

A Study on Zoomer's Cognitive Behaviour in Connection to their Mental Well-being with Special Reference to Under Graduates, Chennai

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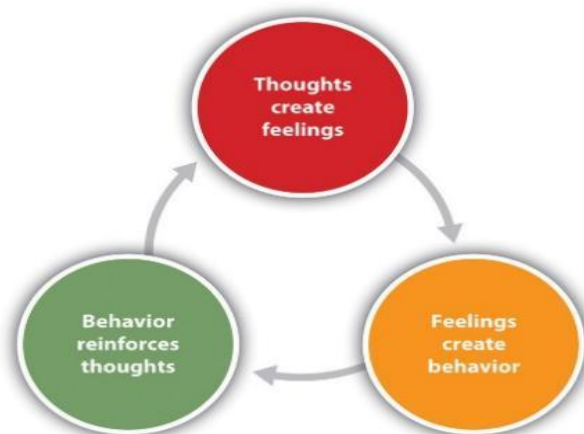
Abstract

In the most recent usage of the term, a Zoomer is a person who belongs to Generation Z, which is defined as those who were born in late 1990s and early 2000s. The Gen Zers follow Gen Xers, who follow the baby boomers, and the millennials (Generation Y) follow them. The term 'Generation Zoomers' describe a group of an individuals who were born into or after the Internet age especially those who grew up with COVID-19 and who have used video conferencing programs like zoom. They are also known as the Zoomer generation or the COVID-19 generation at times. Being the first generation exposed to technology, Zoomers feel more connected and influenced by it which makes them emotionally reliant on other people and less deliberate in their decision making both of which have an impact on their behaviour and mental health. The goal of this research is to comprehend cognitive behaviour of young adult zoomers to examine the factors that affect their behaviour among the undergraduates.

Keywords : Cognitive behaviour, zoomers, characteristics, mental wellbeing, young adult

Introduction

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) focuses on how an individual thoughts, beliefs and attitudes affect the feelings and actions. CBT is widely used approach which emphasizes the interplay between thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Its application to Zoomer undergraduates offers a lens to explore and enhance their cognitive resilience and coping strategies. CBT indicates that emotions thoughts and behavior are interlinked. When one component changes, it will lead to changes in other components as well. The theory outlines how individual's mental processes play a crucial role in behavior development of an individual. Gen X are born between 1960's and 1980's. This generation have a pragmatic outlook, and they value independence. Their thoughts reflect a balance between analogue past and digital future. Generation X have entrepreneurial spirit and emphasize on work life balance by setting a stage for more diversified professional landscape. This generation experienced traditional education environment. Generation Z are born between mid-1990's and early 2010's. This generation have techy savvymindset, and they prefer instant information. They face mental health challenges including concerns of social media, academic pressures. Generation Z are more collaborative and exhibit socially conscious behaviors. As they are accustomed to real time connectivity, they are influenced to expect quick responses and information access. Generation Alpha are born after 2010. They are digital natives from birth. As technology is ingrained in their daily experiences their cognitive development and interaction patterns are shaped by this early exposure.



Impact on mental health:

- 1) Technology Dependent

Increased reliance leads to mental health challenges.

- 2) Emotional Vulnerability

Technology-driven emotions impact mental stability.

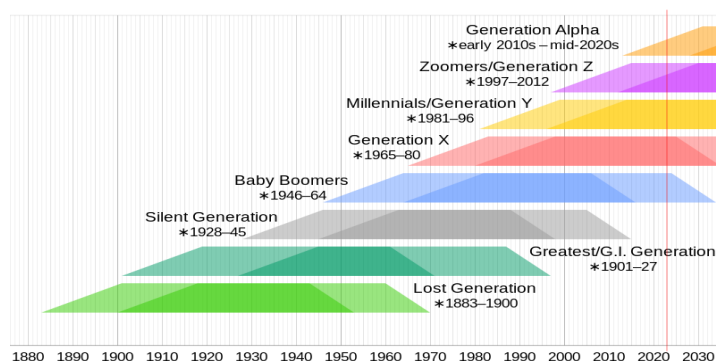
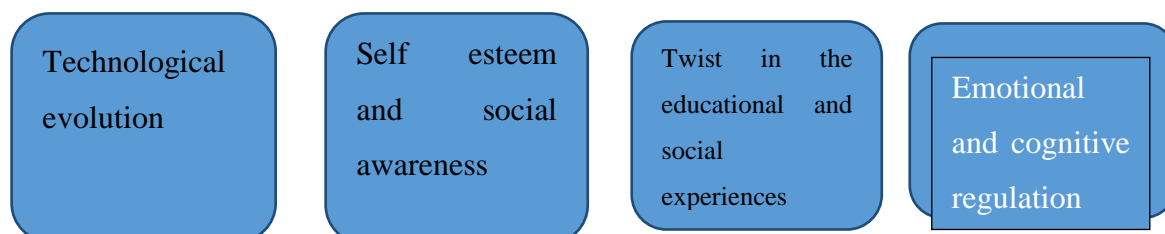
- 3) Behavioral Instability

