

Where Does GenZ's Happiness Reside?

Zainab Khan and S Reshma Jamal

Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

This study investigates the sources of happiness among Generation Z individuals in Uttar Pradesh, India, through a qualitative analysis of responses to ten open-ended questions. Data were collected from 23 participants and analyzed using summative content analysis. The findings reveal ten overarching themes contributing to happiness: hobbies, social relations, the role of technology, personal goals, achievement/success, people responsible for happiness, mental health awareness, sense of fulfillment, basic needs, and positive relationships. Additionally, 103 subthemes emerged, providing a nuanced understanding of the diverse factors influencing happiness in this demographic. The findings highlight those hobbies such as pet care and reading, strong social connections with family and friends, and mental health awareness are crucial contributors to happiness. Additionally, career opportunities and technological advancements significantly impact their well-being, while personal goals and prosocial behavior enhance their sense of fulfillment. This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of happiness for Generation Z, emphasizing the importance of balancing personal interests, social bonds, mental health, and career aspirations. The study's insights can guide policymakers, educators, and businesses in creating supportive environments that foster genuine connections, mental well-being, and growth opportunities for Generation Z.

Keywords: Generation Z, happiness, summative content analysis

When we refer to the word “generation,” we mean an artificial construct that arises from lumping together various birth cohorts (for example, those born between 1980 and 2000) and assigning certain presumptive traits to individuals born within those time frames (Costanza, Rudolph, & Zacher, 2023). Social scientists have created the concept of Generational Theory as one explanation for cultural shift. The first contemporary scholar to examine the evolution of generational values was Mannheim (1952), who defined a “generation” as a group of contemporaries who share a history and a set of experiences that have shaped their formative years rather than just a cohort clustered by a bounded year of birth (Knight, 2009). The Pew Research Center has defined various generations based on birth years:

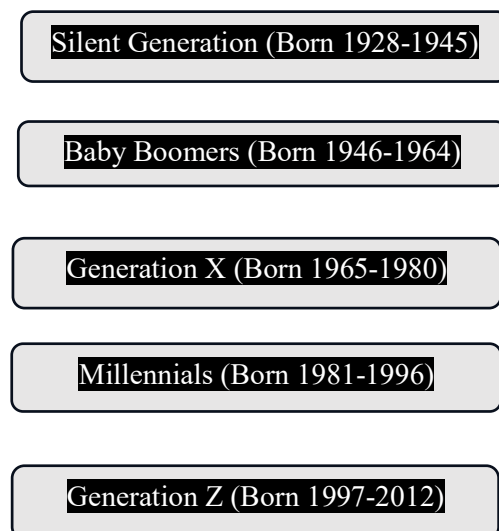


Figure 1. Various generations based on birth years.

What Is Generation Z (Gen Z)?

The group of persons born in 1997 through 2012 is referred to as Generation Z. It's popularly known as, for short, "Gen Z." This generation is the one that comes before Generation Alpha (the first generation to be assigned a Greek letter) and after the Millennials (Zilka, 2023). The Great Recession of 2007–09 and the COVID-19 epidemic have unquestionably influenced Generation Z, or Gen Zers. During their formative years, same-sex marriage became legal and the iPhone was invented (Alison, 2024). Post-Millennials were raised in the 2000s and were born in the 1990s, a time of

enormous technological advancements in the areas of networks, smartphones, computers, digital media, and the web (Dolot, 2018; Dimmock, 2019) (Mahesh, Bhat, & Suresh, 2021). The personalities of this generation are vivacious. A youthful soul will go to great lengths to ensure their happiness (Hafni, Renaldo, Chandra, & Thaeif, 2020)). About 27%, or one-third, of the world's population, is comprised of this group (Singh, 2014). With a rapidly growing population of 23 million, Gen Z now makes up more than 25% of all Americans (Abramovich, 2015). Furthermore, with 20.1% of the world's Gen Z population, India has the biggest Gen Z population, followed by China (Singh, 2014).

