

# Generation Z's Social Presence on Social Media

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**Abstract:** Generation Z, as digital native in the network era, often need to deal with multi-communication. In this process, Generation Z need to take various tasks at the same time. This paper will discuss social presence types for people born in 1995-2000 from lens of Tuner's multi-communication theory, and analyze what are the impacts of multi-communication, and what are the influences of social media on Generation Z's daily social interaction. This paper employed survey and in-depth interview, finding the boundary between work and life has been blurring for Generation Z, but they have been adopted to multi-communication lifestyle.

## 1. Introduction

Generation Z generally refers to those born between 1995 and 2004. This group was born during the dot-com boom. Many people have a computer at home from birth or at a very young age. As a "native" of the Internet, Generation Z prefers to communicate daily via social media. On the Internet, compared with other generations, Generation Z prefers to express their opinions, share daily life, and communicate with family and friends through social software. Those born between 1995 and 2000 are facing problems graduating and entering the workforce for the first time. Generation Z's communication style is challenged. Increased challenges in study and work. Life has become more stressful than ever. As a native of the Internet age, balancing social networking with the life and work of Generation Z is particularly important. Through the investigation of generation Z, this paper studies the role of social media in generation Z's daily work and study. The significance and disadvantages of online social networking for generation Z are also the focus of this study. Besides, with the arrival of smartphones, communication between people is more convenient. With the development of information, the communication environment is no longer just face-to-face communication. Social media feeds, email exchanges, online meetings are all happening at the same time. However, people's energy and attention are limited. Generation Z needs to attract the attention of others and allocate their cognitive resources reasonably in multicultural communication. How does social diversity affect Generation Z? How Generation Z handles multiple communications in life and work. Further, the use of social media by Generation Z to accomplish these tasks in multi-communication is discussed.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Characteristics of Generation Z

With the advent of the electronic age, Generation Z is constantly communicating with others on the information. In the morning by read what others are sharing on social media [1]. Generation Z answered essential customer emails in meetings, communicated with friends, and put forward their opinions according to the teacher's explanation in class. In the age of smartphones, communication is no longer just face-to-face. It is more of non-verbal communication. Therefore, the communication environment is no longer a fixed place. In the case of multi-media and multi-context, the context of communication also becomes rich and high-speed [2]. Communication through social media Generation Z is familiar with multi-scene communication. More and more Generation Z are expressing their opinions on social platforms—skilled use of social software to communicate. In many cases,

Generation Z is not just communicating with one person. They are often multitasking on social software.

Even many of them have more social freedom on social media than they can socialize in real life. The communication process of multitasking improves the efficiency of communication and brings about the problem of attracting attention. Many times, Generation Z will respond to emails from essential customers during meetings. The meeting moderator will not notice this, and the client will not notice that Generation Z is multitasking while receiving messages late. Generation Z, however, will be aware of the problem. Generation Z will often try to grab the participants' attention when they are in charge of the meeting. Individuals must make strategic choices about how to construct and manage their online social presence, strive to be perceived in a specific way, and interact with others in a communicative environment of diverse communication. They must try to project themselves into the communicative world of others [3]. In the research process, few people will focus on the target group born between 1995 and 00. Most of them are in graduate school or are already working. They are the most multitaskers and communicators [4]. Most of them are still in the primary stage, whether they are studying or working. Most of the time, this group can only passively receive opinions without the opportunity to express their views. Being unable to express their opinions for a long time can increase the social pressure of the group [5]. The way they manage their stress is more by expressing their opinions on social media. In daily life, they will be more comfortable communicating with friends and sharing with family members and have the opportunity to express their opinions [5].

## **2.2 Theoretical Frame**

As Turner mentions in the article, social presence can be divided into four kinds: budgeted, entitled, competitive, and invitation social presence. Budgeted means people will have to decide which of several things is happening simultaneously to pay more attention. Entitled means people will control the environment without any disturbance. People force others' attention on themselves. Competitive means people will use different methods to attract others on what they say. Invitation means people will share some exciting things and the process of forming positive interactions with other [6].

