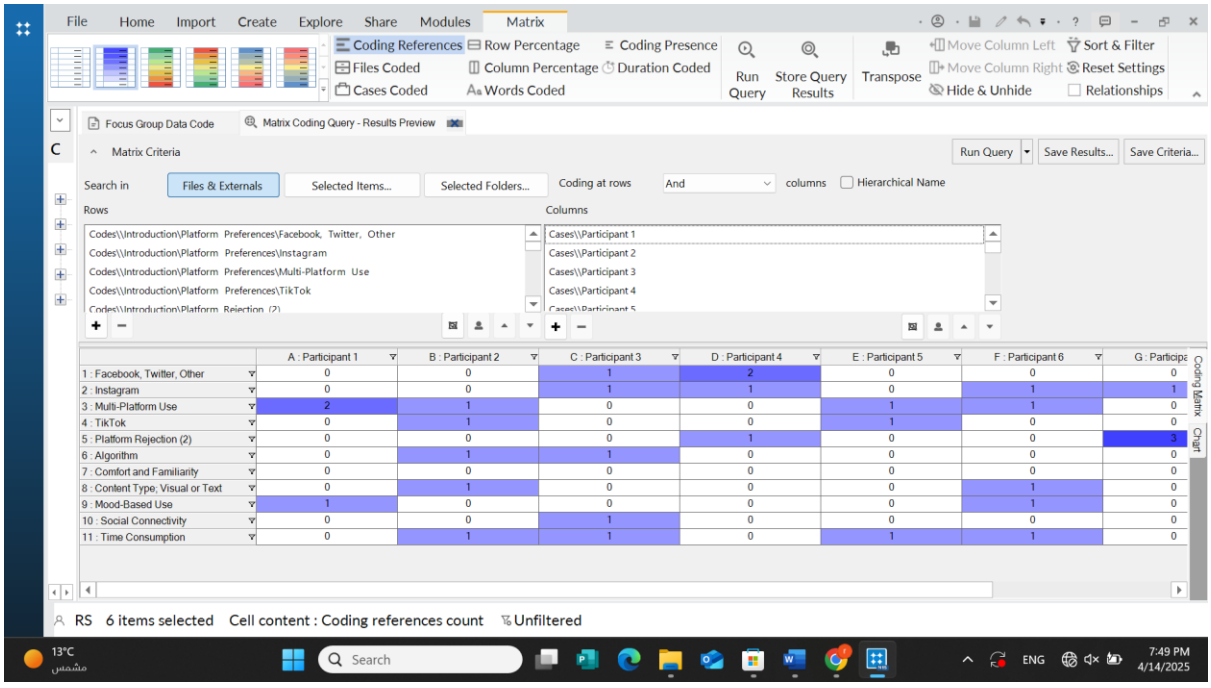
- 5 posts from Millennial users
- 5 posts from Generation Z users

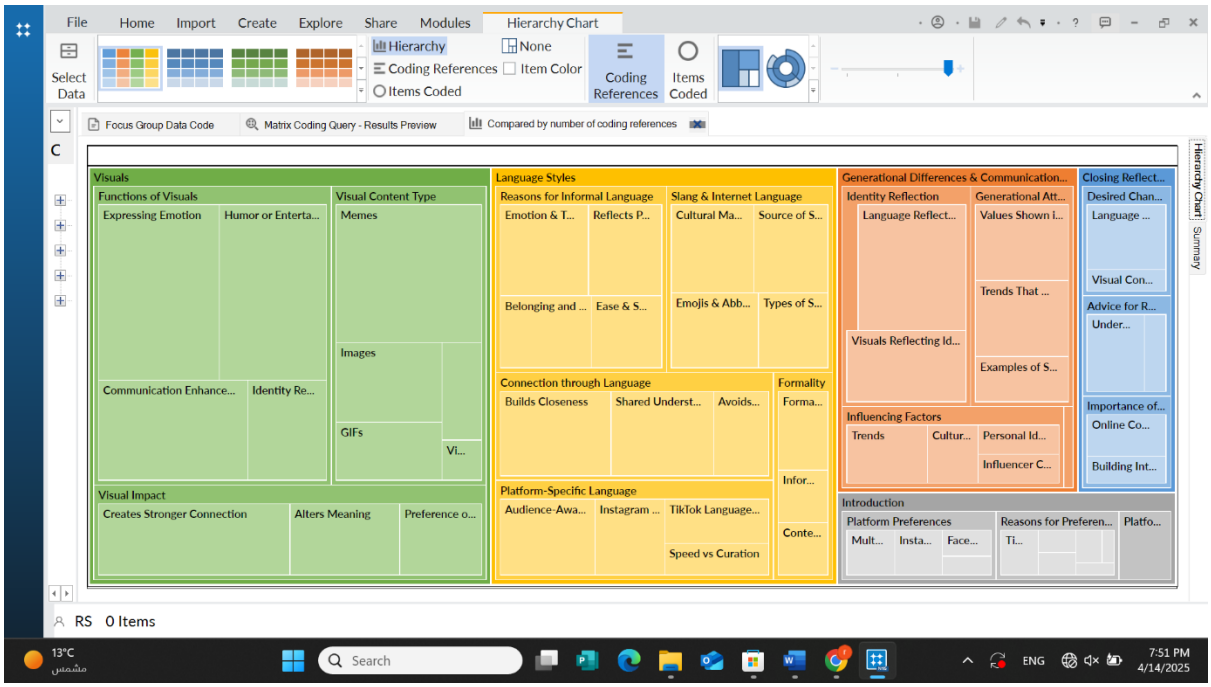
TikTok:

