

Identifying and Analyzing Emerging Social Networks with Global Level Growth Potential Considering Gen Z Preferences

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Abstract. *In recent years, social networks have been a main source of destination for consumers' free time. Given their popularity, social networks have started to become more and more diverse, offering users different content possibilities. Young people belonging to Generation Z (people that were born between 1997 and 2012) have slowly started to become a main audience to which social networks are addressing to, especially because they are a main source of growth. The study found interesting data regarding Gen Z preferences in the scientific literature, but not enough data regarding the new emerging social media networks. Using an analytical investigation, this paper aims to respond to the question of which emerging social networks has the potential to become popular on a global level, considering the preferences of Gen Z consumers. The paper analyzes seven emerging social networks taking into consideration 8 quantitative (general) criteria, not specific for Generation Z audience and 2 qualitative criteria specific to Generation Z. Using a weighted arithmetic average between the 10 criteria, the study identified Reddit to having the biggest score followed closely by Discord. The implications of the theoretical contributions of the study could generate further research regarding Reddit and Discord in the scientific literature and could also inspire developers on offering products (social media networks) that address more Gen Z needs such as diversity or interest for personal finances. The proposed matrix is a first attempt to quantify the data available from secondary sources, considering sources of data available at the same time for all 7 analyzed social networks. The matrix could be improved as follows: by including important quantitative popularity criteria, by taking into account the extent to which qualitative criteria are met by each social network and by taking into account risk factors for future predictions.*

Keywords: *Social networks, Gen Z, emerging social networks, Reddit, Threads, Lemon8, BeReal.*

Introduction

Since the launch of the first website in 1991, things have evolved and internet consumption has changed, with users spending more than 6 hours online even if they have started to lose confidence in the things they have seen online.

It seems that the abundance of information available online is causing people to change their attitudes towards the internet and the information found on it, especially in the case of social networks where a growing number of millennials and Gen-Zs face anxiety (GWI., 2022).

In the context of technological advancements, social media has become a significant phenomenon (Huwaida et al., 2024). If in the past the target audience addressed by social networks were millennials, now the attention has been shifted towards youngsters belonging to Generation Z (people that were born between 1997 and 2012). The social media networks that are popular at the present time are used by both millennials and Gen Z users.

The objective of the research is to identify which emerging social media network has the capacity of becoming more popular taking into consideration some characteristics of the Gen Z preferences. After a literature review of the characteristics of Generation Z, the paper will have a brief presentation of 7 emerging social media networks that will be followed by quantitative research methodology. The study requires further investigation analysing more social networks and considering the complexity of qualitative criteria.

Literature review

Characteristics of Gen Z

Generation Z (Gen Z), also referred to as “Zoomers,” is the demographic group that succeeds Millennials and precedes Generation Alpha (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023).

They are known as digital natives and constitute one third of the world' population (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023). Generation Z is also expected to account for 27% of the workforce by 2025 (Whatsthebigdata, 2024). According to Annie (2021), Gen Zers are distinguished by six core characteristics: first “digital natives“, diversity, pragmatic and financially minded, they face mental health challenges, they are shrewd consumers and politically progressive (Weber, 2024).

Known for their advanced technological skills, Generation Z is proficient in engaging with online applications. Gen Zers are technologically-savvy, heavy-users of social media networks, addicted to finding products that are easy to use, and affected by a permanent stress and need of feeling safe (Rossi, Sasso, Perna, Solima, 2023). Generation Z is using the Internet rather than other traditional research tools, which is allowing them fast access to a wealth of information, enhancing their cognitive decision-making abilities (Huwaidda et al., 2024). Generation Z, known for their sophistication and education, is the most digitally connected generation, actively engaging on different social communities and other digital tools (Ngo et al, 2024).

On social media Gen Zers prefer more innovative content with interactive images (Shetu, 2023). According to eMarketer (2023), Gen Z users are watching videos (72.4%) and 56.7% are watching stories while on social media platforms (Emarketer, 2023). TikTok and Instagram are the living proof that short-form videos are effective.

Up until now, Generation Z is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in U.S., with 48% of them identifying as non-white. This diversity has developed into a strong sense of inclusivity and open-mindedness among its members. They are more likely to embrace different cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles (Wearethereach, 2024). Generation Z shares different human values, such as universalism, benevolence, self-direction, achievement, and security (Leung et. al, 2021).

