



Explanation of the concept of generation disjunction in studying generation z

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ABSTRACT

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Background and Aim: Emerging newer theories in explaining intergenerational differences and the process of generational change and transformations and predicting its consequences seems necessary and important. Therefore, the current research aimed to explain intergenerational differences and predict generational changes based on the concept of generation disjunction. **Methods:** This research was a review type and analytical-descriptive research. The library and documentary method were used to collect data. After collecting the information, the findings related to the subject of this article were described in the findings section for discussion and conclusion. **Results:** The findings indicate fundamental differences between the Z generation and other generations. These differences include a wide range, including: cultural, social, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, linguistic, attitudinal, etc. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that the concept of generation disjunction helps to better understand and explain sociocultural phenomena related to Generation Z.



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Introduction

Generation Z, or digital natives, refers to people who were born from the mid-1990s onwards. Prensky (2001) called this generation digital natives because they did not experience life without technology and the Internet. This characteristic has made Generation Z different from other generations (Prensky, 2001). Hence, Generation Z is uniquely diverse. This generation has grown up in an urban environment and is exposed to more cultures and views than previous generations (Tacoli, 2012). Therefore, these influences and unique characteristics of the generation and the next generations should not be ignored (Turner, 2015).

There are three prominent models regarding the generational change. The first model is the circular model of Strauss and Howe (1991). This model is based on the rotating economic pattern called K waves or economic seasons. In this pattern, economic cycles become expensive or greedy, overextended, and paradoxical or fearful. Strauss and Howe (1991) believe that generational changes also follow this pattern, that this cycle starts from the old generations, and that the contradiction in the new generations is created on this basis and continues in this way (Campbell et al., 2015). The second model is the modernization model, which states that cultures move in a continuous process of modernization in which individualism, civic engagement, and tolerance increase (Iglehart & Welzel, 2005). This theory says societies develop in predictable stages with generational progress reaching individualistic and homogeneous societies (Campbell et al., 2015). The last model is a model based on extrinsic individualism (Twenge, Campbell, and Freeman, 2012). This model predicts that generations will want to move towards: Greater external self-focus (e.g., narcissism and materialism), lower civic engagement, lower trust, higher self-expression, and less internal focus (e.g., finding philosophical meaning in life) (Campbell et al., 2015). In this regard, the study of Twenge, Campbell, and Freeman (2012) showed that the current generation had decreased the civic engagement variable compared to previous generations (Twenge, Campbell, and Freeman, 2012).

Generation Z has formed a digital bond with the Internet so that they feel emotionally attached to it (Turner, 2015). Palley (2012) conducted a

field study on adolescents aged 13 to 17. In his research, participants reported feeling more upset when their cell phone was forcibly taken from them than when they were subjected to other punishments, such as deprivation of pocket money (Palley, 2012). It should be noted that when it comes to media use, parents usually do not consider any special rules and restrictions (Turner, 2015). This makes the exposure of Generation Z to the media as much as possible. In addition, this generation shares more and more of their personal lives on social networks daily (Taylor & Keeter, 2010). In other words, social networks have had an undeniable impact on the way Generation Z interacts. Studies have shown that more than half of people of this generation start their social life in online communication daily and feel more comfortable in online interactions compared to real-life communication. This can be seen even in talking with friends, so they prefer talking with friends through the Internet to talking in the real world (Palley, 2012). Excessive use of mobile phones and computers in this generation, especially playing computer games, can cause the loss of the opportunity to learn coping skills in difficult situations. It can also lead to problems in various tasks in life (Turner, 2015). Generation Z has easy access to all kinds of content, including pornographic content, violence, self-injury, how to make weapons, etc. This has made people at a much younger age learn about it (Turner, 2015). Media and communication explosion have contributed to increasing multiple activities simultaneously instead of focusing on one activity. As a result, instead of focusing on one thing, people are constantly able to focus incompletely on several subjects. One of the negative results of this phenomenon can cause people not to be involved in anything and do nothing and only try to follow everything while doing nothing, which is a very stressful and inefficient process (Firat, 2013). Also, one of the phenomena this generation faces has been called "absent presence." This term means that the person is present in one place while his social attention and communication focus is not related to that place and is somewhere else (Rainie & Wellman, 2012).

With the presence of mass communication devices, generation Z can always and at any moment place themselves in different communities and establish various

communications even simultaneously. One of the consequences of this situation is the emergence of immediate emotions and feelings. In other words, this type of communication has caused the Z generation to be exposed to a variety of positive and negative emotions through various content and platforms (Turkle, 2011). Therefore, the opportunity to think profoundly is lost, and less than previous generations deeply focus on issues. The continuous and inextricable nature of contemporary communication increases tension and reduces the ability to manage and think about complex and challenging issues (Turkle, 2011).