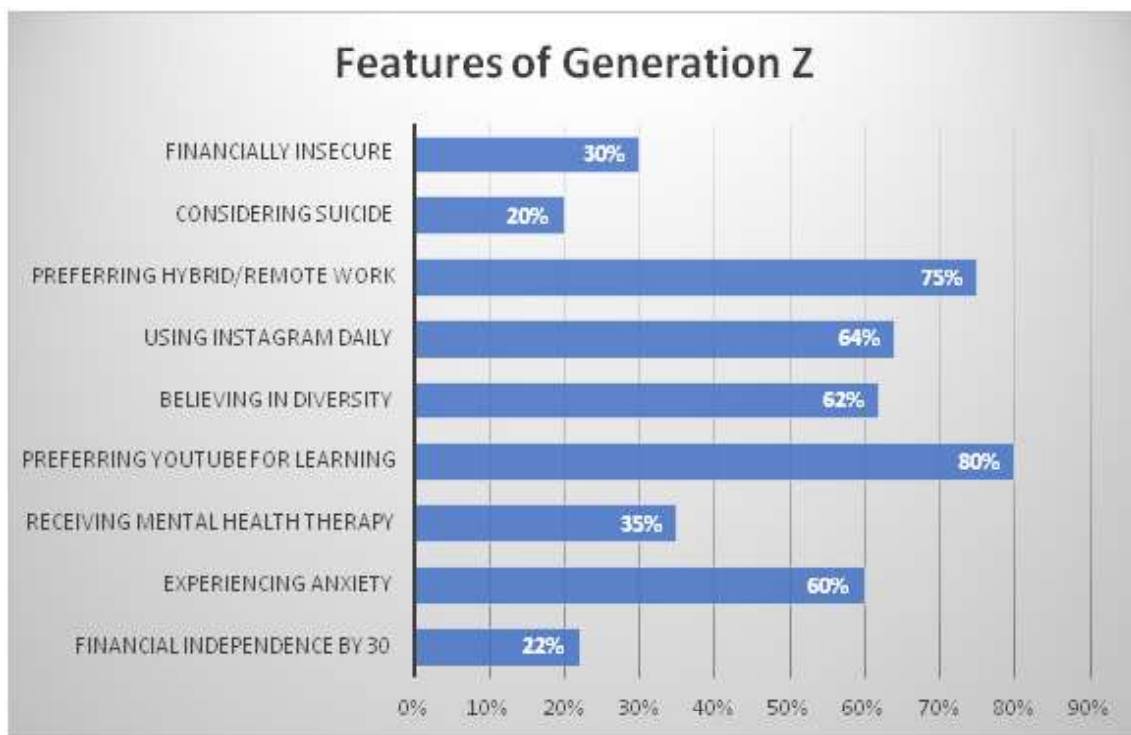


Figure 2. Features of Generation Z.

Happiness

Happiness has been an unquenchable thrust for the whole of humanity for ages. Over the past few decades, concepts like happiness, well-being, and life satisfaction have drawn the attention of social scientists

and have become central to their inquiries (Kullenberg, & Nelhans, 2016). However, the concept of happiness is still elusive. Happiness is one of the fundamental driving forces of human beings underlying most of their actions and aspirations (Krishnananda,

The Chhandogya Upanishad, 1984). Since the beginning of time, man has strived to understand and achieve happiness. Happiness has been viewed as the driving force behind all human activities (Diener, 1984).

There are several ways to use the term "happiness." In the widest sense, it is an umbrella term or all that is good. The extent to which a person feels content with the general quality of their own life is known as overall happiness. Since specialists have so much disagreement over what happiness is, defining it might not be as simple. However, they all seem to agree on the general definition of happiness, which is the state of being content with life, cheerful, experiencing joy, and positive emotions. Happy people typically have successful lives, enjoy better relationships, make more friends, and are generally healthier. Positive affect is a subjectively defined emotional state that consists of both affective and cognitive components (Diener et al, 1999).

In a small survey of Generation Z, 76.5% expressed dissatisfaction with their current financial situation. Only 5.9% reported being very satisfied with their financial situation. Gen-Zers, who are the unhappiest generation, reported being unhappy or hating their jobs 22% of the time. Generation Z, as characterized by various studies, exhibits a blend of traits that distinguish them from previous generations. According to the Ernst & Young Report (2016), they are recognized for being digital natives, persistent, realist, innovative, self-reliant, self-aware, and entrepreneurial. Stillman & Stillman (2017) identify seven key traits, including a preference for technological sophistication, a desire to customize their roles, and a fear of missing out (FOMO). Research by Spohn (2017) highlights their shorter attention span compared to millennials and their view of technology as a workplace necessity. Additionally, insights

from Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) depict Generation Z as digitally literate, socially connected, and highly experiential, with a penchant for collaborative learning and a deep concern for environmental and social issues. These characteristics collectively shape the attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations of Generation Z in various aspects of life and work. Studies indicate that Millennials (Gen Y) are significantly happier than Gen Z, possibly due to differences in expectations, experiences, and levels of individualism. Empirical evidence shows Gen Y scores higher on happiness than Gen Z (Twenge, Sherman & Lyubomirsky, 2015) (Wagstaff, 2014) (Schlossberg, 2016; Beall, 2016) (Wright, 2017) (Nasrina, & Sneha, 2018). Some of the reasons are high expectations leading to greater dissatisfaction, increased cynicism compared to Millennials, growing up during times of significant global instability, higher rates of financial dissatisfaction, and greater prevalence of mental health concerns.

As true digital natives, Gen Z is highly connected through the internet and social networks. While this connectivity can foster relationships and access to information, it also contributes to issues like FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and anxiety, impacting their happiness (Seemiller and Grace, 2016).

