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Future possibility of integration of Social Media platforms for educational Deliverance to the GenZ.

A user based study for better understanding about the future possibilities of educational deliverance in the post pandemic "new abnormal".

Dr. Reshmi Naskar

Assistant Professor, St Xavier's University, Kolkata

Anisha Ray

Assistant Professor, NSHM Knowledge Campus, Kolkata

Abstract

Vision and Version of the post abnormal

The world beyond pandemic has left little room for scholars across the globe for the lack of imagination about the "possibilities of the impossible". It seems like the world is fast pacing forward towards times that involve lethargic psychology and convenient approachability. In those times, what will prevail is comfort over compulsion. Survival through pandemic will deepen the need for convenience over compulsion and this will highly impact the future of academics. Simply going digital isn't exactly the pursuit for betterment of an entire generation that's labelled as the future but is at the present slowly getting addicted and acquainted with a world of social media primarily. The future for this Gen Z lies within the confinement of mobile screens and taps on social media platforms and somehow the integration of education within this will help strengthen the possibilities of converging education and entertainment together that caters successfully to the need for comfort and convenience as a part of the post pandemic abnormalities and resulting possibilities.

Educational deliverance and the role and nature of communication and media in the post-abnormal for education.

The once in a century kind of disaster has engulfed the whole world currently. The world is undergoing a global crisis, be it health wise or economically and psychologically. Amidst this entire situation, the role of media in general is highly integrated with the stable functioning of the society. Be it catering to the human need for information, entertainment, gratification in the form of social recognition or helping people stay in touch and do successful networking, the media is doing it all at the moment. As social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter pave their way quite integrally into the lives of the Gen Z , it quite possibly seems like these could be 'the future'. With an entire generation inclined and submersed into the whole idea of co dependency on these platforms for acquiring all forms of gratification starting from networking to information seeking , these platforms have in the last few months of pandemic made quite the leap from just being a platform for escapade to now a means of parallel digital identity formation and existence.

With the world advancing forward into coping with what could be the creation of a new revolutionary way of existence, education remains one such sector that seems to have lost on the possibilities of betterment through mere digital classroom conversion. The deliverance techniques could be a problem but what also needs to be considered as a possibility of sorts is the change of the medium of deliverance. With various digital advances taking place and smartphones becoming the new amenity for survival, the users of this medium could also possibly contribute to the education driven society of tomorrow.

Objective of the study

In this study, the researcher put forth three research questions 1) Whether the users(Gen Z) of these popular social media platforms really have an increasing interdependence on the same for seeking various forms of gratification?. 2) How does the growing use of social media possibly pave the way for their information seeking gratification particularly? 3) Based on the user's perspective, what are the possible means of integrating it as a form of educational deliverance for post pandemic academics?4)Lastly, what are the challenges and opportunities to Gen Z users in adopting the new abnormal educational deliverance model? The implication of users and gratification theory, hypodermic needle theory along with a few key elements of the play theory concept make it possible to complete the study. Quantitative research approach and questionnaire survey research designs are used for this study. Kolkata, as a metropolitan city has been taken into consideration for sampling and 100 undergraduate students

belonging to gen Z studying in a few prominent media schools in Kolkata are the study samples. Structured Google form will be distributed among students, and percentage analysis to be used for findings and conclusions. The research findings primarily try to indicate that the accessibility and interdependence on social media platforms by Gen Z could effectively be used as a way to cater to their academic needs in the post pandemic digital revolution of sorts. This can be further used as prospective future scope of study for better understanding from the content creator perspective as well. This can be further used to compare and correlate the practicality of the implementation from both the communicator and receiver's side.

Keywords: Online learning, millennial cultural exposure, post pandemic abnormal, digitalisation, educational deliverance

INTRODUCTION

• A detailed narration of the imagined 'Post Abnormal'

COVID-19 first started off widespread amongst the worldwide population last year somewhere in the month of March and since then the whole world went into a frenzy. The pandemic confined people and while there was a hope in the beginning in accordance to a possibility of a future beyond it, that slowly changed and was abruptly confined to a feasibility of existence amidst it.

The new pattern of existence involves planning the new abnormal that awaits in the long journey towards recovery from a global pandemic. Since the pandemic first hit, the social being state of humans has been quite rapidly declining and it seems like it's crashing further into becoming a way of existence. The only way to survive was to isolate and this physical distancing led to an irreplace dependency on virtual connectivity and networking. For the urban millennial, it has become a survival staple and with the pandemic nearing to an evolution both psychologically and physically, going virtual seems like a feasible standard of living in the near future.