Gen Zers have experienced the global financial crisis that began in 2008, many experiencing the negative financial impact this had on their households, while witnessing the impact on friends, family, and other businesses (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023). They prioritize financial stability, prefer experiences instead of material possessions, and have higher probability of saving and investing their income (Wearethereach, 2024).

Although being digital natives, Gen Zers' interactions with technology have mostly reported a negative impact on their feelings of isolation and loneliness (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023). Gen Z have been vocal up front regarding their need to prioritize mental health, with more than 60% of Gen Zers believing that mental health and personal well-being are very important to them (Statista, 2024). Technology may make Gen Zers experience information overload, lack of self-confidence, negative self-esteem and fear of missing out (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023). They have the highest rate of diagnosed depression and anxiety in comparison to other generations

(Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023). Gen Zers are more willing to share personal information on social media when they experience FOMO (fear of missing out) regarding the experiences other are having (Lyngdoh, El-Manstrly, Jeesha, 2022). Most of Gen Z members face challenges regarding fear of missing out, because they are afraid to miss information compared to other peers. In order to access information, they become addicted to heavy mobile phone usage. Their behaviour is so exaggerated as they start to ignore others in their social environment. This is another factor causing them stress (Lyngdoh, El-Manstrly & Jeesha, 2023).

According to Berger (2014), information sharing facilitates social bonding, helping individuals to overcome social exclusion and the sense of loneliness (Lyngdoh, El-Manstrly, Jeesha, 2022). According to Caplan (2002), negative feelings such as social anxiety and social isolation/loneliness may encourage Gen Zers to share more personal information online, to gain social acceptance from others (Lyngdoh, El-Manstrly, Jeesha, 2022). According to Osatuyi (2013), people share personal information and experiences with others to maintain a sense of closeness (Lyngdoh, El-Manstrly, Jeesha, 2022).

Generation Z is the most concerned generation about environment and sustainability (Rossi, Sasso, Perna, Solima, 2023). Taking this into account, Gen Zers tend to make purchase decisions based on personal, social and environmental principles (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023). Statistics indicate that 73% of Gen Z consumers are open to spend more on eco-friendly products (Wearethereach, 2024).

There is a gap in scientific literature regarding the possible preferred emerging social media networks of Gen Z members in the near future. Having in mind the core characteristics of GenZers, this article aims to highlight characteristics of the new social media networks that will probably be appealing to Generation Z.

New social media networks and their unique features

Threads is a social network released in 2023 by Meta platforms, being a text-based extension of the visual focus of Instagram's main application (EpidemicSound, 2024).

Throughout the years, Instagram has been updating itself onboarding features from other social media networks such as Snapchat, Youtube & TikTok. In the case of Threads, this is an application that is offering competition to Twitter (ExplodingTopics, 2024). According to the latest company announcement, Threads had 150 million monthly active users in Q1 2024 (Backlinko, 2024). If we look at the growth in active users of the last three quarters, we notice a small decline in growth (30% growth in Q4 '23 vs 15% growth in Q1 '24). According to Statista (2024), up until March'24, Threads generated over 265 million application downloads in Google Play or App Store (Statista, 2024). According to eMarketer (2023), the main two reasons why Gen Z users downloaded the application were: the application looked like fun (40.1%) and that they wanted to try a new platform (38.7%) (Emarketer, 2023). It may be that in the future, Threads could become a micro-blogging site (Gizmodo, 2023).

BeReal, is a French mobile-first social network, that had a positive viral wave in 2023 (EpidemicSound, 2024). Until April 2024, BeReal has been downloaded worldwide more than 100 million times having more than 23 million active users (TheSocialShepherd, 2024). The application of the network works sending notifications to users prompting them to take pictures of what they are doing in a limited timeframe once a day. It doesn't allow filters and users have a limited number of retakes. Being an no-filter, unedited social sharing application (EpidemicSound, 2024), BeReal is offering Gen Zers an opportunity to be themselves, without the pressure of a perfectly curated social media public profile (Emarketer, 2023). This social network is significantly

different from other platforms since on other social networks users tend to post content that is not accurately reflecting their real lives (TheSocialShepherd, 2024).

