

# Attitudes of Generation Z Towards Instagram & Facebook – A Comparative Study

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Abstract: Social media plays a significant role in our everyday lives and shapes our interpersonal relationships and interactions. Millennials and mostly Generation Z spend more time online than any generation before. This study aimed to determine if there any relationship between personality and social media platform preference. Instagram and Facebook users have been compared regarding the motives of usage and the intensity of the attachment.

Keywords: Generation Z, social media, Instagram, Facebook

# 1 Introduction

Social media sites (SMS) have become unavoidable worldwide for the past nearly 20 years. According to a survey, nearly 4 billion people actively use at least one social media interface, approximately half of the world's population (48%) [1]. Although Facebook's fragility has waned a bit over the past few years, it is still one of the most popular and most used platforms [2]. In terms of social media platforms, Instagram is also taking a unique path, which has started to grow rapidly in the last few years and is still one of the fastest-growing platforms. As a result, it has 1 billion active users, 89% of which are non-US users [1]. However, unlike Facebook, Instagram is mainly popular among the younger age group (18-34 years old) [3]. To understand why these platforms are so popular, we need to know individuals' motivations to use social media [4]. The problematic internet/smartphone use have been studied widely [5;6]. Very few studies investigating the connection between



personality and Facebook or Instagram use motive [7]. The aim of this study was to find answers for the following research questions related to the Generation Z:

- What are the primary motivator factors that affect Instagram and Facebook usage, and are there any significant differences between the two platforms?
- What is the level of attachment to both social media sites?
- Is there any difference in the level of attachment, based on gender?
- What are the main aspects of the attachment to SMS?
- Are there significant differences between any personality dimension between females and males?
- What is the connection between personality traits and SMS intensity and attachment?
- What is the connection between personality traits and motives of SMS use?

# 2 Social media sites (SMS): Facebook & Instagram

Social media platforms/sites (SMS) been defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (p. 211) [8]. The most popular SMS in the Western world are Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Youtube and Google [9]. The primary motivation includes establishing and maintaining relationships [10].

As mentioned earlier, of the social media platforms, Facebook has the most extensive user base, at about 2.7 billion [2], and is also significantly represented across ages in terms of age groups [3]. Numerous studies address social media platforms' effects and the motivations behind their use [4;11;12]. Motivations for using social media are diverse: the need for social interactions, information seeking, spending time, having fun, relaxing, expressing opinions, sharing information, observing or getting to know others [13;14]. Besides sharing photos and videos and status updates, there is a strong demand for entertainment-related content when using Facebook (one of the most popular sites) [15]. People use social media to obtain information about others [16] and thus facilitate the maintenance of relationships despite potentially less frequent interactions [17]. While members of Generations Y and Z have socialized in the digital world and are entirely natural to online contact, for example, those over 60 use social media (especially Facebook) mostly to keep in touch with family members, out of compulsion [18]. There are differences in use not only between generations but also in terms of gender. Women join the Facebook and Snapchat community to track family and friends' lives, while men are encouraged to be members of a network of contacts and meet new people [19].



#### 2.1 Generation Z and social media use

Generation Z already prefers to nurture its relationships online, especially on social media platforms. Its members are open to providing active feedback on the brands or services they use and evaluating others' opinions [20]. In many cases, this generation is already more strongly involved in virtual communities than in offline groups and is also a critical consumer of online content [21]. What significantly differentiates Generation Z from Y is their attitude to the online world: they no longer only want to know everything, they want to share everything, especially their best moments, or at least the edited versions of their experiences [22]. They trust their friends more than their predecessors [23]. They are the first global generation (thanks to technological advances), who can be in regular contact with each other on social media, regardless of geographical affiliation [24]. Looking at the data for the past few years, Generation Y reduced the time spent on social media interfaces, while Generation Z further increased it. Generation Z members have, on average, nearly ten different social media profiles [25]. They prefer Instagram over Facebook, and their lives are more intertwined with social media platforms, they require more attention in online communities, and they are more courageous to express their emotions and problems in a virtual group of peers [26]. This age group is a regular mobile phone user, nearly 40% have a feeling of FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) daily in their lives (so they are reluctant to stay away from their phone for long), and 5.5% are particularly concerned about not being able to check their mobile phone at any time [27].

# 2.2 "Big Five" personality traits and SMS use

Personality cause relevant individual differences which affect the SMS use motivations [28]. The present study examines personality based on the Big Five personality traits, displayed in Figure 1 [29].

The Big Five personality traits model is based on several independent researchers' results. Allport and Odbert collected 4.500 terms relating to personality traits in 1936 [30]. A few years later, Cattel and his colleagues used factor analysis to reduce the items, and they identified 16 traits. Fiske and his colleagues reduced these dimensions to five factors. McCrae and Costa confirmed the model's validity and the following factors (traits): openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism (known by the acronym CANOE or OCEAN). Personality traits are influenced by genes and the environment as well. Each trait represents a continuum and encompasses other facets, as displayed in Figure 1. Most individuals are somewhere between the two polar ends [31].