The concept of generation disjunction was proposed by Parsakia et al. (2023) during a study to investigate the differences between the girls of the Z generation and previous generations from the perspective of social psychology. This concept refers to the fact that the gaps and separations between the generation and others cause the emergence or strengthening of intergenerational differences. It also shows that inter-generational differences can factor in the emergence or increase of differences. In other words, the distance and separation between generations destroy the possibility of transferring values, norms, and culture from previous generations to the next generation. Parsakia et al. (2023) found three components for generation disjunction, which are: 1) verbal, 2) lifestyle, and 3) socio-cultural (Parsakia et al., 2023). The verbal component means distance and separation in the verbal interactions between the next generation and previous generations. When this phenomenon intensifies, the generations become more distant, and the possibility of transferring culture from the old generations to the next generation decreases. Also, the lifestyle component shows that the next generation's lifestyle has created a gap between the members of this generation and the previous generations. This distance is such that it can be said that joint activities between Generation Z and others have been minimized, and this can intensify and increase the differences between generations. Regarding the socio-cultural component, Parsakia et al. (2023) believe that because Generation Z has a very high population, it can form groups and subcultures that include a large population. In addition, this population allows

Generation Z to establish numerous intra-group and inter-group connections. This issue can make this generation perceive high social support and social bonding obtained from the members of this generation rather than the whole society (Parsakia et al., 2023). Considering the mentioned cases and the significant and unique differences between the current generation compared to the previous generations, it seems that the existing theories do not have a high explanatory power concerning generational changes and predicting the changes that occurred in the transition from the previous generation to the new generation. Therefore, the existence of newer theories in explaining intergenerational differences and the process of generational changes and transformations and predicting its consequences seems necessary and important. Therefore, the current research aimed to explain intergenerational differences and predict generational changes based on the concept of generation disjunction.

Method

This research was a review type and analytical-descriptive research. The library and documentary method were used to collect data. Thus, in the current research, the statistical population included all the books and articles that studied the characteristics and generational differences of the Z generation. Therefore, related keywords were searched in valid databases of scientific documents and internal and external indexing databases. Quantitative and qualitative studies and analytical and review articles have been collected. Then, the findings related to the subject of this article were described in the findings section for discussion and conclusion.

Results

Generation Z is the first generation that is considered universal. This generation uses mass media to connect with people around the world. Generation Z people can communicate with different cultures and share different content through the Internet. Also, they can form large groups and exchange information using social networks and mass media. As a result of this, global groups are formed based on people's interests, abilities, and similar characteristics (Dadic, 2022). Culturally, this generation has significant differences from previous generations. Dadic (2022) mentioned some of these differences as follows: 1) privacy, 2) multitasking, 3) technology 4) hyperawareness.

Generation Z has a different view on the issue of privacy because it knows that any kind of information can be shared and spread through the Internet. Generation Z children are significantly more capable of multitasking than teenagers of this generation. In addition, generation Z has a high dependence on technology. The last item listed by Dadic (2022) is hyper-consciousness. The minds of Generation Z people are involved in different dimensions so that they can move quickly from one subject to another and carry out all tasks together (Dadic, 2022).

Generation Z are more conservative in their attitudes than their parents and are less willing to accept differences and change. In addition, the characteristic of prejudice and insistence on values is seen more in this generation. In addition, despite their wide range of communication and social interactions, they have less social participation and show less tendency to collectivism. From a religious point of view, they adopt fewer values and deal less with religious issues (Dadic, 2022).

The way the current generation communicates with each other has undergone major changes compared to previous generations so that even part of the interactions are done with signs and images instead of words. In this regard, Nesl Zed believes that their parents and teachers speak an expired language. In addition, the language structure they use in their conversations is far from the structured way of previous generations, and they follow fewer grammar and writing rules in their writings (Dadic, 2022). So that grammar and writing are expected to be affected.

In this regard, one of the proposed concepts is Internet culture. Generation Z's use of the Internet and the formation of various groups and subcultures in it have led to the emergence of new and diverse language codes, vocabulary, and grammar used on the Internet. In a network society where people with different cultures are connected and interact with each other, the Internet culture and the language changes formed in it also affect people's collective consciousness and leave the Internet platform and enter the real world (Chen, Li, and Yao, 2021). It also includes terms that are created in the Internet space, and these terms enter into conversations in the world outside the Internet. Furthermore, teenagers accept the most influence from the Internet culture and, at the

same time, play the most role and influence in its formation and evolution (Chen, Li, and Yao, 2021). The research results have shown that Generation Z adopts a language from the Internet culture that is considered a person's "second language"; It is as if they have another language besides their mother tongue. In other words, this language has the characteristics of a second language in terms of linguistics (Chen, Li, and Yao, 2021). Considering that Generation Z spends much time on the Internet and considering that the language of the Internet, as a language, is a means of expressing feelings and emotions and sharing them. Accordingly, psychologists believe this phenomenon affects many people's emotions and ideas. In general, it can be concluded that the expansion of Internet culture has turned it into a social culture (Chen, Li, and Yao, 2021).