With the advent of the intelligent age and the epidemic, the communication methods of people born in 1995-2000 will be analyzed from the following four aspects. Whether people born in 1995-2000 have long-term multitask communication? Whether the boundary between work and entertainment is affected by social media? Where is the boundary between mass communication and interpersonal communication in social media? For those born in 1995-2000, does online socializing affect real-life interactions?

## **3. Methods**

This paper mainly adopts two research methods. Firstly, quantitative analysis was carried out through a questionnaire survey, and then qualitative research was carried out through in-depth interviews.

### **3.1 Survey**

The first research method is survey. The reason for choosing this method is to analyze the social status of Generation Z through a large amount of data. The data of people born in 1995-2000 were extracted by forwarding questionnaires in WeChat moments. A total of 82 questionnaires were sent out, and 74 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective rate of 90.2%. The age group was 21-26; The sex ratios were 56.76% for females and 43.24% for males.

### **3.2 In-depth Interview**

The first research method is the in-depth interview. There are relatively concentrated questions in the questionnaire. Through the in-depth interview, the reasons why Generation Z chooses these processing methods are found. Five of them were interviewed. Interviewee A (female, 25, investment banking analyst) Interviewee B (male, 24, securities firm employee) Interviewee C (Male, 26, officer

of public relationship company) Interviewee D (male, 21, computer science undergraduate) Interviewee E (male, 23, electrical engineering graduate). For the ethical concern, their names were hidden in this paper.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Most of Generation Z are Multi-communicators

According to the questionnaire survey, almost all Generation Z in China cannot live without WeChat. WeChat, as social software, facilitates people's communication to a large extent. Under such circumstances, the Multi-communication of Generation Z has become more than that of other eras. As interviewee A said, "I often have to reply to emails sent to me by customers during meetings. Most of the time, I can roughly predict the content of meetings in advance, but I have to meet customers' requirements the first time. When both are happening at the same time, I tend to focus more on the client's temporary needs." Interviewee A's behavior is a kind of budged social presence.

Through these data, it is not difficult to find that the communication mode of generation Z has gradually changed from one-to-one communication offline to one-to-many communication online. According to statistics, more than half of people use more than one social software at a time. Reply to WeChat messages of essential customers in meetings, browse Weibo in class. One-third of them said they check WeChat and reply in time even when they are off work. 63.51% of them think it is very efficient to communicate with colleagues through the Internet. In the process, it will not only help Generation Z better arrange their time at work. It can timely express their views and get the recognition of the other party. Although multi communication at work is inevitable, it is often straightforward to communicate with the atmosphere through social software. In this way, the scenes in Multi-Communication become more varied, and the tension caused by work is eliminated. Generation Z also tends not to feel too painful in the process of work and study.

In addition to professional reply messages, Generation Z also enjoys multi communication in daily life. Communicate with different friends on WeChat at the same time. Alternatively, talk to their friends about the problem while watching the video. According to the survey, more than half of people will reply to WeChat and share their views with their friends timely when watching videos. Interviewee E said, "In daily life, I often share interesting short videos on Tiktok to communicate with my friends. In short video sharing, my friend and I naturally discussed the topic in a relaxed atmosphere. Many of my friends and I do not study in the same city, and many even study abroad. Through communication on social media, we can become strangers and share exciting things around us anytime and anywhere. "In this case, communication is simply Invitation social presence. Form an interactive conversation about topics of interest to the other person.