Lemon 8 is a social media application, launched in 2020 (Thinkhousq, 2024) and created by ByteDance, the same company that has launched TikTok. The content of the application looks like a mixture between Instagram and Pinterest, being shareable & user-friendly (EpidemicSound, 2024). The network divides the content in categories such as: beauty, food, travel, home, lifestyle, travel, fashion (Thinkhouseq, 2024). The platform provides its users with templates, filters and stickers to help them transform simple pictures into a visual aesthetic content (Thinkhouseq, 2024). Communities on other platforms have started talking about this application and how it works. By May 2024, 8.8 billion content views were generated on TikTok using the hashtag "#lemon8". U.S. statistics as of the end of 2023 showed a decline in daily active users (Hootsuite, 2023). Taking into account the geopolitical context, where TikTok has received bans, there is a big question mark regarding Lemon 8's future in US and European markets.

Reddit is a social network that mixtures forums, content ratings and social news “ aims to create authentic human connection online” (ExplodingTopics, 2024). As it is presented on its own website, Reddit is host to over 100,000 communities and offers users the possibility to have "infinite" conversations, this feature being the differentiating factor from other social networks (Reddit, 2024). Reddit was founded in 2005 in the U.S. (Britannica, 2024) and in January 2024 the network had over 1.2 billion users (Statista, 2024), out of which more than 82 million being daily active (Reddit, 2024). Users can post, comment or vote on content, and the latter rises to the top as it generates more interactions (Reddit, 2024). In 2022, more than 8.3 billion types of platform content were generated, almost half of which were conversations in chat groups (Reddit, 2023). According to Reddit's 2022 report, the conversations preferred by users were authentic, in which they showed themselves to be vulnerable, with top communities such as: r/tifu, a community where people talk about the mistakes they make in each day, r/amttheasshole, a community where people ask for feedback about a situation they've been in (Reddit, 2022). Also, among top communities were those about news (eg: r/worldnews) or related to topics such as sustainability or care for the environment (eg: r/guerillagardening, r/climateoffensive (Reddit, 2022). Other top topics were: animals, entertainment, beauty and personal care, gaming or sports (Reddit, 2022).

According to Britannica (2024), Telegram is a cloud-based messaging app, where users can exchange text messages, share files, subscribe to public broadcast channels and join groups. It also features a function that allows text conversations and video calls to be protected via an end-to-end encryption (Britannica, 2024). Telegram's distinctive feature is this end-to-end encryption for all activities (chats, groups, and media shared between participants), that has brought more users over the years (Buffer, 2024).

Discord is a social platform launched in 2015 which allows communication via text messaging, video & voice calls (Britannica, 2024) with friends or with communities (Discord, 2024). When it was launched, Discord aimed to solve the problem of communication between friends while they were playing online games (Discord, 2024). According to the company's message, Discord is a space that allows users to have conversations, spend their free time and build relationships, creating a sense of belonging (Discord, 2024). Discord offers public or private communication possibilities. Variants of video communication can be considered alternatives to the communication on Twitch (Pcmag, 2024). According to Statista (2023), in January 2023 it was estimated that Discord had over 563 million registered users (Statista, 2023). On a monthly basis, the platform has 150 million active users (Discord, 2024). The target audience of this social

network are video game enthusiasts, but the features of the platform make it a viable alternative for Zoom meetings as well (Pcmag, 2024).

Twitch is a live streaming platform launched in 2011 and operated by Twitch Interactive, a subsidiary of Amazon. Twitch is designed to be a streaming platform popular for e-sports and other gaming-related talk shows (AppStore, 2024). The service allows users to watch their favorite gamers in action while interacting with them via chat (Twitch, 2024). According to Statista (2024), Twitch has accelerated its user base during the pandemic, reaching 33.2 million users in the U.S. in 2022 (Statista, 2024).

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, there is a gap in the scientific literature regarding emerging social networks and their features that are appealing to Gen Z users.

This article's contribution is lowering this gap by providing quantitative research that analyses 7 emerging social networks using 10 criteria, including criteria that is specific for Gen Z characteristics. To lower this gap and find which emerging social network best matches Gen Z preferences and numerical indicators, we took into account both quantitative general factors and qualitative factors, specific for Generation Z audience. The paper considered the addressability to this public because, as detailed during the presentation, they represent a third of the world's population (Ameen, Hosany & Taheri, 2023) and are also expected to represent 27% of the workforce by 2025 (Whatsthebigdata, 2024).

