

Influence of Romantic Relationship Posts on Instagram and Twitter among Gen Z

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Abstract

Social media have been identified as key influencers on how Gen Z perceives romantic relationships. For this study, Instagram and Twitter were used to represent social media. This study investigated the influence of Instagram and Twitter posts on romantic relationships among Gen Z undergraduate students of Redeemer's University. The survey research design was used with a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The questionnaire was administered to 373 undergraduates of Redeemer's University which comprised departments with the highest population of students in all faculties. The findings of this study indicated a strong association between Instagram and Twitter posts and romantic relationships among Gen Z undergraduates. The findings revealed that Instagram and Twitter significantly impact romantic relationships, including self-perception, communication, and overall relationship satisfaction. Participants reported that carefully curated posts on these platforms often contributed to the perception of romantic relationships. Therefore, this study suggests the need for increased awareness, critical reflection, and social media usage among Gen Z undergraduates. Parents, educational institutions, and relationship counsellors can be vital in guiding and promoting healthy digital habits. Strategies such as media literacy programmes, relationship education workshops, and open dialogue can empower students to navigate the complexities of social media and foster healthier and more fulfilling romantic relationships. It is strongly recommended that further research be embarked upon to examine other factors that influence romantic relationships among Gen Z undergraduates, as this study is by no means exhaustive of the subject matter.

Keywords: Gen Z, Influence, Instagram, Romantic Relationships, Twitter, Undergraduate Students.

Introduction

The historical evolution of communication begins with the utilisation of spoken language and subsequently expands to include various forms of media such as print, electronic, and digital platforms. During the period characterised by oral communication, the successful transmission of information was contingent upon the physical coexistence of both the sender and the recipient, typically within the confines of a limited assembly. Verbal communication relies on the cognitive abilities of memory and auditory perception, thereby requiring heightened precision in the transmitted information. Hence, it is imperative for

both the sender and recipient of the message to establish a shared sense of trust in each other's dependability. The emergence of digital communication has enabled the widespread dissemination of a broader range of opinions and perspectives, independent from the regulatory influence of authoritative individuals who traditionally govern the flow of information (1, 2). Individuals may have access to timely and current information that is not synchronised, depending on various demographic factors such as age, race, sexual orientation, and religion. Digital communication enables individuals to rely on one

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another for information rather than exclusively depends on professionals. Given the higher credibility associated with interpersonal communication than corporate messaging, organisations must adapt their customer targeting strategies and foster personalised relationships (3). The Millennial generation and Generation Z are two cohorts that have experienced a significant increase in the prevalence of technology and communication. The utilisation of technology is the sole element that differentiates them. Generation Z has been nurtured in an epoch distinguished by the ubiquity of tablets, smartphones, and applications. At the same time, Generation Y has matured in an era marked by the prominence of personal computers, mobile phones, and video games. The intersection of communication and identity in a globalised society is a unique phenomenon that merits scholarly consideration (4). Many individuals demonstrate a significant propensity for their mobile devices, frequently developing a profound emotional attachment and dependence on them to the point where they consistently sleep close. These individuals perceive these devices as essential to their physical and personal identities. The on-going proliferation of knowledge, facilitated by the emergence of the digital revolution and new media platforms, mainly social media, leads to the daily perpetual evolution of technology. Social media encompasses computer-mediated technologies that enable individuals to express themselves within online communities and networks by creating and sharing diverse forms of data, ideas, and other types of content (5). Several social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Google, Skype, Messenger, Telegram, and several others, can be identified. The primary emphasis of this investigation will be directed towards the importance of tweets and Instagram posts. It has been reported that a significant proportion, specifically around 75%, of individuals utilising the Internet in Nigeria are actively involved in various social media platforms (6). The emergence of Internet communication has had a profound impact on sociocultural, political, intellectual, and economic interactions (6). The Internet and social media platforms present many advantages; nevertheless, their usage can engender adverse consequences for an individual's interpersonal connections, aptitude for effective communication,