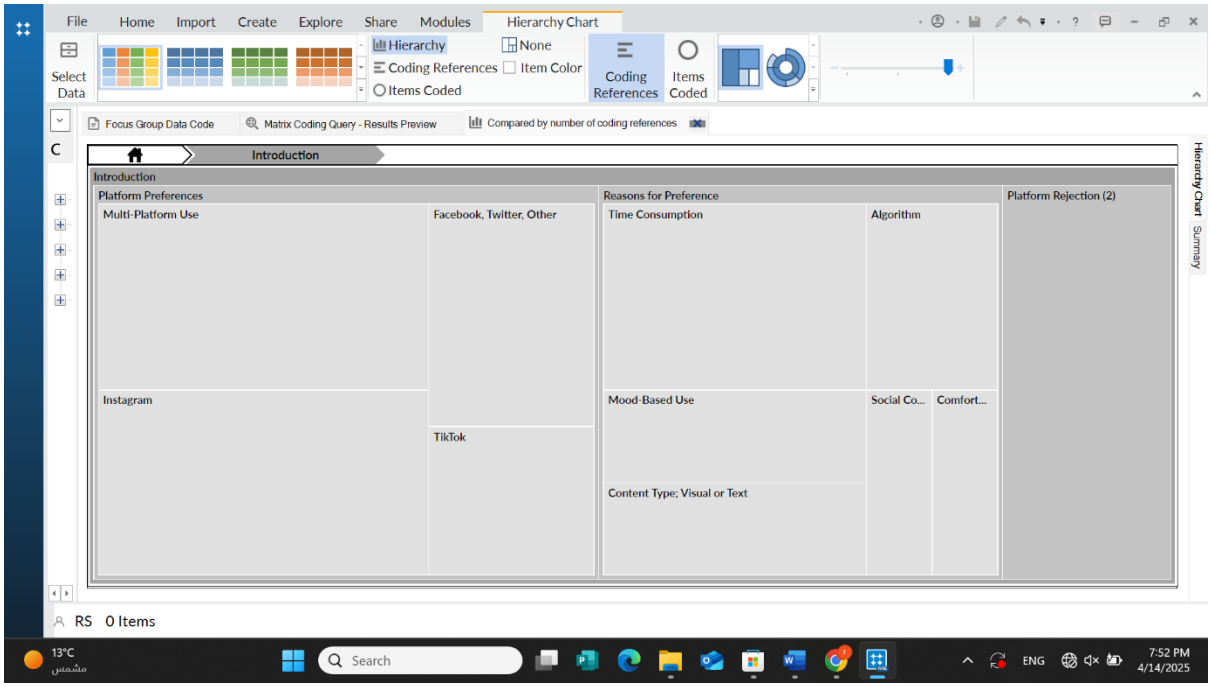
- 5 posts from Millennial users
- 5 posts from Generation Z users