Method

Research Design

This study utilized summative content analysis, a qualitative methodology, to explore the factors influencing Generation Z's happiness, aiming for a comprehensive understanding of their subjective experiences. Through systematic examination of textual data, this research offered a nuanced understanding of where happiness resides for Generation Z, shedding light on key determinants shaping their well-being.

Participants

23 students were selected for data collection from Uttar Pradesh, India. 12 of them were males and 11 were females. The age range was 13–26 years.

Measures

To assess the Generation Z sources of happiness, 10 open-ended questions were used. They are as follows:

- What activities or hobbies bring you the most joy in your daily life?
- How do your friends and social interactions impact your overall happiness?
- What role do technology and social media play in your happiness? Does it affect you positively or negatively?
- How important is achieving personal goals or milestones to your happiness? Can you give an example?
- What kind of achievements or successes make you feel happiest?
- Who are the people in your life that contribute the most to your sense of happiness and why?
- Why do you believe self-care and mental health awareness are important for your happiness?
- What activities or pursuits give you a sense of fulfillment and purpose?

- How does having your basic needs met (e.g., food, shelter, financial stability) impact your happiness?
- How do you maintain and nurture positive relationships in your life?

Each participant's answers to the ten open-ended questions were textual data that was progressively organized in ten columns within an Excel file. Summative content analysis was utilized for data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It entails finding and counting keywords that are pertinent to the research questions as well as analyzing the keywords' content to determine their underlying meaning. After reading each column's narrative response multiple times, observations were made regarding the keywords and phrases. Finding relevant keywords and phrases, organising them into a subtheme, and adding up their frequencies were the steps in the analysis.

Procedure

Participants were informed about the study's goals and provided written consent, emphasizing that participation was voluntary and responses would remain confidential. An environment conducive to data collection was ensured, with an investigator present to address any questions or concerns. Participants were given clear instructions and assurance of their privacy, with all data securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel.

Results

Table 1. Themes and subthemes of sources of happiness among Generation Z.

Theme	Subtheme	<i>f</i>	%	Theme	Subtheme	<i>f</i>	%
Hobbies	Buying	2	9%	Social Relations	Feeling Inclusive	8	35%
	Pet Love	3	13%		Increased Focus	1	4%
	Book Love	3	13%		No Impact	6	26%
	Helping Behavior	2	9%		Source Of Happiness	4	17%
	Love For Video Games	1	4%		Indispensable	1	4%
	Healthy Eating Habits	2	9%		Escape From Isolation	2	9%

Role of technology	Exploring	2	9%	personal goals	My World	7	30%
	Disciplined	1	4%		Boost Confidence	1	4%
	Brands	2	9%		Self-Reliant	2	9%
	Mobile Love	1	4%		Affirmative	4	17%
	Cars Love	1	4%		Affected	2	9%
	Consistent	1	4%		Can't Focus	2	9%
	Cooking	1	4%				
	Love For Sleep	2	9%				
	Positive Impact	7	30%		Achievement	1	4%
	Worth Living	1	4%		Career	4	17%
	Better Life	5	22%		Gamer	1	4%
	Positive Learning	4	17%		Pet House	1	4%
	World Inclusion	5	22%		Updated	1	4%
	Ease/Happiness	2	9%		Serving Nation	1	4%
	Gamer	1	4%		Worth Living	1	4%
	Money Maker	2	9%		Self-Sufficient	1	4%
	Career Opportunities	2	35%		Contentment	1	4%
Easy Living	1	4%	Happy	9	39%		
Classes	4	17%	Independent	8	35%		
Contentment	1	4%	Mobile Love	1	4%		
Negative Impact	1	4%					
Mental health awareness	Awareness	10	43%	Sense of fulfillment	Prosocial Behavior	8	35%
	Importance	15	65%		Routine Life	4	17%
	Dependence On Games	2	9%		Disciplined	4	17%
	Happiness	7	30%				
	Major Contribution	6	26%				
	Motivated	4	17%				
Basic needs	Crucial	19	83%	positive relation	Space	3	13%
	Leads To Irritation	1	4%		Understanding	8	35%
	Happiness	9	39%		Listen	3	13%
	Necessity	10	43%		No Impact	2	9%
					Love	1	4%
					Respect	7	30%
					Emotional Honesty	1	4%
					Communication	7	30%
					No Jealousy	5	22%
					Give Good Advice	1	4%
					Acceptance	7	30%

The tables outline the sources of happiness for Generation Z, identifying ten overarching themes and 103 subthemes. The themes include hobbies, social relations, the role of technology, personal goals, achievement/success, people responsible for happiness, mental health awareness, sense of fulfillment, basic needs, and positive relationships. Hobbies play a crucial role in the happiness of Gen Z. Passion for pets and books emerge as major indicators of joy, with “pet love” and “book love” each having a frequency of 13%. Beyond these interests, activities such as buying (9%), helping others (9%), exploring new places (9%), and maintaining healthy eating habits (9%) significantly contribute to their overall well-being. Engaging in these hobbies allows Gen Z to express themselves, unwind, and find pleasure in everyday life.