and social standing. A significant association can be observed between social media addiction, which is particularly prevalent among the younger population, and an individual's reliance on messages received via platforms such as Twitter and Instagram. Modern technological devices allow individuals to process information, albeit in diverse ways, while concurrently generating a disconnect between friends and romantic partners and their perception of reality (6). The pervasive integration of social media and digital technologies has become deeply entrenched in the lives of individuals belonging to the current generation from a young age. The media has exhibited its efficacy in serving as a medium for fostering interaction and facilitating the exchange of information. Nevertheless, the psychological ramifications of social media's ever-evolving nature are becoming increasingly evident. The utilisation of media information by young individuals in the context of harm reduction raises concerns. The primary aim of this research is to examine current media outlets that discuss healthy relationships, with a particular emphasis on their applicability to the emotional and psychological welfare, as well as the interpersonal interactions, of young individuals, specifically those who are part of Generation Z. The ultimate objective is to suggest efficacious approaches and interventions that can improve the aspects mentioned above within the framework of the digital era. The objective of this study is to analyse different patterns and societal expectations related to the use of social media and its impact on dating practices. Furthermore, this study investigates individuals' attitudes towards social media's potential positive or negative effects on dating and relationships among the current generation. The study sought to know if posts on Instagram and Twitter lead to avoiding confrontation in romantic relationships, if posts on Instagram and Twitter lower self-esteem in romantic relationships if Gen Z does not think social media has positively impacted dating and relationships and investigate the influence of the posts on Instagram and Twitter on increasing social media users among Gen Z. The generation commonly referred to as Gen Z is experiencing a unique circumstance in which they have extensive access to Internet technology. This can be attributed to their formative years aligning with the late 1990s, which witnessed a significant

revolution in online platforms and services. Generation Z, the latest cohort among the three prominent generations, is widely acknowledged for their exceptional technological proficiency and adeptness in utilising diverse social media platforms. The cohort referred to as Generation Z, comprising individuals born between 1995 and 2010, has exhibited notable aptitude in effectively navigating the digital realm and utilising social media for diverse objectives. The younger generation demonstrates a heightened sense of urgency, displays superior qualities, and encounters unique experiences.

In brief, members of Generation Z possess a heightened awareness of and openness to diverse cultural practices, tend to avoid hastily criticising their peers' online behaviours, and actively cultivate an inclusive digital space (7). Some individuals may need help to grasp the importance of social media entirely. In contrast, others may maintain that older generations uphold traditional values more strongly and exhibit fewer acceptances towards others. Generation Z has readily embraced the emergence of new technology and the internet at a young age, leading to a significant shift in the utilisation and perception of these tools. The observed differences between generations are commonly ascribed to technological advancements rather than being exclusively shaped by social, historical, or cultural factors (7). Generation Z demonstrates a propensity for rapidly consuming information, followed by a quick loss of interest (8). Regarding privacy, Mr Gould expressed that individuals are aware of their brand and have witnessed instances in which older members of Generation Y have erred by excessively disclosing information (8). Generation Z demonstrates more remarkable similarities to their grandparents than the bold millennials regarding the amalgamation of prudence, privacy, and a commitment to ethical pursuits. The profound and rapid impact of the internet on brain circuits and functions has been evidenced by its capacity to deliver repeated, intense, engaging, and addictive sensory and cognitive stimuli (9, 10).

The motivation behind this conduct frequently stems from discontentment with one's self, diminished self-worth, and an aspiration to achieve comparable levels of fame as these online personalities, with the ultimate objective of

augmenting their well-being (11). To proficiently participate in interpersonal communication and accurately comprehend the emotional condition of others, individuals must develop the capacity to employ and identify nonverbal and verbal cues, including eye contact, body language, and tone of voice (11). The fear of Internet addiction is one of the concerns affecting Generation Z. As a result, this factor may potentially contribute to the onset and progression of depressive symptoms, heightened experiences of social isolation, and increased levels of social anxiety (12).

Facebook, a social networking platform boasting a user base surpassing one billion individuals, has garnered significant acclaim as the preeminent platform in contemporary society within its category. This is primarily attributed to these platforms' perceived anonymity (13). The development of social media activities facilitates the establishment of online communication channels between couples. The act of actively expanding one's social network on Instagram can be interpreted as a means of self-promotion, which has the potential to result in heightened levels of popularity (14).

Globally, Gen Z's social media behaviour is characterised by high usage rates, preference for visual content and short-form platforms like TikTok, and a reliance on social media for news and entertainment. They are particularly active on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, using them for connecting with friends, family, and engaging with content. Scholars have established that Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are the most frequently used platforms for Gen Z social media users (15-17). Globally, peer pressure and the desire for social acceptance heavily influence Gen Z's social media behaviour, leading to potential risks and consequences (16, 17). While specific platform usage may vary by region, the general trends of high social media usage, visual content preference, and the role of social media in connecting with others are common across the globe.