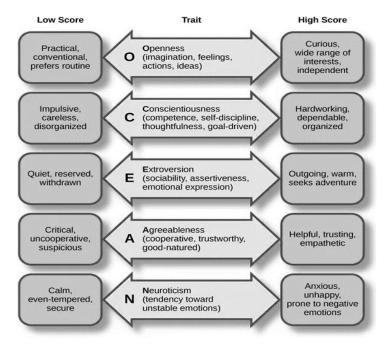


Figure 1
The Big Five personality traits [32]

Previous studies connect personality differences to social media use. For example, neurotic SMS users are more involved in the feedback of others on their selfies [33], spend more time on Facebook [34] and prefer to use SM passively [35]. Extraverted individuals post more photos and selfies [36]. Agreeable individuals are more interested in shared content and comment, and like others' posts more frequently [33]. Unconscientious individuals prefer to use SMS for information and news [35], whole individuals scored high on openness to experience, share more content (photos, posts, selfies, location info) [37]. Personality traits related to preferred leisure and social activities [38;39], and notably impact the quantity of time an individual spends on SMS [40]. For example, who sores higher in the extraversion dimension, that is more inclined to initiate phone calls and sends more text messages [41]. Personality traits affect predisposition to problematic or addictive mobile phone behaviour [28;42;43] and have a remarkable influence on social media use as well, based on previous studies [44].



# 3 Results and discussion

# 3.1 Measure and Method

The data has been collected anonymously by an online questionnaire, which took 10-15 minutes to fill in. The questionnaire contained demographic questions (gender, age, educational level) and validated scales translated to Hungarian. The respondents were encouraged to share the survey via Facebook. Different statistical tests have been used for the analysis, made in SPSS 26 and ROPStat [45].

Facebook and Instagram attachment was measured by the altered version of Facebook Intensity Scale by Ellison et al. [46]. This scale defines the different aspects of the attachment to Facebook or Instagram (e.g., "I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook."). he respondent could answer the six statements on a seven-point Likert scale. In this study, the items related to the time spent online and a number of friends have been excluded. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.86 in the case of Facebook and 0.91 in the case of Instagram. Facebook and Instagram motivation was measured by twelve items that were defined by Alhabash and Ma [47]. The respondents had to answer on a seven-point Likert scale, based on their agreement to the item's statement (e.g., "I use [SMS] to share information"). The scale's Cronbach's alpha was 0.82 in the case of Facebook and 0.89 in the case of Instagram. Personality traits have been measured by Big Five Inventory [48] which contained 44 items and measures an individual on the Big Five dimensions of personality. The respondent had to apply their answer on a five-point Likert scale (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) about characteristics. The dimensions' Cronbach's alfa was between 0.73 and 0.85

# 3.2 Sample

The number of submitted online forms was 168. Respondents, who were younger than 15 years old, or older than 25 or gave incomplete or inaccurate answers have been excluded (23.22%). After the database cleaning, the final sample contained 129 Hungarians' answer (76.78%). The average age was 19.19 (SD = 3.197, min = 15, max = 25). Based on the result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the normality of the age variable was not confirmed. The sample contained 116 females (89.9%) and 13 males (10.1%). Due to the disproportioned gender distribution, a robust statistical test (Yuen-Welch test with 20% trim) has been used in the comparative analysis [49;50]. Most of the respondents still hold student status (91.5%), 3.9% studied at primary, 38,8% at secondary, 48.8% at higher education. Our sample is not representative.



#### 3.3 Motives for social media use

Table 1 displays the different motives for SMS use. Significant differences have been found in the motives of Facebook and Instagram. Generation Z prefers to share their personal information via Instagram (p=0.009), but in case of general information (which is essential for anybody else), no significant differences have been found (p=0.106). They frequently use Instagram instead of Facebook when they bored or want to disengage from the environment (the effect size is bigger than 0.408). Facebook and Instagram are equally used if the individual wants to connect to similar people (p=0.921) or establish a connection with others who have similar interests or tastes (p=0.566).