What excites more is the possibility of social media becoming synonymous to digital media for an entire generation of its own. The gen z that primarily revolves around the pre teens to the current quarter age millennials seems to have quite smoothly adapted to the drastic transition. The Gen Z interdependency on popular social media platforms was arguably quite high anyway courtesy for their upbringing lacking

the transition from tradition to digital. However, the ongoing pandemic has opened up the possibilities of social media for Gen Z like a pandora box. It no more merely serves the purpose for time pass based networking, instead the earlier preferable means of escapade has now a brigade of growing loyal users who are addicted to the versatility of its features. Although it is highly debatable if at all these platforms have a basic structure regarding ethical concerns and filtration of unrequired substance, the escalating dependency is still worth consideration. Most popular social networks on a global level. The US has the most users at 116 million, followed by India at 73 million and Brazil at 72 million. 35% of those making less than \$30k use Social Media Platforms,39% of those making \$30k–74,999 use Social Media Platforms,42% of those making more than \$75k use Social Media Platforms(chen, 2020) establishing why exactly is the platform known as the 'gram' for the elite. The economy of most of its users on a global level surpasses that of the average standard of basic economy. The situation in a third world country like ours, is no different. Followed up closely is the dependency on platforms like facebook,

For a few privileged sections of society, whose economic indulgence doesn't seem to have been affected, the battle of survival was instead on a psychological level. It is undoubtedly a matter of prevailing priority that in a third world country like ours, the majority of the population is currently scraping for access to basic amenities like food, water and shelter. However for the ones who have security on the grounds of these, seem to be equally affected by the barriers of isolation. This study article is however a small effort on behalf of the millennial who don't argue about their privilege of existence but attribute their sanity to social media platforms unnoticed like most other irreplaceable media outlets at the moment.

With media centering in and controlling the information and entertainment seeking gratification quite miraculously, social media platforms in specificity seems to be doing exactly the same for the millennials and the converging Gen Z especially.

Social media platforms have their own way of dealing with the psychological massacre that the global pandemic,COVID 19, has caused amongst the young generation, especially the Gen Z . Social Media Platform, has its own way of dealing with the psychological massacre that the global pandemic, COVID-19 has caused amongst people. It's a successful model that deals with the sense of fulfillment that arises out of a virtual escapade. It isn't quite good at dealing with the ground reality, it isn't the one keeping people updated with minute by minute bombardment of accurate data either, it isn't a platform that filters out content on an ethical and sensible ground and it surely isn't curing people from any pertaining disease. Yet the platform is doing its bit in handling people in a way that's engaging and rewarding in a manner like no other. It's keeping them hooked to the existence of a world that is beyond reality and yet helps

them cope up with an unwanted prevailing situation in the real world. It caters to the basic need of gratification of a human, a need psychologically so strong that it camouflages the need for other survival instincts. Uses and gratification theory of communication explains how people use media to fulfill their needs. The need for Gratification is the most important role of media for humans. People get knowledge, interaction, relaxation, awareness, escape and entertainment through media which they use for interpersonal communication as well. The theory was introduced by Blumler and Katz in 1974 in the article "the Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research" and focuses its attention on media users' roles. (Bajracharya, 2018). It is the users themselves who are choosing to actively involve themselves with a certain media platform against the availability of many others. It is in contradiction to other theories that revolve around the assumption that media platforms prey on consumers in a manner that is one-directional and engulfing without the active voluntary involvement of the receivers. The UGT (users and gratification theory) theory assumes that the audience wants to be informed, educated, relate with characters, entertainment, enhance social interaction and escape from the stresses of daily life. These are the broad classifications of needs and desires based on which a person makes a conscious choice of preferring to be involved with one media platform over the others. When it comes to understanding it in relation to the current situation, it is likely that people seem to gain satisfaction from a certain platform that is versatile in pertaining to every need and desire that humans have from a media platform in general while balancing out the fun and serious quotient attached to it. Social Media Platforms mostly cater to an elite urban class of millennials. India's urban youth spends more time on social media compared to their elderly counterparts, with Social Media Platforms emerging as the favorite among the youngest lot, shows a recent survey conducted by market research firm YouGov in collaboration with Mint. While Facebook remains the most popular social media platform among the millennials, Instagram beats Facebook among Generation Z. Millennials refer to those who attained adulthood in the early twenty first century, and grew up at a time when the world increasingly became digitally connected. In this analysis, millennials refer to those born between 1981 and 1996 or those aged 22 to 37 years in 2018. Those born after 1996, i.e. those aged 21 years or below, are here referred to as the Gen Z (Kwatra, 2018). This emphasises on how Instagram is successfully overtaking other social media platforms, for the millennial generation and beyond.

There is a theory by Maslow known as the hierarchy of needs and in that theory after the physiological and safety and security, comes the need for love, belonging and self-esteem. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before

individuals can attend to needs higher up. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. (Mcleod, 2020)



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Mcleod, 2020)