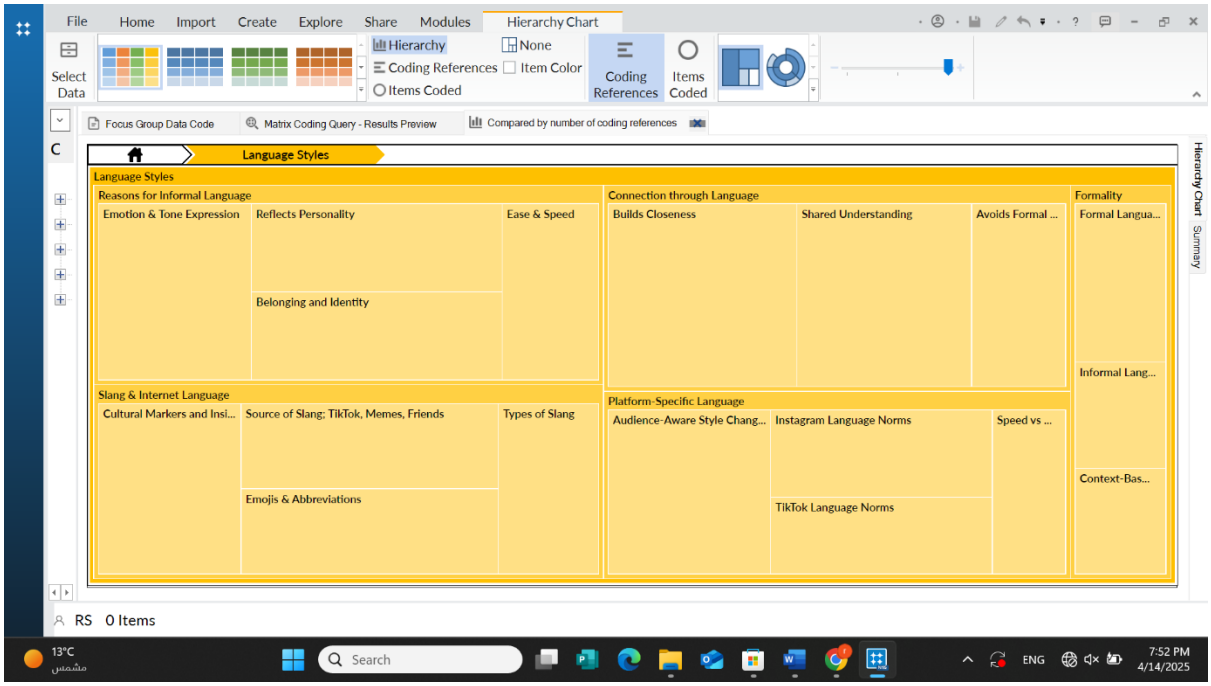
Appendix D: Instances from NVivo

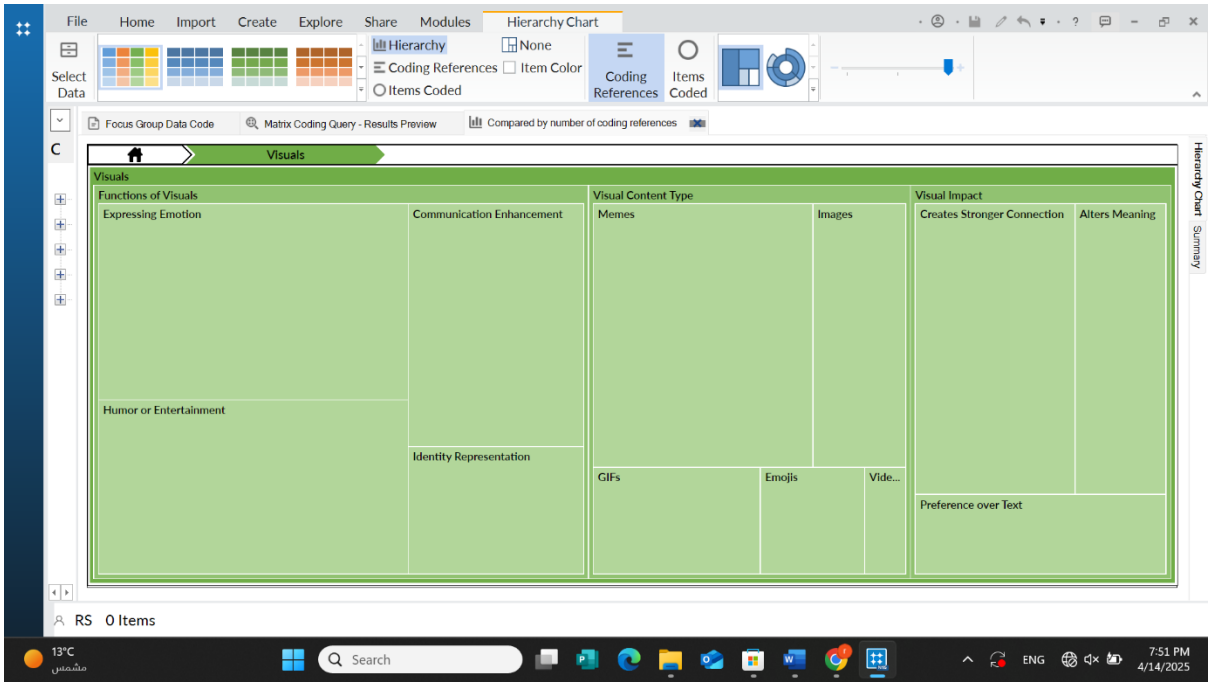


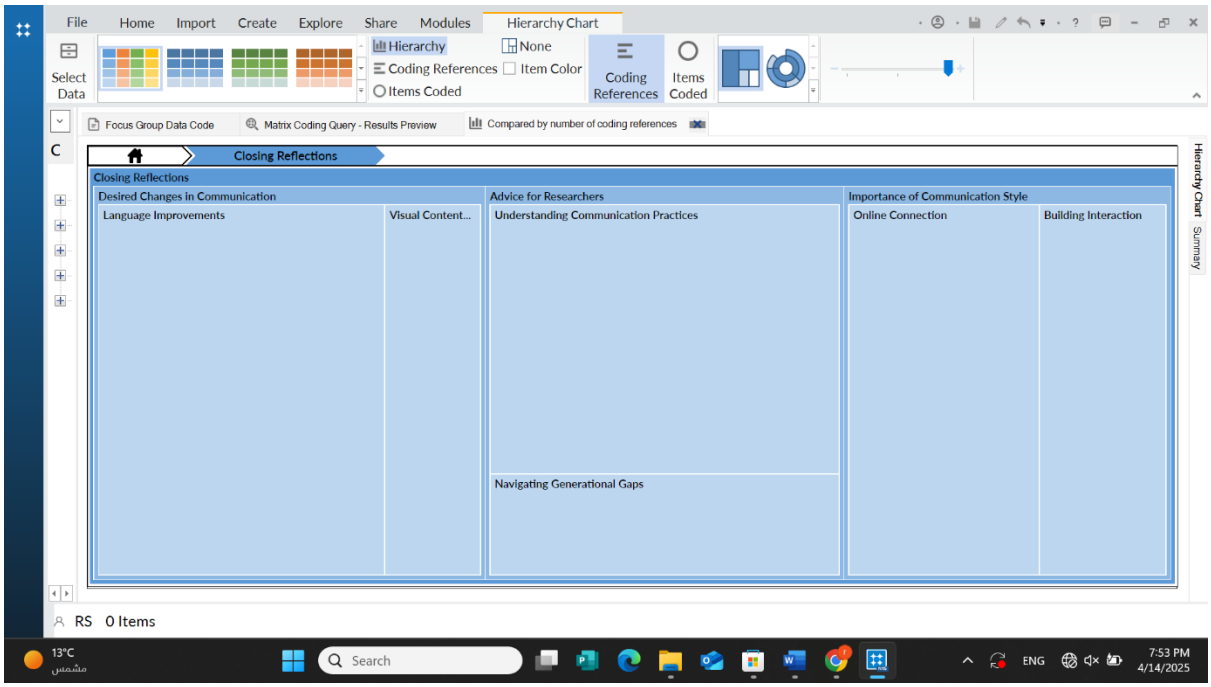


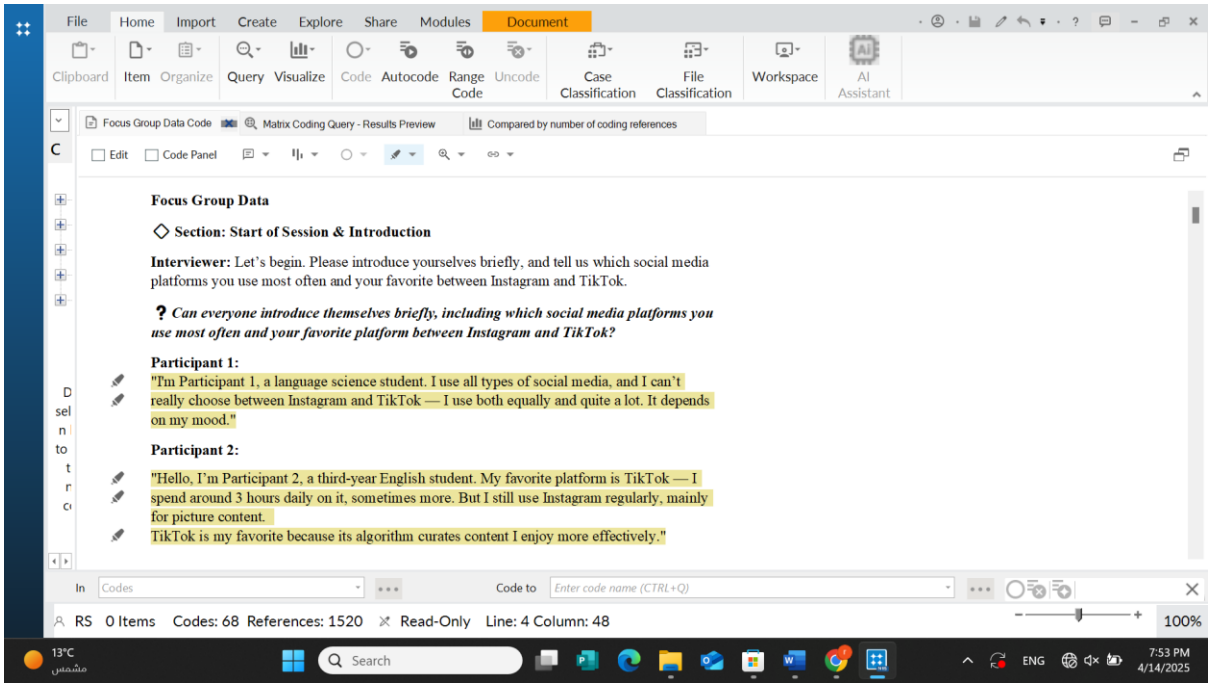

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Item Color
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Coding References