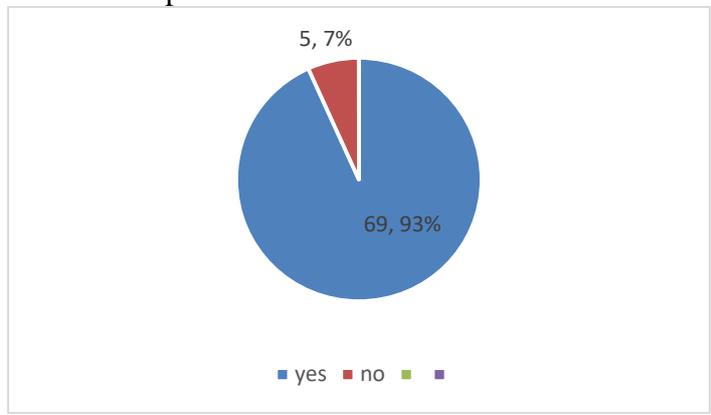


Figure 1. Do you use social media during class/work? Yes: 93.24%, No: 6.76%

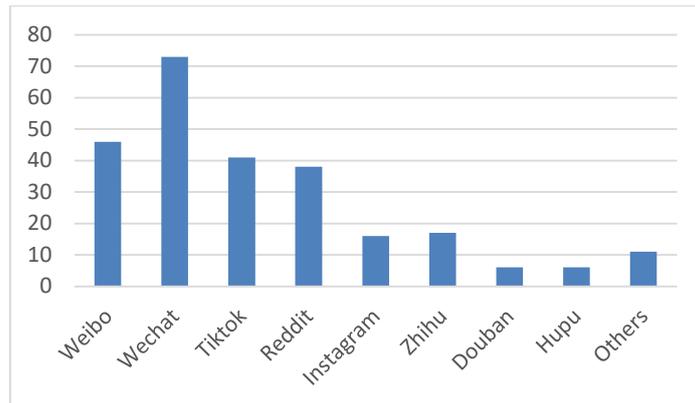


Figure 2. Please choose the three social/video apps you use most? The top three were WeChat 98.65%, Weibo 62.16% and Tiktok 55.41%

#### 4.2 The Boundaries between Work and Life Has Been Blurring

Social interaction is a big part of Generation Z's life. However, due to the rise of WeChat, Weibo and Tiktok, many people have shifted the social scene to online. Complete work handover through WeChat communication. Build connections with friends through significant events on Weibo. Thus, they can share what is going on between friends. Establish a relaxed and pleasant communication atmosphere with friends through sharing short videos. Among them, 82.43% believe that the rise of social platforms facilitates communication between generation Z and classmates and friends. However, while these social apps have brought them closer to their friends, they have also blurred the boundary between work and life. According to a study, 93 percent of Generation Z continue to process work messages through social apps such as WeChat during off-hours. As interviewee C mentioned, regular companies can leave work at six o'clock. However, it has been a long time since I did not deal with work after work. Most of the time, I do get home at six o'clock. Nevertheless, I reply to messages when I get home—more relevant press releases according to customer requirements. Even on weekends, I have not had a good outing with my friends for a long time because, in playing, there are often unexpected events, such as some urgent public relations affairs that I need to help clients deal with. I think my life has been completely taken over by work because of social media."

Although the communication atmosphere on the Internet is relaxed and efficient, it is undeniable that the rise of social software has made generation Z work longer, and to a considerable extent, encroachment on entertainment time. In addition, the sharing function of social software also makes work and life blurred. For example, WeChat and Weibo both have the function of sharing news. More than 85% of generation Z choose to share their daily life on WeChat once a week to half a year. Nevertheless, many of Generation Z's closest friends are colleagues or classmates. In this case, sending moments becomes more than just sharing entertainment. Sometimes, to be freer to display their entertainment life, according to the survey, nearly 90% of Generation Z choose to shield others. Among them, 66.2 percent said they shield their parents and bosses at work from sharing news. As the boundaries between work and life blur, Generation Z will often create their comfort zone by forming groups or sharing private conversations with friends only about things that interest them. As interviewee B said, "Most of the time, I post on WeChat moments to share my life with my peers. However, when my colleagues or leaders seem to have some friends, they will misunderstand me and even judge me as not working seriously. And when I used Internet slang, my parents thought that some words might make others think I was rude. Gradually, I chose groups to express my opinions and share my daily life." This is a combination of competitive and invitation. By sharing ideas, he hopes to attract others' attention and be more willing to listen to what he wants to share, but he selectively invites others to discuss with him. Share different things with people who are interested in different people.