For the millennial, belonging to the urban sector, the need for food, shelter, health and income are mostly taken care of either by the virtue of a financially stable guardian or by their own means of access to stances of better than average medium of employment pertaining to better access to quality of education and skill learning and henceforth resulting with better income sources. Therefore, when these people are coming online, they are looking for friendship amidst isolation, a sense of connection in the time of distancing, a boost of confidence and validation from others in times of embracing the harsh economic, physical and psychological reality of a global pandemic. For all of these psychological needs, Social Media Platforms come to the forefront. There is something called instant gratification, where someone desires for something and wants to attain pleasure and satisfaction almost immediately from the concerned source of gratification. Social Media Platforms seem to fit the bill when it comes to catering to that need for instant gratification. The kind of gratification that it gives isn't long term to say the very least, it isn't voluntary in the long run either. Once exposed to the platform, people are intertwined in a loop of pleasure seeking activities that involve entertainment in the form of a voyeuristic escapade. When a person logs into their Social Media Platform account, they are exposed to the life of others, private and intimate life. Sometimes it's pretentious, sometimes it's the naked truth. People post about the most random things on Social Media Platforms, and unlike Facebook, it's just visual communication. Pictures and videos do the talking on Social Media Platforms. It could be said that it just makes every viewer relate more because the impact of visuals is larger but it could also be analyzed as the power of a platform to make voyeurism acceptable for the person being exposed to the entire process. It's a unique platform that makes voyeurism pleasurable for both the viewers and the content maker. During the current

prevailing situation, it's a time when people especially the millennial are isolated from their otherwise social life. It's a once in a century kind of situation that humankind wasn't actually prepared for and therefore couldn't armor themselves against its disastrous effect. The only shield was a hideout in the form of a lockdown and a hideout in this century is more psychologically depressing than the calamity caused by the epidemic itself. The urban millennial was exposed to a pattern of regular socializing that didn't involve social distancing and validation seeking behavior was a packed parcel that came along with the exposure to the real world networking that existed beyond the current four walls of isolation. Now amidst the confinement, came the need of the hour. A replacement of sorts and Social Media Platforms that keeps people engaged with all forms of visual aspects, making it the accurate platform for being the most relatable to real life. It's helping people stay updated about each other's life, additionally even helping them extend their circles beyond barriers or borders. It's keeping them sane by acknowledging their existence via likes, posts and comments by the peer watchers and most importantly it's helping them stay entertained in a way that's reminiscent of real life socializing behavior. Coming to the versatility part of the 'gram', the platform does a decent job in keeping the millennial updated about global events as well. While it is debatable that it isn't a conventional platform for the propagation of accurate information, it is still worth the mention for its diversity of its usage. Social Media Platform users are mostly centred around the young digital generation, they aren't the ones to stay hooked to traditional media platforms by virtue of their early exposure to the internet. They have been exposed to the digital world quite early on in their life and their compatibility with digital platforms is way higher than that to a television or a radio. In the time of pandemic, it's not different. The newspaper and television is bombarded with facts and figures, and they are bound to be less optimistic and more real. It isn't meant for assurance, it's meant for awareness. The news available via these platforms hard hit the psychology of the people negatively with the precise reality. People tend to develop a psychological mechanism of coping up with unavoidable adversity by an escapade route. The current pandemic situation has too many negative aspects attached to it; it is making people cling to a hope that's an escape from the current situation. For the millennial, Social Media Platform is that thread that makes people believe that there exists and awaits better times and moments beyond the pandemic and its gruesome effects.(Ray,2020)

A robust vision of the 'Post Abnormal'

when integrating it with the possibility of the future, the study becomes a clear feasibility of sorts, with more and more people switching on their phones and tapping on their social media more than their inclination towards the same screen for doing classes on zoom or ms teams is a proof for the future that

awaits beyond the pandemic. If online education is the future and it is here to stay that the current infrastructure that awaits is simply not enough, Students have been brought up with the whole exposure of integration of fun and education while growing up in conventional schools and suddenly the transition to online cannot strictly be based on monologue delivery and protocols. Online education has its own perks and pros and highs and if discovered and utilised well enough could result in a smooth transition to the future. The breaking of demographic and global barriers and the existence of virtual identity of every individual on social media helps people on social media to comfortably interact beyond borders and this interaction could easily result in fruitful informative exchange. For example, youth of today are thriving more than ever when it comes to their active participation and involvement in international politics and areas of conflict, something that people were unaware of just a few years back. Similarly, social media is a platform for personalisation and relatability. Even the showbiz industry has quite well decided to indulge equally when it comes to revealing their life beyond screens and relating more personally with their fans, if such is the platform than it easily opens up avenues .It could be the next big step towards breaking hierarchies in the educational system, with everyone stuck in isolation and behind screens, this could be the next big way for interactions to be more personal and yet effective as compared to the current ghost speaking techniques through online meetings.Lastly, the overall aesthetics of these platforms make it more engaging and appealing, visuals have always benefitted more than textual words . The fact that these social media platforms thrive on its dominance of audio visual content makes it even more prominent as the content of the future. With people's attention span drastically decreasing due to their constant exposure to online content, the only way to hold it is to shorten it and play it .Educational and informative matter made fun could probably do the trick, if not we are stuck in a loop of monologues and non responsive blank screens. If the possibility of education in the future is considered, it must be taken into account that its technically dealing with young minds addicted to platforms that blicker constantly with content that's lucrative and people making that content lucrative enough, if suddenly there is an invasion into the world of likes and hearts, it might a well be as per their liking to better impact them rather than being repulsive .Content in the form of storytelling and content makers in the avatars of story tellers is the only way the future can be intermixed with the present.