Generation Z places immense value on better life opportunities, viewing them as pivotal for their happiness. Technological advancements have opened new career pathways, significantly impacting their lives positively. Career opportunities, encompassing personal fulfillment and growth beyond financial stability, drive a sense of purpose and ambition. Notably, “career opportunities” had a frequency of 35%, highlighting its importance. Feeling connected and part of a community is essential for Gen Z. Social relationships enhance their sense of belonging, with family (48%) and friends (35%) being the most significant contributors to their happiness. Interestingly, while many report that a lack of social ties does not significantly affect their happiness (26% report “no impact”), the importance of feeling included (35%) and supported by loved ones remains paramount.

Success is a core component of Gen Z’s happiness, with “achievement” having a high frequency of 39%. They strive for personal success and seek recognition for their efforts (26%). Additionally, aspirations to serve the

nation (22%), build positive careers, and become influencers (17%) are significant sources of satisfaction and happiness. These ambitions reflect their desire to make a meaningful impact and be acknowledged for their contributions. Personal goals, especially those related to happiness, independence, and career success, hold significant importance for Gen Z. “Happiness” within personal goals shares the highest frequency (39%). Achieving these goals gives them a sense of purpose and direction, fueling their motivation and drive. Independence is highly valued as it represents freedom, self-reliance, and the ability to shape their own future, with being “independent” marked at 35%.

Mental health awareness is critically important for Generation Z, with 65% considering it vital to their happiness. General awareness about mental health impacts their happiness (30%) and plays a major role in their overall well-being (43%). They recognize the importance of mental health in achieving a balanced and fulfilling life, advocating for greater awareness and support. Prosocial behavior is a key determinant of fulfillment for Gen Z, with “prosocial behavior” having a frequency of 35%. Engaging in altruistic actions and contributing to the community brings a profound sense of joy and satisfaction. Acts of kindness, volunteering, and helping others not only benefit those around them but also enhance their own sense of purpose and happiness.

A structured and disciplined lifestyle is highly valued by Gen Z. Having a routine helps them manage their lives more effectively, leading to increased happiness. “Disciplined” and “routine life” each have a frequency of 17%, highlighting the importance of stability and order in achieving their goals and maintaining a balanced life. Meeting basic needs is seen as crucial for happiness by 83% of Gen Z, making it a

foundational aspect of their contentment. Ensuring that these necessities are met is fundamental to their well-being, with 43% viewing these needs as essential. Basic needs provide the stability required for Gen Z to pursue higher aspirations and personal growth. Positive relationships, characterized by understanding, respect, communication, and acceptance, are paramount for Gen Z. These attributes are highlighted by 35% of respondents, with “understanding,” “respect,” “communication,” and “acceptance” each having a frequency of 30%. Additionally, the absence of jealousy (22%) is emphasized as crucial for maintaining healthy and positive relationships. Such relationships foster a supportive environment where Gen Z can thrive emotionally and socially.

This comprehensive analysis reveals that Generation Z’s happiness is multifaceted, influenced by life opportunities, hobbies, social connections, personal achievements, mental health awareness, and the fulfillment of personal goals. These factors collectively shape their overall well-being and satisfaction with life, highlighting the diverse elements that contribute to their happiness. By balancing career ambitions with personal hobbies, maintaining strong social connections, prioritizing mental health, and fostering positive relationships, Generation Z seeks to create a fulfilling and meaningful life. This generation’s pursuit of happiness is deeply intertwined with both personal and collective growth, reflecting their desire to not only succeed individually but also contribute positively to their communities and the world.

Discussion

Based on the purpose of identifying the sources of happiness for Generation Z, the analysis revealed that their well-being is shaped by a diverse set of factors. Hobbies such as engaging with pets and books are significant contributors to their joy. Strong social connections, particularly with family

and friends, play a crucial role in their happiness. Career opportunities, enhanced by technological advancements, provide a sense of purpose and ambition. Mental health awareness is vital, highlighting the importance of a balanced and fulfilling life. Meeting basic needs is foundational for their contentment. Additionally, personal goals related to happiness, independence, and success, as well as prosocial behaviors and structured lifestyles, enhance their overall fulfillment. Positive relationships, characterized by understanding, respect, and communication, are essential for their well-being. For Gen Z, hobbies are crucial for happiness as they provide an outlet for creativity, relaxation, and personal growth. The variety of hobbies, from gaming to reading, reflects the diverse interests of this generation. The significant percentages for pet love and book love indicate that these activities are particularly popular, offering comfort and intellectual stimulation.