In a world where the boundary between work and life is blurred, there is often a great deal of pressure for Generation Z to continue to communicate effectively. A lot of Generation Z, more than 80% of Generation Z, will choose to joke with friends. In the process of teasing, it once again discusses

the common phenomenon of the public and at the same time completes the maintenance of interpersonal relationships with friends. In addition, generation Z will learn much new vocabulary through short video browsing in life and entertainment. Attract more people to listen to them by using these new words at work. For example, in the current news reports of many media, explosive events will be selected for the first time and accompanied by popular words. To increase the number of clicks on the article. In this process, while the scenes in life impact work, mass communication also plays a crucial role in work.

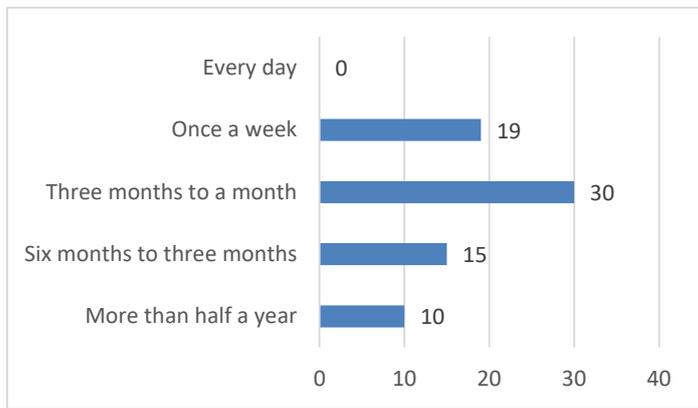


Figure 3. How long will it take to post a moment?

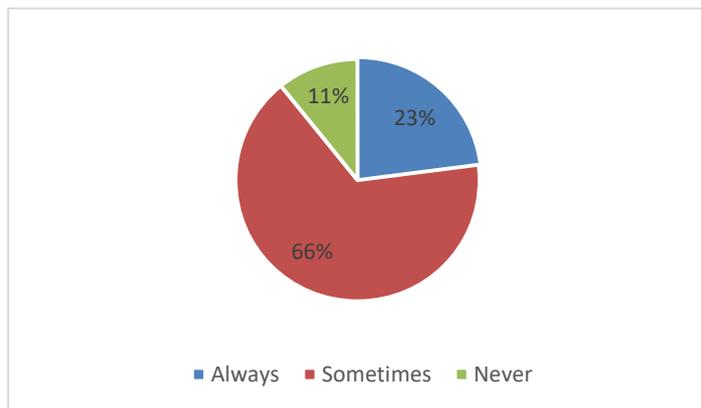


Figure 4. Do you use social media groups?

### 4.3 Interpersonal Communication could be impacted by Mass Communication

According to the survey, 89 percent of Generation Z create social groups. In the case of establishing social groups, only 80% of Generation Z will express their opinions on the part they are interested in and their friends about the events published on social media. More than half of Generation Z either stay home to watch TV and communicate with friends when it comes to entertainment. Watching TV shows to relieve stress from work can also bring new topics to talk about with friends. More than 85 percent of people socialize through forum websites, such as Zhihu, Douban, and Hupu. By posting their opinions anonymously on forums, Generation Z is unknowingly influenced by many emerging ideas. As well as resonating with Generation Z, these new ideas have given them some serious thought. In daily life, Generation Z will also discuss with friends the current popular topics. Among them, 74.32% said that the frequency of discussion with friends and partners is very high. Further, expand the circle of friends of Generation Z through discussion of topics on social media.

As the native people of the Internet age, Generation Z are more willing to share their lifestyles through social platforms. The process of re-sharing is to convey their attitude towards life to the public. Most of the time, in sharing, interpersonal communication will be completed through friends' comments and friends. Sometimes, many friends even chat privately through a circle of friends. In the process of private chat, generation Z shares their current situation with friends and discusses current social events, thus completing interpersonal communication through mass communication.