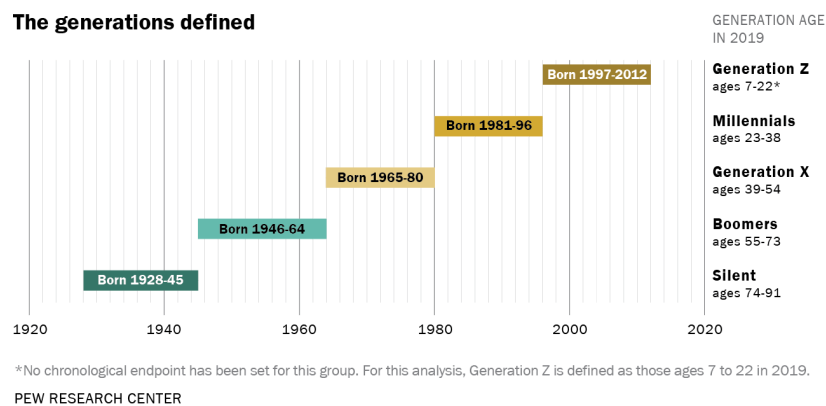
Impulsive behavior due to emotional reliance on technology.

Zoomers / Generation Z & Generation Alpha

Gen X are self-reliant and self-directed as they have lived through the most drastic changes of the social and economic concerns. Zoomers form the bridge between the analog Gen X and techy Gen Alpha. Gen Z follow the millennial's. Zoomers are constantly exposed to digital lives and literacy which contributes to anxiety and low self-esteem in them. They engage in online activism and seek platforms for self-discovery. Zoomers form the collaborative and inclusive management style of system. Rapid technological advancements have long lasting effects on the attention span of zoomers. Therefore, the cognitive, behaviour components of this generation will always be influenced by technology. Training on these emotional regulations and thought pattern needs to be channelized as behavior outcome changes in regard to these components. Zoomers have grown up in more diverse settings than the previous generations. This generation has shift in gender norms, marriage culture and family system. Gen Z are more likely to graduate school may be because of the parents who are of gen X . Though research is still ongoing with respect to Gen Z mental health, there is negative correlation between the mental health and social media. Desires of the parents and maintenance of societal status has been forced on to this generation. Gen Z are more independent and value individuality. As various surveys show Zoomers are less on optimism, the cognitive behavior needs to be considered as crucial. Because the self-esteem, optimism and ability to face challenges in academics and social concern are shaped by the thoughts. Gen alpha marks the new digital age. Because of the vast diversity, the students of this generation need awareness on the social, emotional, and cognitive learning. Unique digital savviness is a characteristic of this generation. Honing the skills of emotional regulation and social awareness can make this generation more empathetic and greater tolerance. Alpha learners are interactive, visual and thrive on hands on learning experiences and the y are still emerging. As alpha students are yet to experience the reforms in social, academic concerns, the study of cognitive behavior of Gen Z and training to them influences Gen Alpha also. Gen Z are the role models and direction markers for the Gen alpha.

Challenges faced by the Zoomers





Significance of the study

The study holds paramount significance that provides insights into interplay between cognitive behavior and mental wellbeing in zoomers undergraduates. By understanding the dynamics of the zoomers, conducive environment for positive development and mental health outcomes can be reaped. By recognizing the influence of demographics on mental health, unique challenges faced by individuals with different demographic backgrounds can be addressed and diverse needs of the undergraduates can be catered by creating inclusive learning environment. By understanding the cognitive dynamics of zoomers strategies that foster positive cognitive development and mental health interventions can be tailored.