 $\label{eq:Table 1} Table \ 1$  Differences in motives in the case of Instagram and Facebook use

	Facebook Instag		gram			
Motives for use	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	р	Cohen-D
Share personal information	2.74	1.873	3.35	2.171	0.009	0.327
Record life events	2.29	1.572	4.31	2.117	0.000	1.287
Connect due to similar interests	3.63	1.931	3.57	2.091	0.566	-0.049
Spend time	4.36	1.923	5.37	1.837	0.000	0.520
Share relevant information	2.39	1.699	2.68	1.867	0.106	0.156
Record experiences	1.98	1.493	2.38	1.791	0.024	0.251
Connect to similar people	4.13	1.976	4.03	2.136	0.921	-0.059
Nothing better to do	3.88	2.087	4.75	2.110	0.000	0.408
Express personal interests	2.72	1.861	4.26	2.112	0.000	0.819
Record visited places	2.30	1.811	3.99	2.234	0.000	0.923
Get to know new people	2.60	1.781	3.09	1.966	0.008	0.263
Disengage from environment	3.70	2.067	5.20	2.055	0.000	0.722

When Gen Z wants to record and share experiences, life events, or visited places, the preferred platform is Instagram (p = 0.000). The effect size for this analysis (d = 1.287) was found to exceed Cohen's convention for a large effect (d = 0.80).

# 3.4 Attachment to social media platforms

The attachment score ranged between 7 and 42. The respondents' average Facebook attachment score was 23.29 (SD = 8.852), and their Instagram attachment score was 27.22 (SD = 10.249). The difference is significant (p < 0.001); the respondents are more attached to Instagram than Facebook. No significant differences have been found between males and females.



Table 2 Differences in attachment items in case of Instagram and Facebook

	Facebook		Instagram			
	Mea n	SD	Mean	SD	p	Cohen-D
Part of habitual mobile use	5.22	1.855	5.46	2.000	0.193	0.125
Pride	4.08	1.943	4.64	2.038	0.001	0.291
Base of daily routine	4.43	2.132	4.92	2.071	0.013	0.233
Fear of missing out	2.57	1.806	3.23	2.044	0.000	0.354
Connected to the community	3.00	1.772	3.84	2.083	0.000	0.472
Importance	3.99	2.108	5.19	2.011	0.000	0.565

Table 2 displays the differences between Instagram and Facebook. Both platforms play an important role in the daily, habitual mobile use; no preference has been found. The respondents are more proud to be the user of Instagram (p < 0.001) and feel connected to the community of Instagram more than Facebook (p < 0.01). Instagram causes more anxiety, because if the respondent cannot connect to the site, they feel FoMO quickly, much quicker than in the case of Facebook (p < 0.001). The importance of Instagram is significantly higher than Facebook (p < 0.001), and this aspect display the most significant difference. As the respondents said, life would be more miserable without Instagram than without Facebook. The importance of Instagram over Facebook in case of Generation Z is unambiguous. Instagram became part of their daily routine. It offers more opportunity to quickly check the others' new stories, upload fresh photos, and avoid the text-based posts of Facebook.

# 3.5 Relationship between SMS use and personality traits

# 3.5.1 Personality traits differences between males and females

Table 3 displays the five dimensions of the BI5 personality test. Due to the unbalance between males (N = 13) and females (N = 116) and the small sample size, Yuen-Welch test (with 20% trim) has been used which is the combination of rimmed Means t-test and Welch's t-test [50;51]. Regarding personality traits, a significant difference has been found between males and females at the *extraversion* dimension, Y(9,4) = 2.370, p = 0.0408. Males scored higher than females, CI(95%) = (0.34; 10.80), which means they are more outgoing, sociable and energetic. Regarding the other dimensions, no significant differences have been found.



Table 3

Average personality dimensions scores and their differences based on gender

	Ma	iles	Females			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	p	Cohen-D
Extraversion Conscientiousne	30.38	6.199	25.20	5.905	0.041	1.273
SS	30.00	5.276	30.26	6.203	0.819	0.110
Agreeableness	32.23	5.688	31.79	5.635	0.907	-0.047
Neuroticism	22.69	8.469	26.69	5.648	0.194	-1.014
Openness	35.77	6.03	37.49	5.499	0.243	-0.491

# 3.5.2 Connection between personality traits and SMS intensity and attachment

Extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience dimensions do not correlate with SM attachment or intensity of use, but others show a significant relationship. Those who are high in agreeableness can be described as empathic, trusting, forgiving, and enjoying helping others. The higher this sensitivity to the others' need, the higher the intensity of Facebook usage (r = 0.178, p < 0.05). Active and symmetrical communication at Facebook is easier than at Instagram because Facebook has plenty of features that help engage with others (e.g., groups). Neuroticism shows the overall emotional stability of an individual, how likely they interpret events. Who score high on neuroticism often feel irritable, anxious, vulnerable and stressful. Neuroticism score significantly correlates with Instagram attachment (r = 0.174, p < 0.05) and Instagram use intensity (r = 0.179, p < 0.05). Thus, the more anxious and shy a person, the more they attached to Instagram, which allows passive following of others' life events without any engagement, and they use it more intensively.