Social media platforms created explicitly for romantic relationships enable the recognition and examination of issues within these partnerships. It is believed that relationship disparities would endure even in the absence of Instagram and Twitter, albeit to a lesser degree when compared to Facebook (18). Social networking platforms

provide individuals with a convenient means to monitor and evaluate the well-being of their loved ones in times of relationship unease or uncertainty. Consequently, numerous individuals turn to social media platforms to monitor their partners (19). The termination of a romantic relationship has been found to elicit emotions of unease and sorrow (20). It has equally been established that verbal and nonverbal behaviours can indicate the imminent termination of a relationship (21). Employing the telecommunication technology device in a romantic relationship can be perceived as a strategy to circumvent remote forms of communication (21). Numerous dating applications integrate social media accounts into their algorithms, causing a convergence between dating platforms and social media (8, 22). Moreover, individuals acquire information about prospective partners via online dating profiles (22). Social media consumption is a cross-national phenomenon facilitated by the widespread availability of internet-based platforms; therefore, technology no doubt shapes people's behaviour (23-25). It has also been established that 72.9% of Gen Z spend over an hour on paid subscription services like Netflix and Hulu, while 81% of Gen Z spend 1+ hour daily on social media, with over half using it for 3+ hours, making them an integral part of their digital life (26). This indicates that the issue is globally significant (27). Human emotions have undergone evolutionary changes to facilitate adaptation to the environment and promote survival (28). The recognition of emotions is a fundamental aspect of human existence, serving as a crucial mechanism for survival and the facilitation of social interactions (28, 29). Nevertheless, individuals anticipate receiving a corresponding response in return for their deeds. Individuals engaged in partnerships characterised by mutual exchange demonstrate reduced responsiveness to the emotional needs of their counterparts, in contrast to those involved in reciprocal community connections (30). Emotional reactions to romantic posts on social media, whether positive or negative, can significantly impact mental health and self-esteem. Experiencing jealousy, loneliness, or feelings of inadequacy in comparison to others' perfect relationships can lead to decreased self-esteem and increased anxiety or depression (31,

32). Conversely, positive experiences like feeling loved and supported can enhance well-being and self-esteem. The negative impacts of emotional reactions to romantic posts on social media can increase anxiety and depression. Comparing oneself to idealised romantic images on social media can fuel feelings of inadequacy and lower self-worth, contributing to anxiety and depression. Emotional reactions to romantic posts can lead to jealousy and social comparison. Seeing others' seemingly perfect relationships can trigger feelings of jealousy and social comparison, leading to feelings of envy and loneliness. It can also lead to decreased self-esteem, such that repeated exposure to romantic posts can lead to a distorted perception of relationships, making individuals feel inadequate in their own relationships or single lives, ultimately impacting self-esteem. Romantic posts often feature idealised body images, which can contribute to body image issues and negatively affect self-esteem (31).

On the other hand, the positive impacts of emotional reactions to romantic posts on social media include increased self-esteem; feeling loved and supported in a romantic relationship can boost self-esteem and provide a sense of belonging and happiness. Enhancing well-being, Romantic relationships can positively impact mental health, leading to reduced stress, increased happiness, and improved overall well-being. In the area of social connection, romantic relationships provide social connection and intimacy, which are crucial for overall mental health. Also, romantic partners can provide emotional support during difficult times, helping individuals navigate challenges and build resilience. In summary, while romantic posts on social media can be a source of inspiration and joy, they can also negatively impact mental health and self-esteem if individuals engage in excessive comparison or struggle with feelings of inadequacy. It's important to be mindful of the potential effects of social media and to prioritise mental well-being by seeking support when needed (31).

Using social learning theory to support the study, it was viewed that social interactions play a crucial role in facilitating effective communication of ideas among students, thereby enhancing their understanding of peers during collaborative assignments (33). Consequently, individuals expand their cognitive perspective to incorporate

pertinent information. The internet's constant dissemination of information offers new opportunities for individuals to participate in interactions and leverage the extensive capabilities of this medium (34). The relevance of this concept is particularly pronounced within the framework of the digital era (35).