Our research is a quantitative method consisting in a weighted arithmetic average with equal value weight between 10 criteria applied for 7 social networks. The social networks that were considered were the ones detailed earlier in the research: Threads, BeReal, Lemon8, Reddit, Telegram, Discord & Twitch. The 10 criteria taken into account are 8 quantitative, general criteria, not specific to the Generation Z audience and 2 qualitative criteria specific to Generation Z. The period of data collection was May 2024. We will further detail the criteria taken into account.

Quantitative Criteria

Criterion A – Number of Followers on X (formerly known as Twitter) of the official brand accounts for each social network separately, in May 2024 (X, 2024).

Criterion B – TikTok followers of the official brand accounts for each social network in May 2024 (TikTok, 2024).

Criterion C – The number of TikTok posts containing the analysed social media #hashtags until May 2024, as follows: #reddit, #bereal, #twitch, #lemon8, #telegram, #threads, #discord (TikTok, 2024).

Criterion D – The number of application downloads in Google Play until May 2024 for the analyzed social networks.

Criterion E – The number of application reviews left by users in Google Play until May 2024 for the analyzed social network applications.

Criterion F – The value of the application rating obtained by social network applications in Google Play until May 2024.

Criterion G - The number of reviews left by users in the App Store until May 2024 for the analyzed social network applications.

Criterion H - The value of the application rating obtained by the social network applications in App Store until May 2024.

Qualitative Criteria

As we have shown so far in this presentation, the following characteristics are specific to generation Z: digital natives, diversity, financial attention, mental health challenges, concerns for the environment. We took into account the addressability of the 7 social networks analysed according to the 5 characteristics specific to generation Z, listed previously. We noticed that all 7 social networks were attractive to a digital native target audience, taking into account the availability of applications on mobile devices. So, we considered that this criterion cannot differentiate between the analysed social networks. If we look at how these social networks work and their main features, it seems that none of them address the needs of Gen Z regarding diversity and attention to their own finances. Thus, there is still room on the market for social networks to satisfy these needs of generation Z. The criteria related to mental health challenges and concerns for the environment are addressed by some of the analysed social networks, so they are included in this study, appearing as qualitative criteria.

Criterion I - addressability of the analysed social networks on aspects related to mental health.

Criterion J - Environmental concerns.

Results and discussions

The study made a weighted arithmetic average between each criterion from A-J, giving an equal value weight (10%) between each individual criterion.

For Criterion A, we awarded points from 0 to 4 depending on the number of followers that each individual account gathered. Accounts that had less than 1 million followers received 1 point; Accounts that had between 1 million followers and 2 million followers received 2 points; Accounts that had between 2 million followers and 5 million followers received 3 points; Accounts that had more than 5 million followers received 4 points. Social networks Lemon8 and Threads do not have official brand accounts on X (Twitter), so they received 0 points for this criterion. BeReal received 1 point; Telegram and Reddit received 2 points each; Discord got 3 points and Twitch got 4 points. Social networks Lemon8 and Threads do not have official brand accounts on X (Twitter), so they received 0 points for this criterion. BeReal received 1 point; Telegram and Reddit received 2 points each; Discord got 3 points and Twitch got 4 points.

Table 1. The number of followers of the official brand accounts of each social network on X until May 2024 and the score given according to it

Criterion A	Number of Followers on X May 2024	Score
Reddit	1.100.000	2
BeReal	59.900	1
Twitch	10.000.000	4
Lemon8	n/a	0
Discord	4.700.000	3
Telegram	1.600.000	2
Threads	n/a	0

Source: X, 2024.

For Criterion B, we awarded points from 0 to 4 depending on the number of followers that each individual account gathered. Accounts that had less than 300,000 followers received 1 point; Accounts that had between 300,000 followers and 1 million followers received 2 points; Accounts that had between 1 million followers and 2.5 million followers received 3 points; Accounts that had more than 2.6 million followers received 4 points. Threads and Lemon8 do not have official brand accounts on TikTok, so they received 0 points for this criterion. Telegram received 1 point; Twitch and Reddit received 2 points each; BeReal got 3 points and Discord got 4 points.

For Criterion C, we awarded points from 1 to 4 depending on the number of posts available in TikTok that were tagged as having content relevant to the analyzed social networks, under the names of brand #hashtags. Hashtags that had less than 3 billion generated mentions received 1 point; Hashtags that had between 3 billion mentions and 10 billion mentions received 2 points; Hashtags that had between 10 billion mentions and 30 billion mentions received 3 points; Hashtags that had over 30 billion mentions received 4 points; Thus, social networks received the following score for this criterion: Threads received 1 point; Telegram, Lemon8 and BeReal received 2 points each; Discord received 3 points, and Twitch and Reddit received 4 points each.