Dependence and excessive use of technology have had heavy consequences for Generation Z, which causes differences in various aspects from previous generations. According to Sikorski (2015), using the Internet and new media leads Generation Z to superficiality. Instead of deep study, this generation has learned newspaper-like reading, and instead of deep thinking, which is the main condition of learning, it has adopted surface thinking and reading (Sikorski, 2015). Moreover, Chorab (2016) pointed out that the use of social networks and shallow communication have made the attention of Generation Z always focused on the next stimulus (Chorab, 2016). According to Tapscott (2008), this generation has negative characteristics, some of which include: low ability to pay attention; inability to communicate in the real world; network dependency; spending time on the Internet instead of exercising; avoiding personal contact; A passion for computer games, like a passion for drugs and alcohol; Social immaturity and inability to live independently; Failure to respect the author's rights; Obscenity and insults online; poor motivation; Weakness in setting goals; narcissism and selfishness; Feeling that they are the center of attention and social support (Tapscott, 2008).

Zylinska (2012) proved that digital natives have neurological consequences by being exposed to and using technology. For example, in the age of the Internet, wherever a problem can be solved with search engines, it can lead to the reduction of some mental abilities, such as

problem-oriented and creative thinking, because there will be no opportunity to make decisions and examine different solutions and search for the best solution. Moreover, the existence of many tasks and information due to continuous Internet connection makes it impossible to analyze this information to develop appropriate behaviors (Zylinska, 2012).

Conclusion

The current research aimed to explain intergenerational differences and predict generational changes based on the concept of generation disjunction. As mentioned, Generation Z has unique characteristics that have caused the theories that have been common and used concerning generational changes to lose their high explanatory power.

The concept of generation disjunction by Parsakia et al. (2023) refers to Generation Z entering into communication in the Internet space from the beginning and distancing itself from the real world around it in the socialization process. Considering the Internet culture and Internet language as a second language for Generation Z, these people are also separated from the rest of the generations in terms of emotional and verbal perception (Tapscott, 2008; Zylinska, 2012; Sikorski, 2015; Chen, Li, and Yao, 2021; Dadic, 2022; Esmaeilzadeh & Rahmani, 2014; Shabaniminaabad, 2020; Parsakia et al., 2023). Also, the separation and distance are such that they happen at a young age, and as described, Generation Z itself is the biggest and most important influencer and, at the same time, influenced by the Internet culture (Chen, Li, and Yao, 2021). In this way, during socialization, this generation is exposed to values, norms, attitudes, ideas, and thoughts that mainly come from the hearts of the members of this generation. In addition, studies have shown that this generation includes conservative and fanatical people (Dadic, 2022) who insist on their values and thoughts. It seems that the reproduction of values and ideas in the internet space by this generation and their adoption and internalization by themselves has led to the emergence of value differences between the Z generation and other generations, and their prejudices lead to the enmity of this generation with its predecessors. Here, language differences become important; Because this generation does not feel comfortable communicating with other generations and

prefers to interact with their peers on the Internet. Thus, despite intergenerational cultural conflicts, this generation feels social support and high social bonding (Tapscott, 2008). In other words, this generation considers society as its supporter, while the values of a large proportion of society do not agree with them. Therefore, it can be predicted that Generation Z will face various problems entering the labor market and working environment. Also, expect the evolution of traditions and rituals to occur at a rate greater than Strauss and Howie have proposed in their theory concerning this generation. In addition, Hirschi's social bond theory (2017) regarding the occurrence of delinquency and crime does not correctly predict the occurrence of crime according to the concept of generation disjunction; Because, according to this theory, the high social bond that generation Z has in the internet space has the power to prevent misbehavior, but generation disjunction states that this social bond is not real and only exists within large intragenerational circles and not the whole society. In fact, these cases show that Generation Z has disturbed many equations, and we have low explanatory power to predict the social events of this generation. As a result, many phenomena will appear unexpected. According to the mentioned materials, the concept of generation disjunction can take a step towards a better understanding of socio-cultural phenomena related to generation. One of the things that can be seen in the concept of generation disjunction is the production and reproduction of cultural and linguistic components by Generation Z in the groups that are members of it, which happens along with their socialization. In fact, it can be said that Generation Z is the first generation to internalize its values. In other words, this generation produces, reproduces, and internalizes its values, ideas, attitudes, and norms. Finally, it can be said that according to the current research method and the topic of this research, the main limitation of this research is the lack of studies in this field due to its novelty. Obviously, it is suggested that more and especially multi-faceted research be done concerning this generation.

Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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