The theory of self-presentation, also known as dramaturgical theory, views social interactions as theatrical performances where individuals act out roles to create desired impressions. The theory likens social life to a stage, with individuals acting as performers and audiences as spectators (36). Therefore, romantic relationship posts on Instagram and Twitter among Gen Z have amplified the self-presentation theory. Likewise, the networked public theory has had a great influence on Generation Z. The networked public is described as a space constructed through networked technologies and an imagined collective that emerges from the intersection of people, technology, and practice (37). It's a space where people gather for social, cultural, and civic purposes, enabling connections beyond their immediate circles. The unique affordances of networked technologies, such as persistence, search ability, replicability, and scalability, have made networked publics different from traditional publics. Hence, Gen Z has explored the opportunity afforded by the social media networks to collectively take over the space beyond their immediate environment using social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, online forums and communities, digital spaces used for sharing information and collaborating. Furthermore, mediated intimacy theory has been used by Gen Z to influence their environment. Mediated intimacy is the way technology and media influence our intimate relationships and our sense of self (38). It explores how we use technology to connect with others, create intimacy with devices themselves, and how these interactions reshape our understanding of intimacy and social connection. Gen Z uses the available technology to create intimacy, mediated relationship, and as such, influence their environment.

Methodology

This study utilised a quantitative research approach, specifically employing cross-sectional

surveys to execute the study. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design, the researchers effectively elucidated, juxtaposed, scrutinised, and interpreted the data collected while investigating respondents' reactions to Twitter and Instagram. The study sample comprised undergraduate students currently enrolled at Redeemer's University, an educational institution with a total student population of 5331. The study sample comprised 373 individuals who were selected from the study population for this project.

Yaro Yamani was tasked with determining the appropriate sample size for the study.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \dots \dots \dots [1]$$

$$n = \frac{5331}{1 + 5471(0.05)^2} \dots \dots \dots [2]$$

$n = 373$

Where: n = Sample Size [373]

N = Population [5331]

1 = Constant [1]

e = Tolerable Error [0.005²]

The research utilised a multistage sampling methodology, chosen for its capacity to divide a large population into smaller subgroups, improve the efficiency of data collection, and provide a more precise representation of the target population. The researchers aimed to gather data from students across various departments, explicitly focusing on academic levels from 100 to 500. The study utilised the purposive sampling technique, a non-probability approach that involves intentionally selecting individuals based on specific characteristics or qualities pertinent to the research objectives. The departments selected for inclusion in this study were chosen based on their representation of various faculties and the highest enrolment. These departments include Nursing (Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences), Computer Engineering (Faculty of Engineering), Architecture (Faculty of Built Environment Studies), History and International Studies (Faculty of Humanities), Law (Faculty of Law), Accounting (Faculty of Management Sciences), Computer Science (Faculty of Natural Sciences), and Mass Communication (Faculty of Social Sciences). The data collection process involved gathering information from students with a particular emphasis on individuals enrolled in academic levels ranging from 100 to 500 across different departments. This methodology

facilitated a comprehensive viewpoint regarding the research objectives.

The current investigation employed a survey as the primary research tool, developed using a questionnaire as the principal method for data

collection. Data gathered were analysed using a statistical package for social science (SPSS) to perform descriptive analysis, utilising frequency tables and percentages.

Results

Table 1: Use of Social Media Platforms in Romantic Relationships

| Do you have a user account on Twitter and/or Instagram? | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 373 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |

Table 2: Influence of Social Media Posts on Relationship Decision

| S/N | Posts on Social Media Platforms and the Culture of Causal Relationships | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-----|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. | Posts on Instagram and Twitter influenced my decision to be in a relationship | 107 | 89 | 30 | 59 | 88 |
| | | 28.70% | 23.90% | 8.00% | 15.80% | 23.60% |
| 2. | When I see Instagram and Twitter posts on romance, I always desire it | 233 | 33 | 12 | 54 | 41 |
| | | 62.50% | 8.80% | 3.20% | 14.50% | 11.00% |
| 3. | I do causal relationships and not romantic relationships | 80 | 18 | 190 | 66 | 19 |
| | | 21.40% | 4.80% | 50.90% | 17.70% | 5.10% |
| 4. | When I see content on Instagram and Twitter, it makes me want to be single | 47 | 188 | 66 | 19 | 53 |
| | | 12.60% | 50.40% | 17.70% | 5.10% | 14.20% |

The Table 1 shows that 100% of the respondents have a Twitter and/or Instagram user account. The Table 2 shows that most respondents strongly agree that posts on Instagram and Twitter influenced their decision to be in a relationship, most of them strongly agree that they always

desire it when they see Instagram and Twitter posts on romance, and they disagree that they do causal relationships, not romantic ones and they equally disagree that seeing content on Instagram and Twitter makes them want to be single.