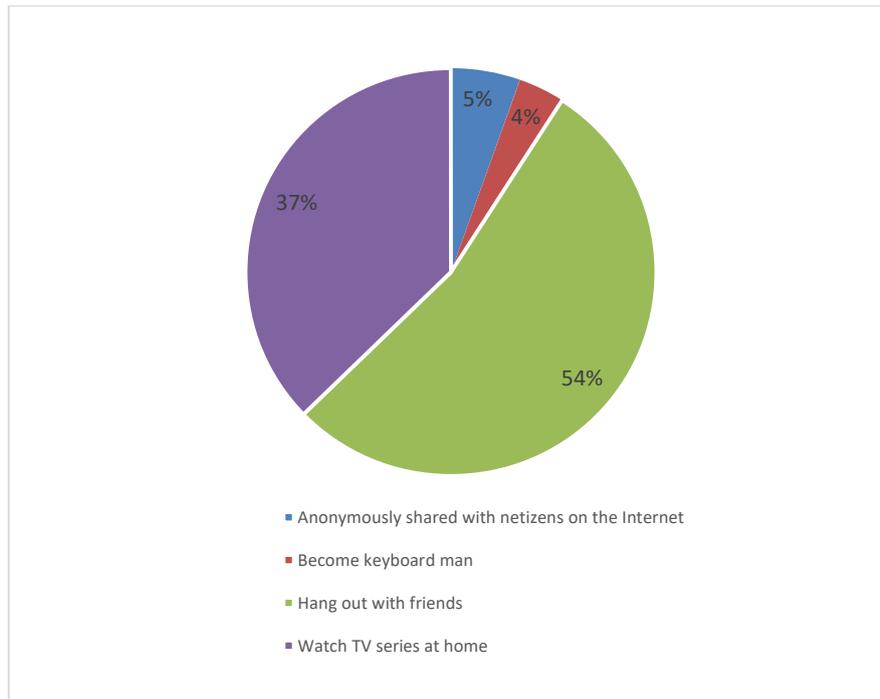


Figure 5. How do you decompress daily? (Multiple choice)

## 5. Discussion

This paper finds that Generation Z would like to use competitive social presence and invitation social presence in their daily life from lens of social presence theory.

### 5.1 Multi-communication has helped Generation Z adapt to an efficient lifestyle

As natives of the Internet age, Generation Z often maintains a state of multi-communication on the Internet. Wechat became their primary social networking tool. Meanwhile, in the life of generation Z, whether at work or in life, they often choose to check WeChat and reply to new messages within a certain period. The budget social presence usually applies to people in school or just entering the Labour market in 1995-2000. Because they have too much experience in multi-communication, generation Z can judge, which is more critical almost at the first time when two things are parallel. Furthermore, devote more of their attention to more important things later in the day. Generation Z can handle multi-tasks well most of the time, but there is still a shortage of managers when multiple tasks are essential. Many Generation Z chooses to pause one thing and focus on the other.

Like indigenous people in the Internet age, many Generation Z born in China had experienced social presence by their parents or teachers when they were in middle and high school. Moreover, in many necessary tests, their environment is the controlled one. Generation Z leaders sometimes ask their phones to be silenced or turned off during meetings. Because of the many experiences of being controlled in their social environment, Generation Z is slowly not entitled to have a social presence. Generation Z generally feels that this situation is not achieving the results they want.

For Generation Z, however, competitive social presence is a regular occurrence. They often want to influence their audience to focus solely on their message. In many cases, Generation Z will achieve the effect that others can only achieve through entitled social presence through their competitive social presence behaviors, which is hard for Generation Z. Most of the time, Generation Z will share GIFs and use popular Internet words to arouse the audience's interest for the next presentation meeting. In addition, Generation Z widely uses PPT in meetings because generation Z summarizes their own words in more concise words so that the audience can identify what Generation Z wants to share.