METHODOLOGY

Objective:

The role of Social Media and communication through the same at macro and micro scale in the imagined 'Post Abnormal'

Keeping in mind the purpose of this study in particular, a quantitative research method was adopted and in accordance, a questionnaire survey was prepared. The selection of quantitative research method is beneficial because its a comparatively systematic process of gathering quantifiable data and performing credible statistical techniques on the same. Quantitative methods emphasize on the collection of information in accordance with research goals and objectives, it takes into account prospective potential target groups for the study using convenient online surveys, online polls, questionnaires, etc.After understanding of the data collected, a better concluding analysis can be made based on the same.(Wimmer, Dominick,2000). A questionnaire that's made available for the sample survey could either be open --ended or closed --ended . An open --ended question has a demand mostly when it comes to analyzing psychology and perspective in accordance; however in the case of closed-ended questions, respondents select an answer from a list provided by the researcher. These questions are popular because they provide greater uniformity of response and because the answers are easily quantified. In this particular study, we have applied stratified sampling .Stratified sampling ensures that a sample is drawn from a homogeneous subsect of the population – that is, from a population with similar characteristics. Homogeneity helps the researcher to reduce sampling error. In this study, the researcher has selected Kolkata urban youth especially sub concentrating on gen z as the population. The reasons for selecting this as a population are (1) availability and accessibility to them through popular educational institutions (2) their access to basic comforts to life make them more reliable source of information when it comes to digital dependency which is mostly a luxury in a third world country like ours (3) they have seen the conversion from traditional to digital dependency amidst the pandemic and their relative chances of dependency on digital world is either way greater than other target groups irrespective of the pandemic .For this study, the researcher went ahead with online poll.The age and city was included as filter questions however there wasn't much emphasis laid on other factors like gender because it didn't quite correlate with the focus of the study.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

RQ1: Whether the interdependency on social media platforms is large and also has increased amidst the pandemic for our targeted age group?

The purpose of the study is to establish the increasing co-dependency on Social Media due to the quarantine situation and a user's perspective about the contribution of the versatile 'social gram' for catering to their different psychological needs during the current lockdown.

To better understand the importance of these social media platforms in correlation to Gen Z, it is equally important to justify the increasing interdependence on these apps especially in correlation to the current quarantine situation. India is currently implementing its lockdown 7.0 and has been under a complete lockdown since the last two years almost. While analyzing the contribution of a media platform against the current background of pandemic, the psychological impact of the same can be better critiqued or roughly be analyzed. Social media platforms as a whole caters to a man's psychological need for escapade from daily life when seen from a general perspective. When put under the scanner for the same in context to the pandemic and the resulting lockdown, it's a platform that's helping its target users escape the boredom that's a part of the daily unproductive lifestyle during lockdown, of the privileged class of the country who have their basic needs secured. The assurance of the basic needs of mankind, the first basic two tier of physiological and safety needs of mankind being guaranteed, they look for what's next in the hierarchy of needs of a human. The need for belongingness, love and need for esteem that constitute the psychological needs of mankind. Instagram is a platform that ensures that its users can seek validation, to keep their esteem intact and look for relatable belongingness amidst the pandemic situation that exists beyond the four walls of shelter. To better emphasize on the credibility of the platform in influencing and manifesting the psychological needs of a human, it is first necessary to understand how the interdependence on the platform has increased during the current lockdown. A small survey study had been conducted for the same in the city of Kolkata amongst the GenZ age group .The results are as follows.

RQ2:Whether social media platforms successfully cater to all forms of gratification for Gen Z?

Although These social media platforms are conventional media platforms that's propagated with the goal and purpose of entertainment and networking primarily, the platforms seem to attract users because of its visual aspect. These are platforms where pictures and videos do the talking mostly and therefore the aesthetic of the platform is way more appealing to the eyes. It also makes the content more relatable because of the better credibility of visuals over texts. Textual content requires deeper concentration and better involvement of the brain and people do not like to be deeply engaged with a social media platform too often considering with addiction comes a flickering span of attention as well.

People when logging on to their social media platforms seem to be raving for entertainment and timepass over the need for information and awareness. However, surprisingly when it comes to analysis from a Gen Z perspective , these platforms are the go to platform for every need of its loyal users at the moment. The survey sample has proved the fact that even though they do not seek information on a priority basis from these platforms , they do rely on it for their daily updates about the entire pandemic