Table 3: Social Media Posts and Avoidance of Confrontation in Romantic Relationships

| S/N | Social Media Posts And Avoidance Of Confrontation In Romantic Relationships | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-----|---|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1 | I always have vocal confrontations with my partner | 83 | 74 | 30 | 59 | 127 |
| | | 22.40% | 19.80% | 8.00% | 15.80% | 34.00% |
| 2 | I always avoid any form of confrontation with my partner | 27 | 103 | 23 | 167 | 53 |
| | | 7.20% | 27.60% | 6.20% | 44.80% | 14.20% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 3 | I avoid any form of confrontation with my partner because of the content I see on Instagram or Twitter | 18 | 80 | 50 | 206 | 19 |
| | | 4.80% | 21.40% | 13.70% | 55.20% | 5.10% |
| 4 | Contents on Instagram and Twitter make me want to maintain peace with my partner | 76 | 37 | 180 | 18 | 62 |
| | | 20.40% | 9.90% | 48.30% | 4.80% | 16.60% |
| 5 | Seeing content on Instagram and Twitter makes me want to lash out at the slightest provocation | 64 | 49 | 33 | 167 | 60 |
| | | 17.20% | 13.10% | 8.80% | 44.80% | 16.10% |

Data from this study (Table 3) show that most respondents strongly agree that they always have vocal confrontations with their partners, the majority of the respondents disagree that they always avoid any form of confrontation with their partner, they avoid confrontation with their

partner because of the content they see on Instagram or Twitter, and most respondents disagree that seeing content on Instagram and Twitter makes them want to lash out at the slightest provocation.

Table 4: Posts on Social Media and Self-Esteem in Romantic Relationships

| S/N | Posts On Social Media And Self-Esteem In Romantic Relationships | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-----|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | I do not trust anyone | 66 | 135 | 7 | 59 | 106 |
| | | 17.70% | 36.20% | 1.90% | 15.80% | 28.40% |
| 2 | I do not trust my partner | 53 | 127 | 26 | 117 | 50 |
| | | 14.20% | 34.00% | 7.00% | 31.40% | 13.70% |
| 3 | I believe my partner is capable of cheating on me | 18 | 206 | 10 | 120 | 19 |
| | | 4.80% | 55.20% | 2.70% | 32.20% | 5.10% |
| 4 | My partner lies to me | 36 | 77 | 9 | 180 | 71 |
| | | 9.70% | 20.60% | 2.40% | 48.30% | 19.00% |
| 5 | Posts on Instagram and Twitter make me trust people less | 132 | 100 | 60 | 49 | 33 |
| | | 35.40% | 26.80% | 16.10% | 13.10% | 8.80% |
| 6 | I have come across posts on Instagram and Twitter where partners cheat, and it makes me suspect my partner | 120 | 74 | 50 | 39 | 90 |
| | | 34.00% | 19.80% | 13.40% | 10.50% | 24.10% |
| 7 | I believe cheating is okay if done without one's partner's knowledge | 20 | 63 | 23 | 207 | 60 |
| | | 5.40% | 16.90% | 6.20% | 55.50% | 16.10% |

Table 5: Social Media and Positive Impact on Dating and Relationships

| S/N | Social Media and Positive Impact on Dating and Relationships | SA | A | N | D | SD |
|-----|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Social media has positively impacted my relationships | 48 | 67 | 159 | 34 | 65 |
| | | 12.90% | 18.00% | 42.60% | 9.10% | 17.40% |
| 2 | I never break up with my partner when I follow social media rules and trends | 50 | 76 | 120 | 84 | 43 |
| | | 13.40% | 20.40% | 32.10% | 22.50% | 11.50% |
| 3 | Social media guides me on how to communicate with my partner | 59 | 173 | 17 | 45 | 79 |
| | | 15.80% | 46.40% | 4.50% | 12.10% | 21.20% |
| 4 | Social media encourages faithfulness and loyalty in relationships | 48 | 34 | 156 | 82 | 53 |
| | | 12.90% | 9.10% | 41.80% | 21.90% | 14.20% |

Data presentation from the Table 4 shows that most respondents agree that they do not trust anyone, the majority of the respondents agree that their partner is capable of cheating on them, and most of the respondents disagree that they believe their partner can cheat on them.