Items Coded
Focus Group Data Code
Matrix Coding Query - Results Preview
Compared by number of coding references
Visuals
Functions of Visuals
Expressing Emotion
Humor or Enterta...
Communication Enhance...
Identity Re...
Visual Content Type
Memes
Images
GIFs
Vi...
Visual Impact
Creates Stronger Connection
Alters Meaning
Preference o...
Language Styles
Reasons for Informal Language
Emotion & T...
Reflects P...
Belonging and ...
Ease & S...
Slang & Internet Language
Cultural Ma...
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Connection through Language
Builds Closeness
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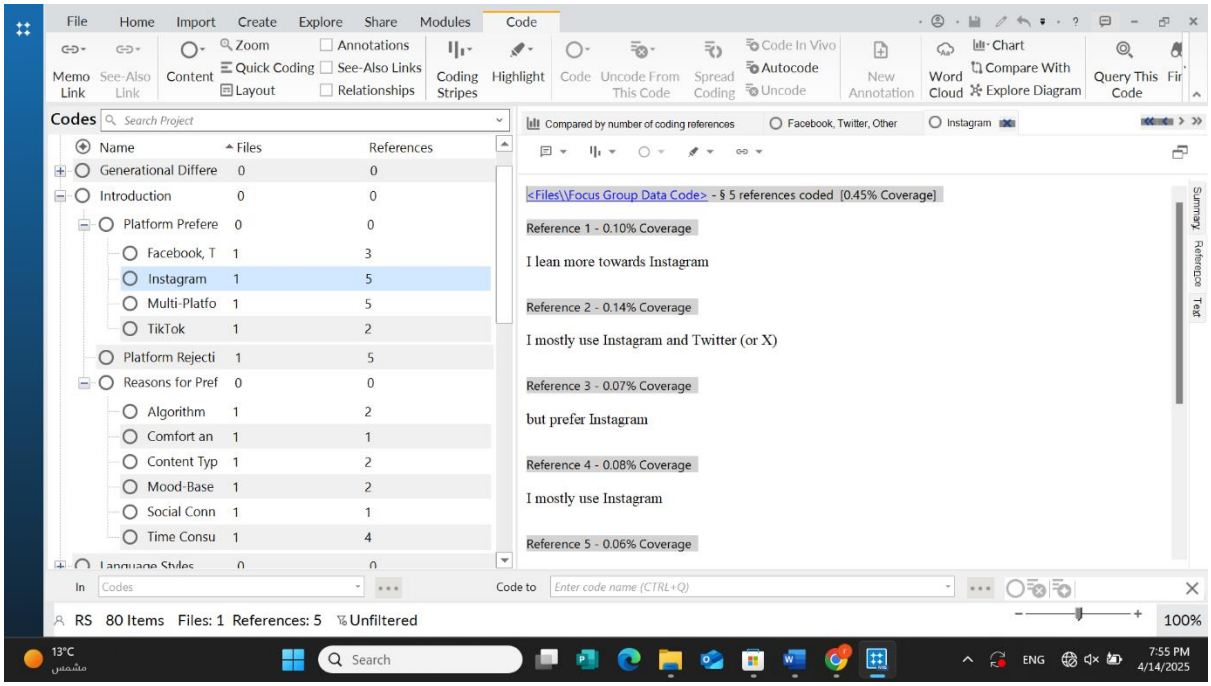