However, although many Generation Z people have been used to multi-communication, they do not like it. In many cases, multi-communication improves the work efficiency of Generation Z, and at

the same time, generation Z cannot relax. In daily life, life is always accompanied by work, and the extension of overtime hours all lead to the tension of generation Z. When communicating with friends, they often hope that the topic is easy and exciting. Invitation social presence is essential in this process. In communication, generation Z tends to choose the topics that the audience is interested. Interesting topic facilitates the development of the topic and the interaction with friends.

### **5.2 Online Socializing Has an Impact on Real-life Socializing**

For those born in 1995-2000, the impact of online socializing on real-life interactions is profound. For example, more and more Generation Z now produces invitation Social Presence. Invitation social presence is when they compete with people communicating online for their audience. For example, when friends get together, they often share their time first to attract their attention. Then, describe the cause and effect of the event. In addition, many students who are still in school get through boring classes by socializing in real life. For example, graphic design students sometimes talk to their friends about picture editing in class and ignore the teacher's lecture. There are even many programs for asking doctors online. Many diseases cannot be judged by simple pictures and what the patient describes best. In such cases, online socializing takes the place of going to the hospital in real life, quickly leading to illness aversion. It can be seen that although online social communication improves people's work efficiency, it has a significant impact on interpersonal communication and other aspects. For friends who are no longer in the same city, online communication can deepen their friendship. In real life, generation Z who do not live in the same city rarely see each other. Things that cannot be shared in real life may reduce the desire to share when we meet again. Nevertheless, if it is time for online communication, the friendship between friends will not become far because of the distance.

Sharing daily life through social media also reflects another current situation of Chinese Generation Z in life. Many Generation Z is moving away from home, going to school, and working in cities different from where they were born. Due to regional differences, there are often differences in communication between generation Z., But social media is for the masses. The big things that happen on social media know no boundaries. Communicating significant events through social media can help Generation Z quickly close the social distance with their peers. With the expression of invitation social presence, generation Z can make a good transition into interpersonal communication through significant events spread by the mass.

### **5.3 The Generation Z' Behaviour for Online Social Networking**

In the workplace, Generation Z tends to adopt a competitive social presence. For example, when communicating with customers on WeChat, many Generation Z will communicate with customers by observing their daily idioms. Customers prefer to listen to what Generation Z says next in a familiar context. It will also be more smooth for generation Z to introduce their plans. In addition, when communicating with office members, Generation Z will use PPT sharing to attract others' attention. Compared with other ways, PPT is relatively time-consuming. In this case, others will also attach great importance to the sharing of Generation Z. PPT has concise language and clear logic, which can better enable the audience to focus on the discourse expounded by Generation Z. Generation Z believes that they can also attract the attention of others so that more people can recognize their opinions.

Moreover, in many cases, Generation Z will hardly use entitled social presence. Generation Z generally believes that forced listening is counterproductive. However, in everyday life, Generation Z is often the one being controlled. For example, elders need to look directly at each other when communicating, and phones should be silent or turned off during meetings. However, Generation Z cannot better listen to conference speakers just because they are away from their gadgets. So when Generation Z themselves become spokespeople, they do not have an entitled social presence.

Finally, Generation Z begins its invitation social presence by sending content in groups on moments. Generation Z often has different ways of communicating with different people. Sending moments in groups is itself an invitation to communicate with others. Generation Z is oriented to attract others to communicate, attempting to form good interactions with others. Through Invitation Social Presence, Generation Z has narrowed the communication distance with friends and avoided

unnecessary misunderstandings to some extent. The daily communication between generation Z and colleagues and leaders is usually very formal. However, if something different happens in posting messages on WeChat and daily work, it will sometimes lead to doubts about their working ability. As a result, invitation social presence has become an essential way for most generation Z to communicate.

## **6. Conclusion**

The rise of social media also brings multi-communication with more scenarios. Among them, Generation Z is budgeted, entitled, competitive, and Invitation social Presence. Under the influence of social media, the boundary between work and life is gradually blurred and has been greatly influenced by mass communication. In addition, online social communication is a double-edged sword. Many times, people tend to ignore communication in real life because of online communication. This study adopts the form of a questionnaire survey. The sample data is not fully representative of all Generation Z. The findings are limited.

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