The research aims to fill the gaps regarding the psychological implications of Zoomers, who are grown up in digital age and their reliance on technology.

By examining the factors affecting Zoomers' decision-making processes, the study contributes to understand how technology and connectivity shape cognitive development and behaviour of zoomers.

Objectives of the study

The study is based on the assessment conducted on generation Z / Zoomers and their CB in connection to their Mental Well-being with the following objectives:

- Examine the cognitive behavior and investigate the cognitive processes and patterns exhibited by zoomers
- Assess the mental wellbeing of the under graduates considering different demographic factors.
- To investigate how demographic variables influence cognitive behavior
- Evaluate the impact of demographic variables on mental wellbeing of young adults
- To identify the factors influencing the decision-making processes of Zoomers, considering their emotional reliance on technology and connectivity.
- To investigate the cognitive behavior patterns of young adult Zoomers in the context of their technological upbringing and exposure to COVID-19.

Methodology

The study is descriptive, and it aims mainly to the assessment conducted on generation Z / Zoomers and their CB in connection to their Mental Well-being. A survey was conducted to address and observe the zoomers in college environment.

Data is collected from all the undergraduates in Chennai. The questionnaires are distributed to 150 students at various colleges. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was suitably modified and used to measure the factors of CB like thought process, Emotional regulation and behavioural pattern along with their demographic detail and distributed the questionnaire to under graduates. Respondents' data has been analysed with descriptive statistic measures of mean and standard deviation. Correlation study among the variables have also been conducted.

Limitations

The study population was restricted to the Institutions in Chennai, which may be a limitation to the study. Despite efforts to reach a wide audience, the study may suffer from a low response rate, leading to selection bias and thereby reducing the representativeness of the sample.

Review of literatures:

Constantinos Vasilios Priporas (2023) and panel explored the effects of technology distractions and their effect in Gen Z as they are technologically savvy. Technology distraction in Generation Z and the effects on consumer responses, sensory overload, and discomfort among the respondents.

Abutalip D., Yesbossyn M., Pertiwi F.D., Suleimen S.B., Kassymova G.K. (2023) in their article Career guidance for Generation Z: modern methods of professional orientation in a stress Period examines Generation Z from psychological point and explains that there is need for cognitive behavior therapy to make them overcome this stress. Also this article examines that generation Z as more advanced than the previous generations and career guidance can be successful only if stress factor of the generation is addressed.

Dona Vetrisia Yuniarta (2023) explored the mental health self-care behaviour of Gen Z. Lifestyle experienced by Gen Z is causing them mental health problems. This is a descriptive study of purposive sampling.

Raj Aman and Dr. Annapurna Gupta. (2022) in their research, A Study On Mental Health Of High School Students focuses on the mental health in relation to the modernization. Social media exposes high school students to the negative aspects of loneliness, addiction, anxiety. This article also emphasizes that children with less exposure to technology perform better academically and socially.

In their research, Fadhil Pahlevi Hidayat¹, and colleagues (2022) state that social media has positive and negative impact on youth. Negative impacts, effects the mental health and also addiction, pornography, behavioral changes among the youth.

Ramya, S., Michael J Leo, A., Antony Raj, M. (2021) study focused on the mental health of Generation Z, particularly addressing the impact of technology, social media, and the need for mental health cleansing strategies.

In her article on Impact of social media on adolescent's mental health, Anjali Singh and Herendra Kumar (University of Delhi) (2020) proved that there is significant difference in usage of social media of less than two hours and more in adolescents.

In their research on Predictors of Mental Health Symptoms, Automatic Thoughts, and Self-Esteem Among University Students, Duygu Hiçdurmaz (2017), predicts that self-esteem, relationship with parents, age, automatic thoughts influence the mental health of the university students.

Gross, J. J., & Muñoz, R. F. (1995) emphasizes in their study on Emotion regulation and mental health about the importance of emotional regulation on the mental health. The emotional regulatory mechanism helps individual to assess the depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns.

In his study, Albert Bandura, on Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change, Advances in Behaviour Research and Therapy, finds that there is hypothesized relation between the perceives self-efficacy and behavior changes. Variety of vicarious and an active forces influence the cognitive processing of efficacy formation which in turn impacts the behavior that is shaped by the thoughts.

In the research article on the relationship between the affective, behavioral, and cognitive components of attitude, Thomas M. Ostrom (1969) explains that attitude has three components affective, cognitive and behavioral which shapes the person. The thought pattern of person is the basis for the behavior and finally attitude.