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Navigating Generational Gaps
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Compared by number of coding references
Edit
Code Panel
Focus Group Data
◇ Section: Start of Session & Introduction
Interviewer: Let's begin. Please introduce yourselves briefly, and tell us which social media platforms you use most often and your favorite between Instagram and TikTok.
? Can everyone introduce themselves briefly, including which social media platforms you use most often and your favorite platform between Instagram and TikTok?
Participant 1:
"I'm Participant 1, a language science student. I use all types of social media, and I can't really choose between Instagram and TikTok — I use both equally and quite a lot. It depends on my mood."
Participant 2:
"Hello, I'm Participant 2, a third-year English student. My favorite platform is TikTok — I spend around 3 hours daily on it, sometimes more. But I still use Instagram regularly, mainly for picture content.
TikTok is my favorite because its algorithm curates content I enjoy more effectively."
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Memo Link
See-Also Link
Content
Zoom
Quick Coding
Layout
Annotations
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Uncode From This Code
Spread Coding
Code In Vivo
Autocode
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Word Cloud
Chart
Compare With
Explore Diagram
Query This Code
Codes
Search Project
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Generational Differe 0 0
Introduction 0 0
Platform Prefere 0 0
Facebook, T 1 3
Instagram 1 5
Multi-Platfo 1 5
TikTok 1 2
Platform Rejecti 1 5
Reasons for Pref 0 0
Algorithm 1 2
Comfort an 1 1
Content Typ 1 2
Mood-Base 1 2
Social Conn 1 1
Time Consu 1 4
Compared by number of coding references
Facebook, Twitter, Other
Instagram
<Files\\Focus Group Data Code> - § 5 references coded [0.45% Coverage]
Reference 1 - 0.10% Coverage
I lean more towards Instagram
Reference 2 - 0.14% Coverage
I mostly use Instagram and Twitter (or X)
Reference 3 - 0.07% Coverage
but prefer Instagram
Reference 4 - 0.08% Coverage
I mostly use Instagram
Reference 5 - 0.06% Coverage
Summary
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ملخص