Table 2. TikTok followers of official brand accounts and Number of branded TikTok posts (using branded #hashtags) until May 2024

Criterion C	TikTok followers Criterion B	Number of branded TikTok posts (using branded #hashtags) (billions) Criterion C
Reddit	1.000.000	119,5
BeReal	2.300.000	7,4
Twitch	799.100	265,7
Lemon8	n/a	8,9
Discord	4.800.000	26,8
Telegram	55.000	8,1
Threads	n/a	2,6

Source: TikTok, 2024.

For Criterion D, we scored from 1 to 3 as follows: 1 point for less than 10 million application downloads; 2 points for more than 10 million downloads and less than 100 million downloads; 3 points for more than 1 billion downloads. The scoring criteria took into account the references of downloads from Google Play, with the provider displaying data like +1 billion or +100 million. Thus, BeReal and Lemon8 received 1 point each; Reddit, Twitch, Discord and Threads received 2 points each; Telegram received 3 points.

For Criterion E, we scored from 1 to 4 as follows: 1 point for less than 100,000 application reviews; 2 points for more than 100,000 reviews and less than 500,000 application reviews; 3 points for more than 500,000 reviews and less than 6 million application reviews; 4 points for more than 6 million application reviews. Thus, Lemon8 obtained 1 point; BeReal and Threads obtained 2 points each; Reddit, Twitch and Discord got 3 points each; Telegram received 4 points.

For Criterion F, we awarded a score from 1 to 3 as follows: 1 point for a rating below 3.5; 2 points for rating between 3.5 and 4.2; 3 points for rating higher than 4.3. Thus, Reddit and Discord obtained 1 point each; BeReal, Telegram and Threads each obtained 2 points; Lemon8 and Twitch got 3 points each.

Table 3. The number of application downloads, reviews and value rating obtained in Google Play until May 2024

Criteria	The number of application downloads in Google Play until May 2024 Criterion D	The number of application reviews in Google Play until May 2024 Criterion E	The value of the application rating in Google Play until May 2024 Criterion F
Reddit	+ 100.000.000	3.090.000	3,3
BeReal	+ 10.000.000	292.000	4,2
Twitch	+ 100.000.000	5.410.000	4,4
Lemon8	+ 10.000.000	97.600	4,5
Discord	+100.000.000	5.680.000	3,1
Telegram	+1 B	13.900.000	4,2
Threads	+100.000.000	438.000	4

Source: Google Play, 2024.

For Criterion G, we scored from 1 to 5 as follows: 1 point for less than 100,000 app reviews; 2 points for more than 100,000 reviews and less than 300,000 app reviews; 3 points for more than 300,000 reviews and less than 1 million app reviews; 4 points for more than 1 million app reviews and less than 2.3 million reviews; 5 points for more than 2.3 million reviews. Thus, Lemon8 obtained 1 point; Telegram and Threads obtained 2 points each; BeReal obtained 3 points; Twitch got 4 points and Reddit got 5 points.

For Criterion H, we awarded a score from 1 to 3 as follows: 1 point for a rating below 4.1; 2 points for rating between 4.2 and 4.5; 3 points for rating higher than 4.6. Thus, Telegram obtained 1 point; Lemon8 and Threads each got 2 points; Reddit, BeReal, Discord and Twitch got 3 points each. We noticed that in App Store, the applications received higher rating values than in Google Play. This happened in the case of 5 applications among those analysed, one of them obtaining the same rating and one a better rating in Google Play (Telegram).

Table 4. Reviews & Ratings obtained by the social network in App Store until May 2024

Criteria	The number of reviews left by users in the App Store Criterion G	The rating in App Store Criterion H
Reddit	2.900.000	4,8
BeReal	1.000.000	4,8
Twitch	2.200.000	4,7
Lemon8	52.500	4,5
Discord	2.700.000	4,7
Telegram	192.300	4,1
Threads	273.100	4,5

Source: AppStore, 2024.