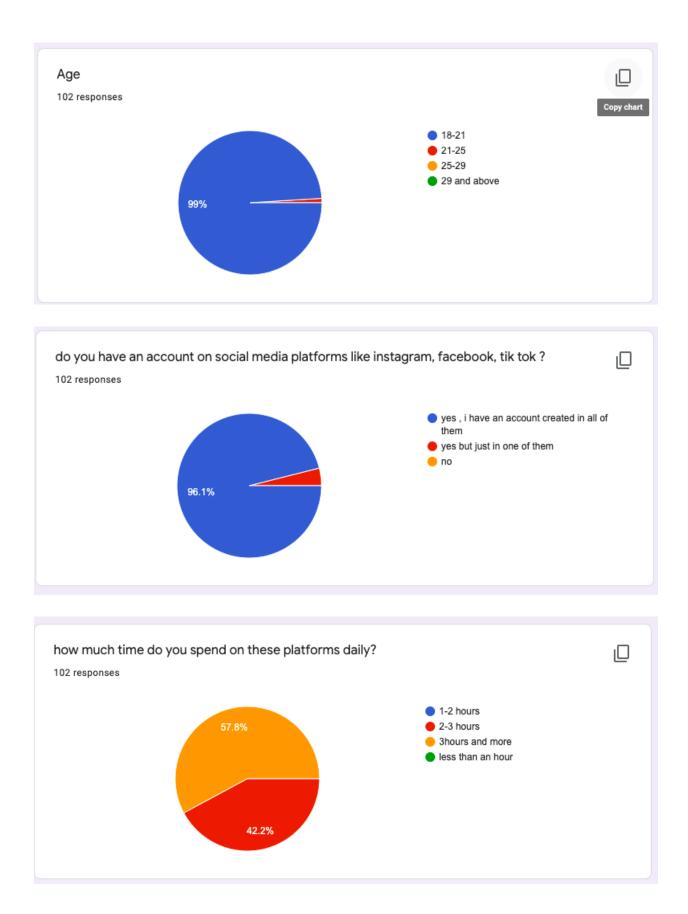
situation as compared to the conventional information propagating media platforms like television news channel and newspaper.

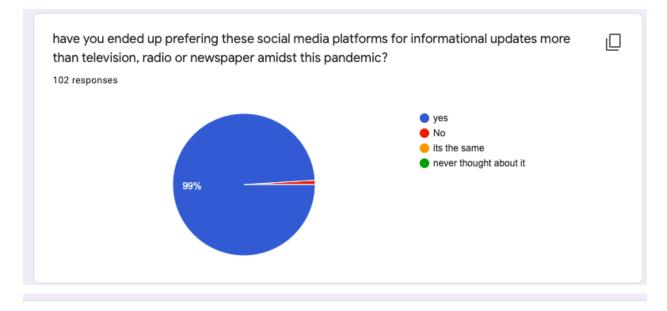
People tend to socialize in real life and garner appreciation for the smallest of achievements that become a part of daily discussion, or simply because of the way people decide to deck up for networking in real life. Amidst the isolation period, all of this has come to a deadly halt, putting a questionable esteem crisis amongst the people. Courtesy of which, people are now logging on to their social media platforms accounts more often and are uploading posts way more often than usual to compensate for the lack of validation through real life scenarios. These platforms are less about the conventional form of entertainment that involves singing and dancing, it's more about catering to the sense of belongingness and pertaining to self-esteem, it's the kind of belongingness that is created via the constant exposure to the lives of each other through pictures and audio-visual posts.

RQ3: Whether the GenZ would explore the possibility of integrating educational deliverance through these platforms?

As per the sample study and their perspective point of view, it has been duly noted that students see a future with the possibility of integration of educational deliverance along with the convenience and accessibility to social media platforms. the dependence on these platforms ensures the accessibility part of it to play a major role in its influence over a generation of its own. The widespread of its usage is resulting in its over dependency and it's probably time to interpret their dependency in a way that integrates the possibility of the currently unexplored but eventually a feasible option for the future.

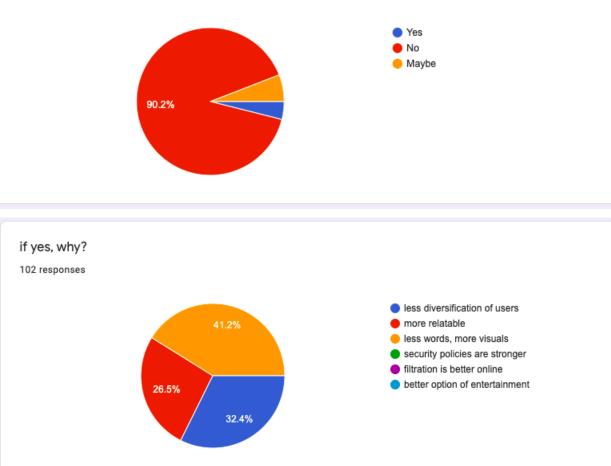
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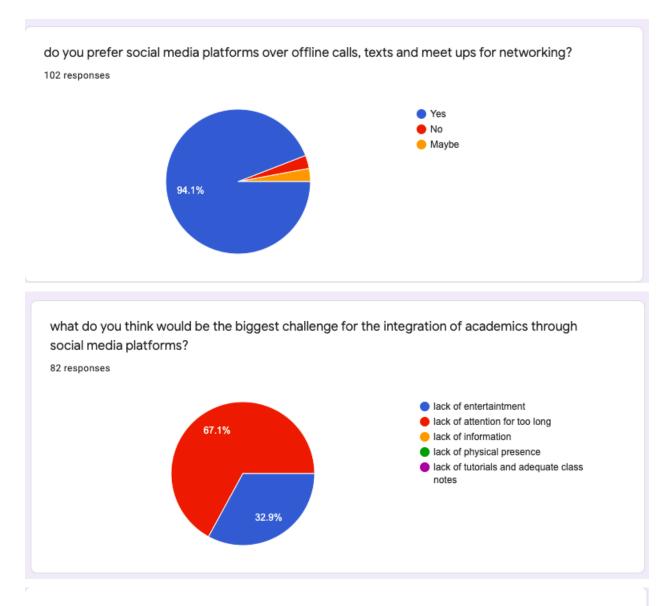


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do you normally depend on these social media platforms for information?