Zoomers and CB Analysis

Descriptive statistics

The mean score suggests that Individuals reported a moderate level of words for expressing their thoughts (low variability in responses), information processing skills (consistent responses), consideration for consequences (higher variability in responses compared to other attributes), skill communicating with others, ability to regulate emotional behaviour (consistent responses), multitasking ability and ability to manage information overload.

The mean score suggests that Individuals reported high level of perceived ability to learn among respondents, active listening skills and propensity to seek solutions to problems.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Words for thoughts	150	3.46	1.021
active listen	150	3.92	1.027
ability to learn	150	4.17	1.239
input	150	3.60	1.043
consequences	150	3.77	1.337
communicate to others	150	3.27	1.257
regulate	150	3.27	1.203
multitasking	150	3.73	1.269
overload info	150	3.73	1.115
seek solution	150	3.90	1.186
Valid N (listwise)	150		

Correlation study

Positive correlation: words for thoughts are moderately positively correlated with active listening, consequences, ability to learn, multi-tasking and emotional regulation, information overload and seeking solutions at $p < 0.01$ level of significance.

Negative correlation – ability to communicate with others and communicate with others has weak negative correlation with $p > 0.05$ level of significance

overload information and communicating with others has weak negative correlation with $p < 0.01$ level of significance

overload information and multitasking has weak negative correlation with $p < 0.01$ level of significance.

Correlations

	Words for thoughts	active listen	ability to learn	input	consequences	communicate to others	regulate	multitasking	overload info	seek solution
Words for thoughts	1	.496**	.390**	.395**	.495**	.427**	.667**	.326**	.338**	.343**
Pearson Correlation										
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

active listen	Pearson Correlation	.496**	1	.433**	.308**	.481**	.214**	.496**	.153	.028	.275**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.061	.733	.001
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
ability to learn	Pearson Correlation	.390**	.433**	1	.291**	.497**	.161*	.415**	.247**	.071	-.126
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.049	.000	.002	.386	.126
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
input	Pearson Correlation	.395**	.308**	.291**	1	.392**	.374**	.467**	.216**	.242**	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.008	.003	.291
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
consequences	Pearson Correlation	.495**	.481**	.497**	.392**	1	.132	.468**	.129	.202*	.235**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.107	.000	.114	.013	.004
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
communicate to others	Pearson Correlation	.427**	.214**	.161*	.374**	.132	1	.262**	.252**	.022	.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.049	.000	.107		.001	.002	.786	.622
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
regulate	Pearson Correlation	.667**	.496**	.415**	.467**	.468**	.262**	1	.265**	.415**	.414**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001		.001	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
multitasking	Pearson Correlation	.326**	.153	.247**	.216**	.129	.252**	.265**	1	.138	.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.061	.002	.008	.114	.002	.001		.092	.833
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
overload info	Pearson Correlation	.338**	.028	.071	.242**	.202*	.022	.415**	.138	1	.472**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.733	.386	.003	.013	.786	.000	.092		.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

seek solution	Pearson Correlation	.343**	.275**	-.126	.087	.235**	.041	.414**	.017	.472**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.126	.291	.004	.622	.000	.833	.000	
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Recommendations

The study explains the importance of three components - cognitive components like attention, decision making and problem-solving ability, Emotional component includes the way individual expresses emotions and regulating them, Behavior component -- outward expression of thoughts and emotions which are all interlinked. These three components which forms the cognitive triad influences zoomers mental health. The thoughts, emotions and behaviour of an individual are crucial for sound mental health. Zoomers being technology driven needs more self-awareness on their thought pattern and emotional regulation to exhibit thoughtful behavior. Earlier studies on Zoomers explores them as technology driven and not from the perspective of cognitive triad which is the highlight of this study.

Conclusion

The study provides valuable insights into the cognitive behavior of Zoomers, a generation shaped by the digital age and the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19. The findings also underscore the importance of promoting effective communication skills, decision-making abilities, and information management strategies among young adult Zoomers. By fostering these competencies Zoomers can be empowered to navigate the complexities of the digital age more effectively, contributing to their cognitive development and well-being in an increasingly interconnected world. The study provides valuable insights into the cognitive behavior of young adult Zoomers, a generation shaped by the digital age and the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19.

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