# 3.5.3 Connection between personality traits and motives of SMS use

Table 4 displays the significant correlations between the personality trait s and motives of Instagram use. *Conscientiousness* shows a person's ability to reguéate their impulses in order to engage in goal-directed behaviour. These dimensions' high score describes competence, self-discipline, and dutifulness, while a low score confirms disorganized, careless, impulsive, and incompetent personality. Respondents who scored high on this dimension are less likely to use Instagram for spending time and disengage from their environment. Who scored higher n activities which related to boredom or disengagement, scored higher on *neuroticism* as well. Thus the more emotionally stable and individual, the less time they spend on Instagram while they have the chance to do other activities.



Table 4
Correlation coefficients based on personality traits and Instagram use

Personality traits	Motives of Instagram use	Spearman rho
Conscientiousness	Nothing better to do	-0.2463**
	Spend time	-0.2221*
Neuroticism	Nothing better to do	0.2512**
	Disengage from environment	0.2292**
	Spend time	0.2163*
Extraversion	Get to know new people	0.1935*
	Share personal information	0.1823*
Openness	Get to know new people	0.1740*
	Express personal interests	0.2525**

Notes: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

Extraversion shows the tendency to wich someone seeks social interaction. Who scores high in this dimension are excitement seekers, energized by social interactions and sociable persons. The more extrovert a person, the more information they share on Instagram, and they seek new connections with the platform's help. The more reserved, introvert personalities share less personal information and no as brave with new connections. Openness to experience refers to a person's willingness to try new things and engage in new activities and intellectual challenges. Individuals who score higher in this dimension express their personal interests more freely and are more open to new connections.

Table 5
Correlation coefficients based on personality traits and Facebook use

Personality traits	ersonality traits Motives of Instagram use	
Conscientiousness	Nothing better to do	-0.2911**
Neuroticism	Nothing better to do	0.1777*
Extraversion	Share relevant information	0.2533**
	Share personal information	0.2020*
Openness	Connect to similar people	0.1752*
	Connect due to similar interests	0.1922*
	Express personal interests	0.2062*

Notes: \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

In the case of Facebook, small differences can be seen (as displayed in Table 5). The pattern for *conscientiousness* and *neuroticism* is similar to Instagram's. Individuals who score higher in *extraversion* share more personal information and post about information relevant to others. Due to this difference (Instagram is more likely to seek new connections and self-expression), Facebook is the place for symmetrical interactions. The higher the individual's *openness* score, the more active they are foster their social connections via Facebook and express their personal interests.



# 4 Conclusion and recommendations

In order to explore the motives of Instagram and Facebook use ad Generation Z's attachment to these SMSs, quantitative methods have been used. Based on 129 respondents (aged between 15 and 25), significant differences have been found between the two platforms. Generation Z prefers Instagram in case of sharing personal information and record their life evens or their travels. When they are bored or want to disengage from the world, Instagram is a better alternative than Facebook, due to the relatively text-free timeline. It consumes less energy to scroll over hundreds or thousands of photos, and Instagram's algorithm helps them by offering accounts with similar content to their interests. This young generation is more attached to Instagram; the platform plays an essential role in their daily routines and provides belongingness as well. Both SMS became part of their everyday habitual mobile phone use, but Instagram is more important for them.

Regarding the personality traits, we found no significant differences between the genders (except the extraversion dimension, which scored higher to males). Individuals who are higher in agreeableness prefers Facebook, which allows easier symmetrical communication between the parties, who are more stressful ad anxious, prefers Instagram and use it more frequently than the balanced individuals. This kind of passive SMS use, especially when an individual is bored, is linked to personalities with a lower self-regulation level. Extroverts freely share their most personal moments and interests and do not wait for too much reciprocity. Individuals who are open to new experiences easily engage with establishing new connections, they express their emotions and interests and glad to maintain relationships with others; they prefer Facebook, which is the place for symmetrical interactions.

While both social media sites attract more and more users, Instagram is more important for the Generation Z. They use if against boredom and self-expression, and it is an excellent platform to "stalk" others without real interactions. Facebook is the place for maintaining relationships because it has more features which help symmetrical communications and provide more privacy. Another important (but previously did not mention) aspect is the anonymity. Facebook does not allow to use simple usernames, but on Instagram, anybody can stay anonymous and fake even a whole life for themselves.

Overall, this study's findings with Hungarian Generation Z strengthen the previous findings regarding the significant relationship between personality traits and social media use. Knowing the SMS using patterns of the young users might help to detect their main personality traits, which tremendously helps personalization which is an emerging field of sales and marketing activities [51]. More sophisticated human-computer interactions and personalization of user experience without more comprehensive knowledge of the users' attitudes and traits is unimaginable [52].



There are two major limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. First, the sample size was small (n = 129). Even if Yuen-Welch test - a robost statistical method - has been used, the results are subject to biases. Second, the sample does not reflect the general population due to the lack of balanced gender distribution and the snowball selection method. Thus, the inability to generalize the research findings could be an issue.

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