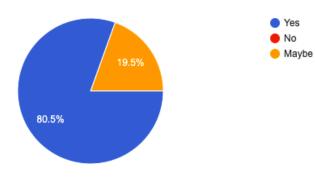


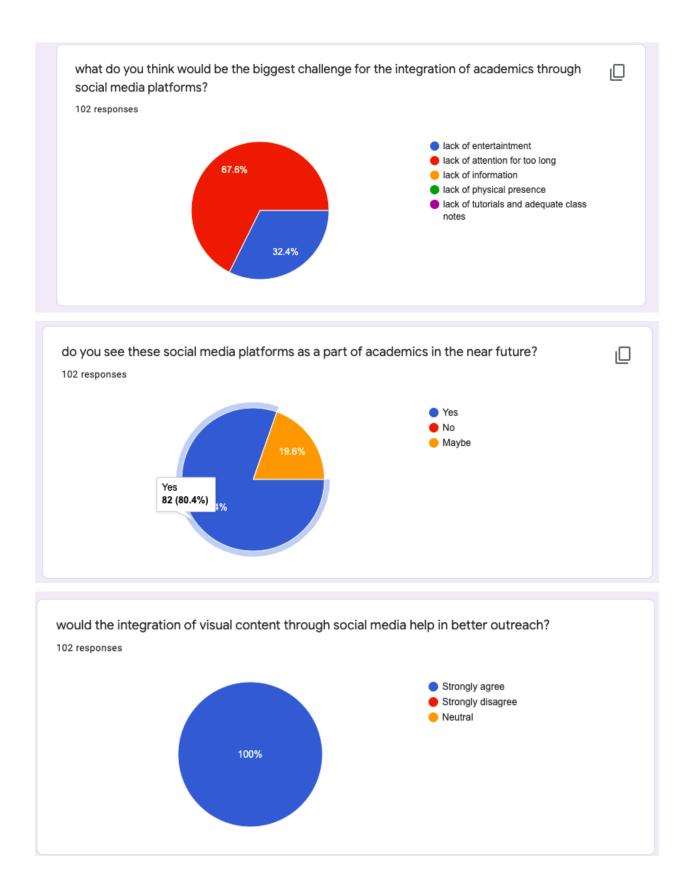
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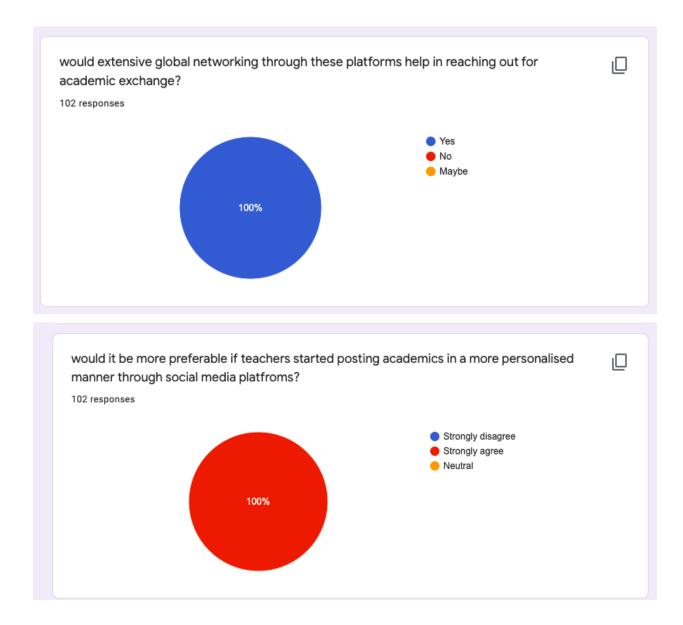