The above Table 5 reveals that most respondents disagreed that they never break up with their partners when they follow social media rules and trends and that most respondents disagree that social media encourages faithfulness and loyalty in relationships.

Discussion

After examining the acquired data, the following are the findings from the study based on the research questions. Looking at how posts on Instagram and Twitter influenced the culture of casual relationships more than romantic relationships, the outcome of the study was discussed in relation to the objective. The primary objective of this study is to investigate whether the increased reliance of Generation Z on social media platforms contributes to the development of a culture characterised by more casual relationships compared to earlier generations. Based on the data provided, it can be observed that most respondents express a neutral stance regarding the preference for casual relationships over romantic ones. Additional data reveal that a significant proportion of participants in this study enter into relationships due to the influence of

social media posts, regardless of culture. This finding is not surprising, as social media platforms serve as a means to showcase romantic partners and display affectionate gestures, thereby fostering a desire for love and companionship among individuals. Nevertheless, it is evident that the younger generation, commonly called Gen-Z, lacks enthusiasm towards pursuing a soulmate. This observation serves to elucidate the impartiality observed in their attitudes when faced with the decision of opting for either a romantic or causal relationship. The outcome of this study supports previous studies with the evidence that most Generation Z individuals strongly oppose the concept of romantic soul mates or enduring partnerships (7). The notion of finding a single individual to develop a romantic connection is impractical and overly traditional in the context of contemporary society. Individuals prioritise independence and personal stability over impractical expectations. The findings above corroborate the findings documented in the literature review.

Looking at the trend of how posts on Instagram and Twitter lead to avoiding confrontation in romantic relationships, the study explores the strategies employed in Instagram and Twitter posts to mitigate conflict in romantic relationships. Findings from the study suggest that more than half of the overall sample does not tend to respond aggressively due to the influence of social media. Based on the data presented, it is evident that there

is a predominant disagreement regarding the notion that posts on Instagram and Twitter contribute to the avoidance of confrontation within romantic relationships. A more significant proportion of the participants responded negatively to the impact of Instagram and Twitter on conflict. Put differently, most of the participants express dissent towards social media involvement in conflicts within romantic relationships. Based on the data collected in this study, social media has a minimal or negligible impact on avoiding confrontations between partners in romantic relationships. The aforementioned discovery aligns with the outcomes derived from the literature review conducted in this study. Based on a recent study, it is generally deemed inappropriate for individuals to terminate their relationships through phone calls, text messages, or disengagement on social media platforms; terminating a romantic relationship through telephone can manifest avoidance in distant communication (21). These suggests that the individuals in the relationship opt for mediated communication to terminate their partnership rather than directly facing the emotional turmoil associated with in-person communication.

The study makes further inquiry to know how various posts on Instagram and Twitter lead to lowered self-esteem within romantic relationships. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the potential impact of Instagram and Twitter posts on self-esteem levels within romantic relationships. Inquiries were raised to ascertain whether the utilisation of Instagram and Twitter platforms is associated with diminished levels of self-esteem within the context of romantic relationships among the participants. Findings indicate that most participants demonstrated a correlation between their engagement with Instagram and Twitter content and a diminished sense of self-worth within the context of their romantic partnerships. The accessibility afforded by social networking sites for individuals to monitor the activities of their romantic partners can potentially engender feelings of envy and insecurity within the context of a relationship. The act of a romantic partner expressing approval or leaving comments on another individual's photographs can evoke feelings of envy within their significant other, consequently resulting in conflicts within the relationship. Social networking

services facilitate the accessibility of personal information on a romantic partner due to their inherent lack of privacy measures. According to previous studies, it has been established that individuals experienced a higher frequency of envy as their usage of Twitter and Instagram increased (39). The influence of gender on jealousy within a romantic relationship is a factor that warrants consideration, and there is a tendency for both men and women to exhibit more significant levels of jealousy towards sexual relationships as opposed to emotional infidelity (20).