The “Hobbies” theme encompasses a diverse range of activities that Gen Z engages in during their leisure time, contributing to personal satisfaction and enjoyment. These activities include buying, reading, gaming, healthy eating, nurturing pets, and prioritizing sleep, with varying prevalence among respondents (Bakir et al., 2020; Eastman et al., 2020; Shin et al., 2021; Keever, O’rourke, & Diffley, 2021; Deloitte, 2019; Ko et al., 2019; Roux et al., 2017; Eastman et al., 2018; Shin, Eastman, & Li, 2022; Vidani & Jaiswal, 2024). Gen Z’s perception of luxury and masstige brands is influenced by generational values, with a preference for experiences like international travel as markers of adulthood success (Deloitte, 2019; Ko et al., 2019; Roux et al., 2017; Eastman et al., 2018; Shin, Eastman, & Li, 2022). Gaming plays a crucial role in fostering social interaction and stress relief (Vidani & Jaiswal, 2024), but excessive use can pose risks to physical health, academic

performance, and social life, highlighting the need for balance (Vidani & Jaiswal, 2024). Pets hold significant importance for Gen Z, influencing emotional well-being and spending habits, as seen in their preference to allocate savings towards pet care over vacations (Pires, 2020; Jeanelle Grech, 2023). Gen Z's reading habits prioritize nonfiction and educational reading, reflecting their emphasis on practical knowledge acquisition (Kathi & Rachel, 2024; Zasacka, 2016). Moreover, Gen Z demonstrates a strong inclination towards prosocial behaviors, engaging in charitable causes aligned with personal values through authentic online interactions and peer endorsements (Konstantinou & Jones, 2022).

“Social Relations” encompass how individuals interact and connect, influencing their sense of belonging and well-being. Subthemes like “feeling inclusive” and “source of happiness” highlight positive interactions, while “no impact” and “can't focus” touch on neutral or negative experiences. Gen Z's happiness hinges significantly on these relationships, fostering emotional support and a sense of belonging through close friendships and family bonds. Authentic peer support is vital for their well-being, seeking relationships that provide understanding and validation. Prioritizing sincere connections enhances their happiness and social integration. Positive social bonds are crucial for Gen Z's happiness, with those reporting happiness twice as likely to feel loved, supported, and connected (Kian, 2023). However, a substantial 73% still feel lonely at times, akin to the health risks of smoking 15 cigarettes daily. Digital interactions, though advanced, fail to replace physical emotional bonds. Declining traditional social structures, alongside overstimulation, worsen isolation. Extreme cases from Japan and South Korea illustrate this, stressing tech alone isn't a fix. Disappearing social spaces deepen the

issue, underscoring genuine connections as crucial for combating loneliness in Generation Z (Kian, 2023).

The “Role of Technology” theme explores how profoundly technology influences Generation Z's daily lives and career aspirations. As digital natives, Gen Z benefits from global connectivity through platforms like international gaming communities (Wearing, 2016; Nazier, 2020; Taylor, 2020), global brand communities (Zaglia, 2013), and social media-embedded interest groups (Weise, 2019; Dorsey & Villa, 2020), fostering cross-cultural interactions and global youth activism (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2021). This tech-savvy generation prioritizes careers that leverage cutting-edge tech, seeking roles where digital skills are integral and valuing innovation, growth in digital fields, and opportunities to pioneer new technologies (Alma, 2021). Despite concerns about social media's negative impacts such as FOMO and body image issues, it remains crucial for social connectivity and self-expression (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Fromm & Read, 2018; Yang et al., 2020). Gen Z's happiness is closely tied to their ability to navigate technology, using it for personal fulfillment while managing potential challenges like mental health impacts effectively.

Generation Z places a high value on happiness and independence, finding fulfillment through nurturing plants and seeking work environments that align with their values of authenticity, connectivity, and stability (Tena-Monferrer & CarlosFandos-Roig, 2024; Obelisk, 2021; Zani, Ahmad, & Saad, 2022). Career-wise, they prioritize roles offering both professional growth and personal fulfillment, guided by intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Barhate & Dirani, 2022; Laliæ et al., 2019). Financially, Gen Z aims for independence by making strategic investments in long-term assets like equity shares and mutual funds, alongside exploring



high-risk opportunities such as cryptocurrencies, driven by considerations of potential returns and historical performance (Dugar & Madhavan, 2023).