في العصر الحديث، أحدثت منصات التواصل الاجتماعي، مثل إنستغرام وتيك توك، تحولاً جذرياً في كيفية تواصل الأفراد من مختلف الأجيال افتراضياً. في الواقع، لا تُنشئ هذه المنصات مساحة افتراضية تُسهّل سد الفجوة بين مختلف الفئات العمرية فحسب، بل تُشجّعهم أيضاً على استخدام أشكال تعبير متنوعة من خلال أنماط لغوية ومرئية تعكس هوياتهم الجيلية. على الرغم من أن الدراسات السابقة استكشفت التفضيلات اللغوية والمرئية لجيل الألفية وجيل زاد تجاه إنستغرام وتيك توك، إلا أنه لا تزال هناك فجوة كبيرة في فهم كيفية تجلّي هذه الاختلافات الجيلية في السياق الجزائري. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مقارنة وتحليل الطرق المختلفة التي يستخدم بها جيل الألفية وجيل زاد في الجزائر أنماط اللغة والمرئيات في تواصلهم بين الأجيال على إنستغرام وتيك توك. تعتمد هذه الدراسة على نهج مختلط، يجمع بين تقنيات جمع البيانات الكمية والنوعية. أُجري استطلاع رأي على 209 مشاركين مُصنّفين حسب الأجيال لجمع بيانات حول تفضيلاتهم اللغوية والمرئية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أُجريت مجموعات تركيز لاستكشاف العوامل المؤثرة على هذه التفضيلات، مثل التأثيرات الثقافية، والإلمام التكنولوجي، والهوية الجيلية. بعد ذلك، أُجري تحليل محتوى منشورات مختارة على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي لتحديد أنماط استخدام اللغة والصورة، مما يوفر فهمًا شاملاً لكيفية اختلاف هذه العناصر بين الجيلين. كشفت النتائج عن بعض الاختلافات بين الجيلين وكيفية استخدامهم لأنماط اللغة والصورة على إنستغرام وتيك توك. حيث فضّل جيل الألفية مزيجًا متوازنًا من اللغة الرسمية وغير الرسمية مع محتوى صور متوسط، بينما فضّل جيل زاد لغة عامية غير رسمية وصورًا عاطفية، وخاصة على تيك توك. تعكس هذه الأنماط بطريقة ما العادات الرقمية والتأثيرات الثقافية والطرق التي يستخدمها أفراد كل جيل للتعبير عن الهوية ووضع أسس التواصل بين الأجيال في الجزائر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أنماط اللغة، الصور، التواصل بين الأجيال، الجزائر، إنستغرام، تيك توك، جيل الألفية، جيل زاد

Résumé

À l'ère moderne, les plateformes des réseaux sociaux comme Instagram et TikTok ont radicalement transformé la façon dont les individus de différentes générations communiquent virtuellement. En effet, ces plateformes créent non seulement un espace virtuel facilitant le rapprochement entre les différentes cohortes d'âge, mais les encouragent également à utiliser diverses formes d'expression à travers des styles linguistiques et visuels reflétant leurs identités générationnelles. Bien que des études antérieures aient exploré les préférences linguistiques et visuelles des Millennials et de la Génération Z pour Instagram et TikTok, il subsiste un manque important de compréhension de la manière dont ces différences générationnelles se manifestent dans le contexte algérien. L'objectif de cette étude est de comparer et d'analyser les différentes manières dont les Millennials et la Génération Z en Algérie utilisent les styles linguistiques et visuels dans leur communication intergénérationnelle sur Instagram et TikTok. Cette étude utilise une approche mixte, combinant des techniques de collecte de données quantitatives et qualitatives. Une enquête est menée auprès de 209 participants stratifiés par génération afin de recueillir des données sur leurs préférences linguistiques et visuelles. De plus, des groupes de discussion sont organisés pour explorer les facteurs influençant ces préférences, tels que les influences culturelles, la familiarité technologique et l'identité générationnelle. Une analyse du contenu de publications sélectionnées sur les réseaux sociaux est ensuite réalisée afin d'identifier les tendances en matière d'utilisation du langage et des visuels, permettant ainsi de comprendre en détail comment ces éléments varient entre les deux générations. Les résultats ont révélé des différences entre les deux générations et leur façon d'utiliser les styles de langage et les visuels sur Instagram et TikTok. Les Millennials privilégient un équilibre entre langage formel et informel, avec des images de qualité moyenne, tandis que la génération Z privilégie un langage informel basé sur l'argot et des images chargées d'émotion, notamment sur

TikTok. Ces tendances reflètent les habitudes numériques, les influences culturelles et les moyens utilisés par les membres de chaque génération pour exprimer leur identité et poser les bases de la communication intergénérationnelle en Algérie.

Mots-clés : Algérie, communication intergénérationnelle, Génération Z, Instagram, Millennials, styles de langage, TikTok, visuels