For Criterion I, we gave a score of 3 points to social networks that in one way or another addressed mental health issues on their own platforms and 0 points to social networks that did not/that we did not identify as addressing these issues. Discord is a social network that aims to create a sense of belonging, as it appears from the company's message available on its own website (Discord, 2024). Thus, for this criterion, Discord received 3 points. As BeReal pays particular attention to the health of its users, urging them to post real content, as close to reality as possible, and how it also controls the time spent by users on its own platform, for this criterion, BeReal received 3 points. At the heart of Reddit's activation mechanism is communication, offering users the opportunity to have "infinite" conversations, to show themselves vulnerable and to receive feedback from people who have been in similar situations. Thus, for this criterion, Reddit received 3 points.

For Criterion J, we gave a score of 3 points to the social networks that were addressing in one way or another the issues related to sustainability and caring for the environment and 0 points to the social networks that did not address/that we did not identify to address these issues. The only social network we identified as having environmental concerns was Reddit. As we have shown before, in this study, Reddit is a space for conversations, and among the top communities created on this social network are communities concerned with sustainability and care for the environment (Reddit, 2022).

According to the calculations made follows that the social network that scored the best is Reddit, accumulating a final score of 2.8. This social network obtained the maximum score in 5 of the 10 criteria taken into account: the number of posts on TikTok in which #reddit is found, the ratings and reviews obtained by the Reddit application in App Store and the two qualitative factors taken into account (addressability of the network for mental health problems and concern for the environment). Since these last two criteria are specific to Generation Z, it seems like Reddit has a good chance of growing in popularity among Gen Z in the near future. At the top of the ranking are, in this order, Discord - with a score of 2.7, and Twitch - with a score of 2.5. Discord scored the highest in 4 of the 10 analysed criteria: the number of followers collected so far on TikTok, the ratings and reviews obtained by the Discord application in App Store and the addressability of the network for mental health issues. Twitch also obtained the maximum score in 4 of the 10 analysed criteria: the number of followers gathered on the official Twitch account on X (Twitter), the number of posts on TikTok in which #twitch is found, the rating obtained by the application Twitch in Google Play and App Store. At the bottom of the ranking are Lemon8 - with a score of 1 and Threads - with a score of 1.1. Both networks lost important points since they are not present in other social networks, not having an official account anywhere.

Table 5. Total score obtained in the matrix by each social network

Criteria	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Total Score
Reddit	2	2	4	2	3	1	5	3	3	3	2,8
BeReal	1	3	2	1	2	2	3	3	3	0	2
Twitch	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	3	0	0	2,5
Lemon8	0	0	2	1	1	3	1	2	0	0	1
Discord	3	4	3	2	3	1	5	3	3	0	2,7
Telegram	2	1	2	3	4	2	2	1	0	0	1,7
Threads	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	1,1
Value Weight	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	n/a

Source: Claudia Bizon, 2024.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to identify which emerging social network has to potential to become more popular taking into consideration Gen Z preferences. The paper analysed seven emerging social networks trying to see which one is more appealing for Gen Z users. Out of the 7 social networks considered, Reddit scored best, followed by Discord & Twitch. The paper comes with practical contribution for businesses and marketers encouraging them to use the findings of the paper and develop effective communication strategies for connecting with Gen G audiences and fostering community growth on Reddit, Discord & Twitch. As the model didn't identify social networks that offer Gen Z audiences spaces for diversity and attention to own finances, another practical contribution of the paper is for social media developers to either develop new networks or pivot existing ones in order to respond to these needs. When it comes to theoretical contributions, the paper identifies a research question regarding to Gen Z and their needs to use and consume social networks. This can stimulate further investigation and contribute to the overall progress of the literature regarding social media networks.

The matrix can be extended on other social media networks (not analysed by the study) as well.

Limitations

For the quantitative criteria, the study considered criteria that provide data at the same time for all 7 social networks subject to the observation. This is the reason why data such as the number of users or the average number of monthly active users are not found among the analysed criteria, these data being available in the online environment from different sources in different time periods. Therefore, a first point by which the matrix could be improved would be the inclusion of these quantitative criteria of popularity, when data would be available at the same time and from the same source for all analysed social networks.

Another point that can improve the proposed matrix refers to qualitative factors. When the scores were awarded, the paper considered an average score based on the logical thinking of whether a social network covers or not a topic, but the paper did not consider the extent to which that topic is reached by the respective social network.

A final point that can be improved would be the calculation mode. For the proposed matrix, the calculations refer to the data we currently know, but the study did not consider a risk factor for the future.

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