Generation Z's emphasis on achievement and success spans personal and professional realms, reflecting their aspirations and values. According to Barna and Impact 360 Institute, educational achievements (43%) and hobbies (42%) significantly define Gen Z's identity, surpassing the influence of family background and religion (Barna, 2018). They prioritize purposeful careers, influenced by their digital upbringing, experiences in the gig economy, and a commitment to diversity and inclusion (Natassha, 2024). Recognition in the workplace is crucial to Gen Z, who actively seek feedback to drive their professional growth (Mamatha). Their proactive engagement in civic and social issues illustrates their resilience and dedication to effecting positive change in society. This generation actively participates in movements for racial justice, climate action, LGBTQ+ rights, and other social causes, leveraging their digital fluency and social

networks to amplify voices and mobilize action. Additionally, many Gen Z individuals find fulfillment in becoming influencers, using their platforms to educate, inspire, and promote positive change, thus further expanding their impact on societal conversations and movements.

Generation Z (Gen Z), characterized by digital nativism, values close relationships with family and friends, maintaining frequent and diverse communication through digital channels like texting and social media (Gentina, 2020). This generation prioritizes real-time interactions and multimedia communication with peers, reflecting a blend of digital intimacy and traditional familial bonds. Previous research underscores the crucial role of supportive family environments in shaping Gen Z's happiness and societal perspectives (Hassan, Ab Hadi, Qatheja, Husani, Baharen, Hamdi, & Yunus, 2022), highlighting how these relationships influence their well-being and behaviors in a digitally driven world. Ultimately, the strong emphasis on interpersonal connections suggests that nurturing family and friendship dynamics remains pivotal for Gen Z's overall happiness and social integration.

“Mental Health Awareness” highlights the significance of understanding and addressing mental health issues, particularly crucial in the lives of Generation Z. Despite facing challenges like isolation, heightened depression due to screen time, and social media pressures, Gen Z increasingly recognizes the importance of mental health awareness. Their emphasis on self-care underscores a cultural shift towards brands that prioritize openness and mental well-being (Annie, 2021; Christian, 2023). In response, fostering supportive environments and promoting mental health awareness are pivotal in nurturing Gen Z’s happiness and resilience. By aligning with these values, brands and communities can play a vital role in supporting Gen Z’s journey towards holistic well-being and empowerment.

Exploring prosocial behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic provides valuable insights into how Generation Z adapted socially and contributed to collective well-being. Their proactive use of digital platforms for public health messaging and community support underscores their commitment to societal benefit and resilience (Wider, Lim, Wong, Chan, & Maidin, 2022). Additionally, Generation Z values structure and flexibility, balancing disciplined routines with the need for work-life balance and mental health awareness. Their technological fluency and focus on wellness practices shape their approach to both work and personal life (Rahman, 2023). By understanding and supporting Gen Z’s unique needs and behaviors, organizations and communities can create environments that enhance their well-being and engagement, strengthening societal resilience and cohesion in the face of future challenges.

Understanding and meeting Gen Z’s basic needs, such as food, shelter, and relaxation, is fundamental for their overall well-being and happiness (Renée, 2024). These essentials form the bedrock upon which their daily

functioning and contentment rely. Moreover, fostering a sense of purpose in educational and professional settings plays a crucial role in enhancing Gen Z’s motivation and satisfaction. By prioritizing both basic needs and meaningful engagement, educators, employers, and policymakers can create supportive environments that empower Gen Z to thrive and contribute positively to society, ensuring their long-term success and well-being.

Generation Z’s approach to social relations emphasizes respect, understanding, space, effective communication, acceptance, and freedom from judgment. They value authentic connections, whether online or offline, and prioritize relationships that allow for individual expression and growth.

For Generation Z, meaningful interactions are rooted in mutual respect, understanding, and authenticity, whether in digital spaces or face-to-face settings. This cohort values relationships where individuality is respected and space is given for personal growth, emphasizing the importance of authentic connections that acknowledge their unique perspectives and challenges (Lindsey, 2022). In counseling contexts, prioritizing trust and open communication helps Gen Z navigate mental health challenges and develop resilient interpersonal skills crucial for today’s social landscape. Institutions and businesses can contribute to this by embracing these values, creating inclusive environments that cater to Gen Z’s need for genuine connection and supportive community engagement. By doing so, they not only align with the preferences of this demographic but also contribute positively to shaping a more understanding and empathetic society for future generations.

Limitations and Future Directions

- The study’s small sample size of 23 participants from Uttar Pradesh, India,

restricts its applicability to broader populations of Generation Z globally or even nationally. Future research should strive to include larger and more diverse samples to enhance the external validity of findings.

- Relying on self-reported responses to open-ended questions introduces biases such as social desirability and recall bias. Employing mixed-method approaches could mitigate these biases by triangulating data from multiple sources.
- While the study focused on 10 specific questions related to happiness factors, it may have missed exploring other potential factors that could influence Generation Z's happiness, such as political beliefs, environmental concerns, or specific cultural influences. Future studies should broaden their scope to encompass a wider range of potential influences.
- Happiness and its determinants can vary significantly across cultures. The findings may not be applicable to Generation Z in different cultural contexts, as cultural norms, values, and societal structures can shape perceptions of happiness differently. Exploring cross-cultural differences would provide insights into how cultural norms and values shape perceptions of happiness.
- The study did not account for potential changes in Generation Z's happiness over time, particularly considering rapid technological advancements or societal shifts that could impact their experiences and perceptions. Implementing longitudinal studies would allow researchers to track changes and identify causal relationships.