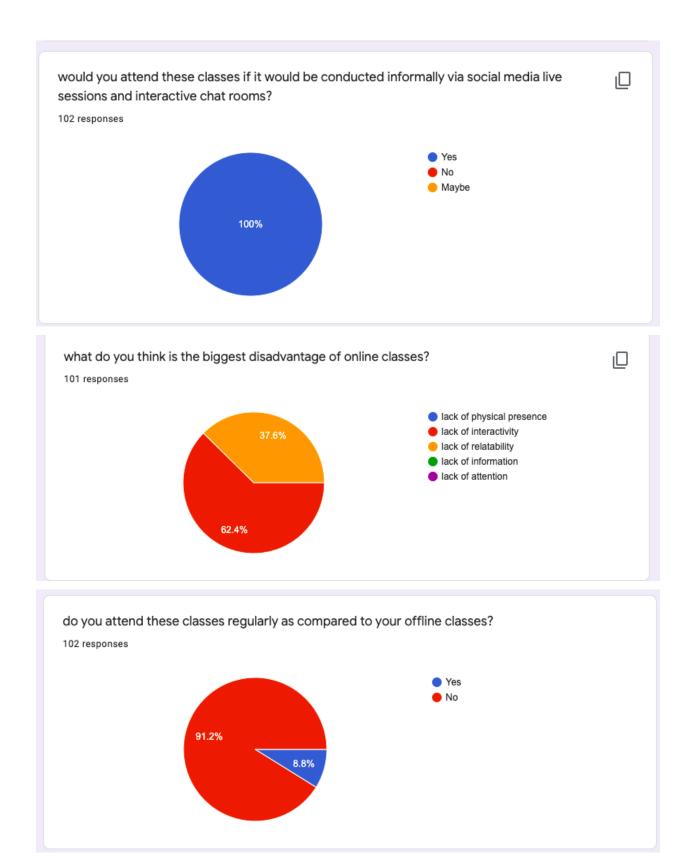
do you see these social media platforms as a part of academics in the near future?

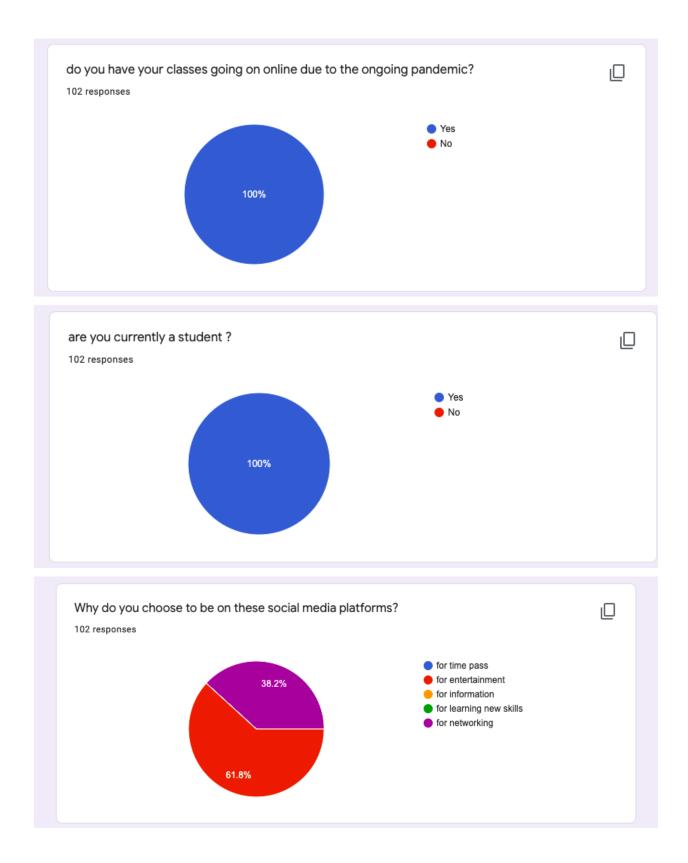
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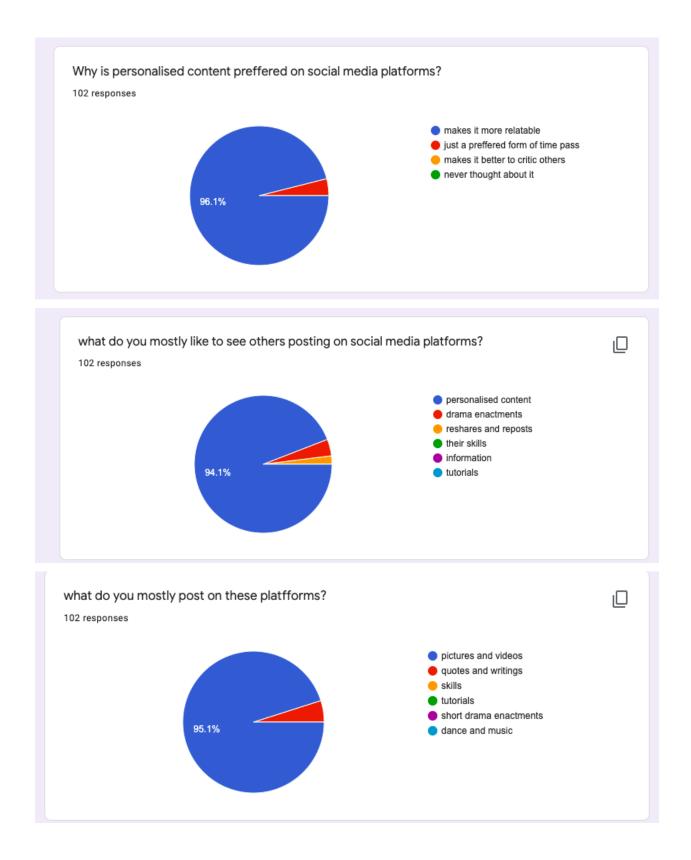