The study seeks to know the thoughts of Gen Z regarding the positive impact of social media on dating and relationships. The objective of this study is to ascertain the perspective of Generation Z regarding the potential positive effects of utilising social media in dating and relationships. This finding indicates that using social media platforms benefits individuals who are engaged in dating activities. Findings reveal that social networking sites can enhance the dynamics of a romantic relationship by fostering a sense of security when both partners mutually consent to publicly disclosing their connection. Recognising and acknowledging the connections established on Instagram can enhance an individual's overall presentation. The extent to which individuals engage in surveillance activities on social networking sites can be quantified by how much time they allocate to these platforms (19, 27, 31).

The study also seeks to find out how posts on Instagram and Twitter influence the number of social media users among Gen Z. The objective of this study is to ascertain the perspective of Generation Z regarding the potential positive effects of utilising social media in dating and relationships. Findings from this study show that using social networking sites as a means of partnership facilitates the straightforward identification of flaws within relationships. The outcome of the study aligns with previous studies that students hold the belief that, irrespective of the absence of Instagram and Twitter, disparities would still occur, albeit with reduced visibility compared to Facebook (18). Irrespective of age, culture, gender and literacy, social networking has removed the barriers hitherto created by the conventional media. The outcome of the study is supported by the networked public theory, which explains that people gather for social, cultural, and

civic purposes, enabling connections beyond their immediate circles without hindrances (36). Social networking platforms facilitate the ease with which individuals can monitor the activities of their romantic partners, particularly during periods of emotional insecurity or relationship uncertainty. Numerous individuals seek social media platforms to monitor their romantic partners. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have the potential to facilitate the cultivation and sustenance of romantic relationships. Instagram and Twitter provide online platforms for couples to establish connections by facilitating the visibility of each other's profiles, sharing pictures featuring both individuals or depicting their togetherness, and allowing the option to formally link their profiles when the couple updates their relationship status. Therefore, showcasing one's relationships on Instagram can be interpreted as a means of self-presentation, thereby enhancing an individual's social standing (40).

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of romantic relationship posts on Instagram and Twitter among undergraduate students belonging to Generation Z at Redeemer's University. The research identified various factors affecting individuals' love lives and romantic relationships. The study's results indicate a correlation between Instagram and Twitter posts and a cultural shift towards more casual relationships compared to previous generations. There is a correlation between the presence of romantic relationship-related posts on Instagram and Twitter and their impact on romantic relationships within the Gen Z demographic. The study participants also recognised social media's favourable influence on romantic relationships. The study demonstrates that participants utilise social media platforms as a means of efficient communication with their partners due to the favourable impact of social media on their relationships.

The study's findings highlight the significance of social media as a platform that facilitates self-expression and fosters romantic connections across various age groups. It is imperative to highlight several suggestions and recommendations put forth by the researcher. One potential solution is for the government to expand

the availability of social, recreational and sports centres to provide alternatives to online platforms. This approach has the potential to foster increased physical interaction and interpersonal relationships among the younger population. Higher education institutions, governing bodies, governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations responsible for youth affairs should arrange quarterly training programmes and seminars for students and young individuals. These initiatives are expected to foster the development of interpersonal relationships and facilitate positive personal growth. Additionally, the research revealed that many undergraduate students were involved in romantic partnerships. Hence, parents must make concerted efforts to provide comprehensive sex education to their adolescent children engaged in romantic relationships.

The outcome of the study implied that since many undergraduate students were involved in romantic partnerships, parents and educators must make concerted efforts to provide comprehensive sex education to their adolescent children engaged in romantic relationships. The study contributes to knowledge by revealing that participants utilise social media platforms as a means of efficient communication with their partners due to the favourable impact of social media on their relationships. The implication is that social media are platforms that facilitate self-expression and foster romantic connections across various age groups.

Suggestions for Further Study

Since this study looked at the influence of romantic relationship posts on Instagram and Twitter among Gen Z, further studies on longitudinal and qualitative studies should be conducted to compare Instagram to Twitter to know how the platforms' disparities affect the perception and impact of romantic posts since Instagram prioritises pictures and aesthetic arrangement, while Twitter is predominantly conversational and text-oriented.

Abbreviations

Gen Z: Generation Z/Zoomer (those born between the 2000s and early 2010s).

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All authors whose works were cited are duly listed in the references.

Author Contributions

All the authors contributed to the study in terms of conception, writing, reviewing, methodology, data curation, analysis, editing, and funding.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

Ethics Approval

The study received ethical approval from the University Ethical Approval Committee. Reference number: RUN/REC/2024/94.

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