Implications

- Policymakers should consider the impact of materialistic values on youth well-being when formulating laws and regulations. Encourage initiatives that promote a balanced approach to consumption and well-being.
- By focusing on Generation Z, the study contributes to understanding how different generations experience and prioritize happiness. This insight can help policymakers, educators, and businesses tailor their approaches to better meet the needs of this demographic.
- Generation Z's reliance on technology and social media is a significant finding. It underscores the importance of digital literacy and managing the impacts of technology on mental health and well-being. Societal discussions on regulating technology and promoting healthy usage habits could benefit from these insights.

Conclusion

Generation Z's pursuit of happiness is shaped by a multifaceted interplay of factors, encompassing personal hobbies, strong social connections, career aspirations, and mental health awareness. Their engagement in hobbies such as pet care and reading, coupled with robust social ties with family and friends, underscores their desire for authentic relationships and meaningful interactions, both online and offline. Prosocial behaviors like volunteering further contribute to their sense of fulfillment and well-being, highlighting their commitment to community and empathy. Career opportunities enabled by technology not only provide financial stability but also ignite their ambition and sense of purpose. In navigating these elements, Generation Z adeptly balances digital connectivity with traditional values of

respect, understanding, and acceptance, fostering inclusivity in their communities. Their pursuit of happiness reflects aspirations for personal success, societal contribution, and holistic well-being, urging institutions and businesses to create supportive environments that prioritize genuine connections, mental health, and growth opportunities. By aligning with these values, stakeholders can nurture a resilient and empathetic society for future generations, ensuring Gen Z's ongoing fulfillment and thriving.

References

- Bakhtiari, K. (2023). Gen-Z, The Loneliness Epidemic and The Unifying Power Of Brands. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kianbakhtiari/2023/07/28/gen-z-the-loneliness-epidemic-and-the-unifying-power-of-brands/>.
- Barhate, B., & Dirani, K. M. (2022). Career aspirations of generation Z: a systematic literature review. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 46(1/2), 139-157.
- Barna (2018). Is Gen Z the Most Success-Oriented Generation? Barna. <https://www.barna.com/research/is-gen-z-the-most-success-oriented-generation/>
- Berens, K.I., & Noorda, R. (2024). Gen Zers and millennials are still big fans of books – even if they don't call themselves 'readers'. *Minnpost*. <https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2024/05/gen-z-millennials-are-reading-books-bookstagram>
- Brooks, A.C. (2024). Less than half of younger Gen Zers feel motivated to go to middle school or high school, Gallup/Walton Family Foundation survey finds. *Walton Family Foundation*. <https://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/sense-of-purpose-in-school-and-work-drives-gen-z-happiness-new-gallup-survey-finds#:~:text=Positive%20social%20connections%20%E2%80%94%20Happy%20members,by%20and%20connected%20to%20others>.
- Casey, A. E. (2024). WHAT ARE THE CORE CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION Z? Annie E. Casey Foundation. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/what-are-the-core-characteristics-of-generation-z>
- Coe, E.H., Doy, A., Enomoto, K., & Healy, C. (2023). Gen Z mental health: The impact of tech and social media. *McKinsey Health Institute*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/our-insights/gen-z-mental-health-the-impact-of-tech-and-social-media>.
- Colón, K. (2024). Gen Z and Relationships: Redefining Connections in the Digital Age. *Allsteel*. <https://www.allsteeloffice.com/gen-z-andrelationships#:~:text=For%20Gen%20Z%2C%20virtual%20communication,meaningful%20as%20in%20person%20meetings>.
- Costanza, D. P., Rudolph, C. W., & Zacher, H. (2023). Are generations a useful concept?. *Acta Psychologica*, 241, 104059.
- Deckman, M. et, al. (2024). A Political and Cultural Glimpse Into America's Future: Generation Z's Views on Generational Change and the Challenges and Opportunities Ahead. *PRRI*. <https://www.prrri.org/research/generation-zs-views-on-generational-change-and-the-challenges-and-opportunities-ahead-a-political-and-cultural-glimpse-into-americas-future/>.
- Dugar, M., & Madhavan, V. (2023). Is Gen Z in India Moving Towards Financial Independence?-A Study of Their Investment Preferences. *Journal of Student Research*, 12(2).
- Gentina, E. (2020). Generation Z in Asia: a research agenda. *The new Generation Z in Asia: Dynamics, differences, digitalisation*, 3-19.
- Grech, J. (2023). Gen Z Are Happier Seeing Their Pets Than Partners. *Bay*. <https://bay.com.mt/gen-z-are-happier-seeing-their-pets-than-partners/>
- Hafni, L., Renaldo, N., Chandra, T., & Thaief, I. (2020). The Use of Regression Models with