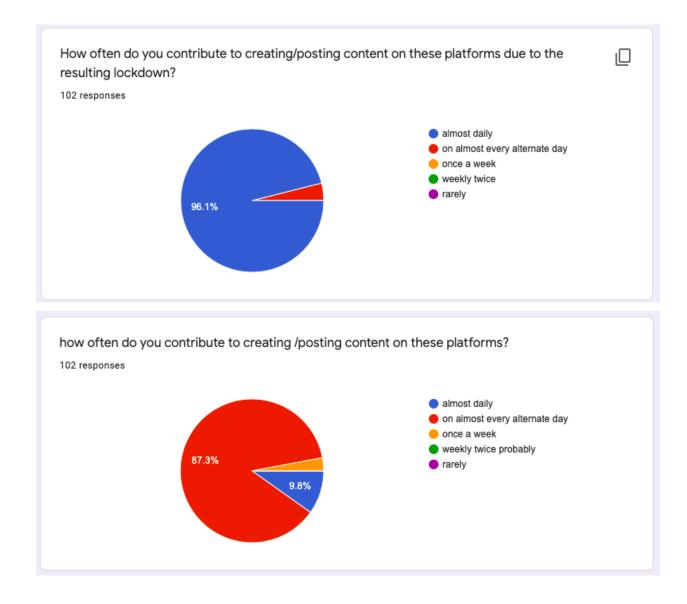












SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The analysis based on the small sample survey opens up avenues for further research and detailed analysis on this topic. Social media platforms have paved its way for an instant way of living, a kind of survival that's keeping the Gen Z sane during self-isolation. It's a compensation of sorts for the lack of viability to real life scenarios and conventional set ups and structures.Quarantine is a weird time to be in but the future beyond pandemic is a black hole that everyone predicts but no one can put a finger on the accuracy of it. People are more than ever realizing why they have been termed as the 'social animal', amidst all of this for the privileged few, social media platforms are successfully creating a new behavioral pattern where a virtual existence is replacing a real one while still being the closest to it. It's a world constricted to a few at the moment but its constant expansion amongst an entire generation speaks for itself about the satisfaction that the 'social gram' is providing its users with. If such is its integral existence with the youth of the nation, it might as well be well integrated into education that has gone for a rapid transition to digitalisation. This is an interpretative study from the user's perspective but the culmination of its actual possibilities along with the user's point of view could very well open up avenues towards its execution. Although there exists enough studies that talk about its negative impact, the better side to it is left out.

CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic and the following extensive Lockdown has resulted in a compulsive and yet drastic change for everyone entrapped within the four walls of their home. However the education sector is one such avenue that didn't get the time and space to cope up with the sudden abrupt transition, digitalisation was a necessity and abrupt procedure was followed for the digital convergence considering the factor that India in itself is a third world country and the resulting change from traditional to digital classroom was more of a luxury that strived hard to have access to basic bread ,butter and shelter.

Amidst this situation, what looked like a legitimate possibility for the future was a convergence of habit and convenience into educational deliverance meant for the future. The dependency of a generation that has grown up being exposed to the parallel world of digital identity has because of the resulting lockdown become even more dependent on the same. The social media platforms have started catering to their diversified forms of gratification ranging from the need for information to the need of networking and social inclusion. This vast diversification has led to the divergence of and polarisation of Urban gen z population infront of their versatile mobile phone screens.

if this is what future is for the gen Z, it is also highly probable that the only way that shall pave way forward for a new milenia in the field of education is to integrate the need for entertainment with their need for knowledge and information while being connected to fellow scholars and academicians across the globe without geographical barriers coming in their way. This would help them socialise while having important discussions that help with their progression, all while isolation and distancing becomes the "new abnormal" in the post pandemic era as well.

While the study at the moment extends to regular modern youth , it could be further be effective in studying and understanding the possibility of its implementation to the youth of this nation when well conceiended with the implementation of digital India and accessibility to the same for the majority of the population is made possible. The future that lies after the pandemic will be a whole new world with possibilities different from the existing and this will require us to adapt ourselves to ventures and an evolving phenomenon that will require us to evolve and learn as well .

India was racing forward towards rapid transition towards all things digital. The pandemic has in a way sharpened the upward climb and speedened up the process. Humans have since the resulting lockdown understood the grave importance of networking and humans as primitive social animals have never had the history of surviving without dependence . the pandemic has caused young generation to depend on these social media platforms for their basic human needs and pursuit for company while being stuck indoors. The process of enrichment can never merely occur on its own, classrooms haven't all been about teaching monologue delivery, it has also equally been about informative exchange and discussions beyond syllabus confinement. It has also been about interactions and group engagements. Social media platforms snap of fingers on mobile phones.

If it all comes to social media, it might as well show the collaborative possibility of teachers and students transforming themselves into the new normal of survival through online parallel identities, creating and existing in a world of its own that helps break geographical and formal barriers and brings together people while isolation becomes the new mode of survival.

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