- Supply Chain Management to Increase Financial Satisfaction of Generation Z. *International Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 9(5), 1641-1650.
- Hassan, M. S., Ab Hadi, S. N. I., Qatheja, N. H., Husani, N. A. Q. K. A., Baharen, N. S., Hamdi, N. N. I., & Yunus, W. A. M. M. (2022). Communication of Parent-Child among Gen Z: A Preliminary Study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(8), 807-817.
- Keever, M. M., O'rourke, V., & Diffley, S. (2021). Generation Z an exploration of their unique values driving brand affinity. *Irish Academy of Management Conference*.
- Knight, Y. (2009). Talkin'bout my generation: a brief introduction to generational theory. *Planet*, 21(1), 13-15.
- Konstantinou, I., & Jones, K. (2022). Investigating Gen Z attitudes to charitable giving and donation behaviour: Social media, peers and authenticity. *Journal of Philanthropy and Marketing*, 27(3), e1764.
- Laliæ, D., Stankoviæ, J., Boškoviæ, D., & Miliæ, B. (2019, July). Career expectations of generation Z. In *International joint conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management* (pp. 52-59). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Mahesh, J., Bhat, A. K., & Suresh, R. (2021). Are Gen Z values the new disruptor for future educational institutions? *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 21(12).
- Nasrina, S & Sneha, M. (2018). *Exploring the Newbies: A Comparative Study of Gen Y and Gen Z. People management in 21st century: Practices and challenges*. McGraw Hill Education
- Natasha (2024). Why does Gen Z look for recognition in jobs? *Easywork*. <https://www.easywork.asia/blog/why-does-gen-z-look-for-recognition-in-jobs/>.
- Onque, R. (2024). This is the No. 1 thing that influences Gen Z's happiness, a new survey shows. *CNBC* make it. <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/04/10/the-no-1-thing-that-influences-gen-zs-happiness-a-new-survey-shows.html>.
- Phillips, L. (2022). The emotional and social health needs of Gen Z. *Counseling Today*. <https://www.counseling.org/publications/counseling-today-magazine/article-archive/article/legacy/the-emotional-and-social-health-needs-of-gen-z>.
- Pires, A. (2020). Pet industry expenditure. Case study of Metropolitan France: struggling pet owners and a promising market with constant innovations.
- Rahman, K. S. (2023). Millennial & Gen Z Experience-A Meta-Analysis.
- Ramesh, M. (2024). Rewards and Recognition at work in the Gen Z era. *Chimera Technologies*. <https://www.chimera-technologies.com/chimera-diaries/rewards-and-recognition-work-gen-z-era#:~:text=Recognition%20and%20progressive%20feedback,to%20recognition%E2%80%94positive%20or%20negative>.
- Rosina, A. (2021). Gen Z In The Workplace: Reimagining the Future Of Work. *Fireflies.ai*. <https://fireflies.ai/blog/gen-z-in-the-workplace-reimagining-the-future-of-work>.
- Shin, H., Eastman, J., & Li, Y. (2022). Is it love or just like? Generation Z's brand relationship with luxury. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 31(3), 394-414.
- Suar, D., Jha, A. K., Das, S. S., Alat, P., & Patnaik, P. (2021). What do millennials think of their past, present, and future happiness, and where does their happiness reside?. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 34(3), 345-361.
- Tena-Monferrer, S., & CarlosFandos-Roig, J. (2024). Growing Happiness in Times of Uncertainty: Plant Parenthood Among Millennials and Gen Z. *SAGE Publications: SAGE Business Cases Originals*.
- Vidani, J., & Jaiswal, P. (2024). A Comparative Study on Social Media's Positive and

- Negative Effects on Gen Z. Available at SSRN 4848123.
- Wider, W., Lim, M. X., Wong, L. S., Chan, C. K., & Maidin, S. S. (2022). Should I help? Prosocial behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 19(23), 16084.
- Zani, R. M., Ahmad, I. N., & Saad, S. M. (2022). HAPPINESS AT WORK ACROSS GENERATIONS. *FBM INSIGHTS*, 56.
- Zasacka, Z. (2016). Reading Satisfaction: Implications of Research on Adolescents' Reading Habits and Attitudes. *Polish Libraries*, 4, 40-64.
- Zilka, G. C. (2023, June). Gen Z Self-Portrait: Vitality, Activism, Belonging, Happiness, Self-Image, and Media Usage Habits. In *InSITE 2023: Informing Science+ IT Education Conferences* (p. 005).
- Zainab Khan**, Research scholar, Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.
- S Reshma Jamal**, Ph.D, Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.