

Social Presence in Computer-Mediated Communication between Gen X and Gen Z through WhatsApp

Oktariani Akhirin¹, Palupi^{2,1}

¹ Department of Communication Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), Surakarta, Indonesia

² Department of Communication Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS), Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Purpose :The purpose of this study is to investigate how social presence is exhibited between members of Generation X and Generation Z through text-based communication on the WhatsApp platform. Research data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted with 4 pairs of parents and children who represent members of Generation X and Generation Z, respectively. Additionally, data was gathered through documentation.

Methodology : This research employed a qualitative descriptive methodology, utilizing both inductive and descriptive data analysis approaches. The study utilized purposive sampling to ensure comprehensive and in-depth data collection.

Applications/Originality/Value: Findings reveal that both generations strive to establish intimacy, as reflected in their communication intensity, use of emojis or stickers, and sharing of pictures related to activities through WhatsApp. Furthermore, members of Generation X and Generation Z demonstrate immediacy in their response to family messages, make calls to convey their emotions or feelings, and respond promptly to critical situations.

Keywords: computer-mediated communication, social presence, instant messaging.

Background

Effective communication plays a vital role in the lives of social beings. Technological advancements have enabled individuals to connect with one another regardless of distance. In today's fast-paced world, technology has become an integral part of our daily routines, including communication. As social beings, interpersonal communication holds a significant place in our lives, particularly within the family setting. Hasibuan (2011) suggests that effective communication within a family impacts understanding, emotional wellbeing, strong relationships, and the ability to influence one's actions and attitudes. Such impacts can be likened to the trust and good relations that exist among family members.

According to McLuhan (1964), the media represents the progression of human interests in everyday life. Technological advancements have facilitated various flexible activities that can be performed anywhere and at any time, as long as there is a stable internet connection. This progress in technology has made it easier for individuals to acquire and disseminate information. One such technological development in communication is the introduction of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC).

Text-based computer-mediated communication is intended to facilitate the exchange of messages accompanied by mutual message displays and to encourage users to participate in direct dialogue (Marmorstein & König, 2021). According to Marmorstein & König (2021), instant messaging (IM) platforms are primarily focused on social interaction. In reality, computer-mediated conversations differ from face-to-face conversations (Marmorstein & König, 2021). As a result, each user has a unique approach to computer-mediated communication. Furthermore, each user of an IM application utilizes the platform in their own way.

According to Putra (2016), generations can be classified not only by birth year, but also by shared experiences or historical events that shape their identities. Zemke et al., (2000) propose a generational classification based on birth year, including the veteran generation (1925-1946), the baby boom generation (1946-1960), generation X (1960-1980), generation Y (1980-1995), generation Z (1995-2010), and generation

¹ Corresponding author: palupi@ums.ac.id

alpha (2010-present). Each generation displays distinct characteristics, including their level of technological proficiency.

Generation X is widely recognized as the first generation to become familiar with technology, given that the era of digital development corresponds to their time of birth (Bencsik et al., 2016). As the internet and other forms of information technology were developing, so too was this generation. Research conducted by Koçak & Yüksek Vergiveren (2019) indicates that WhatsApp usage varies across generations, with Generation X being the group with the shortest average usage time. Unfortunately, some parents struggle to properly vet information they receive through these channels due to their limited familiarity with technology (Tutiasri & Kusuma, 2020). As a result, they may be more susceptible to accepting information without verifying its accuracy.

Generation Z, also known as the Net Generation or Net Gen, is closely associated with the digital age due to the speed at which it has developed (Bencsik et al., 2016). This generation often uses slang and expressions that may be challenging for their parents to comprehend. Growing up in a world driven by technology makes it easy and comforting for them to operate within this realm. They prefer to remain in a milieu that aligns with their current living conditions. The internet is an integral part of Generation Z's life, and they rely heavily on it to solve any problems they may encounter (Bencsik et al., 2016). Additionally, they use it to satisfy their daily social needs (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). It is interesting to note that Generation Z makes up the majority of WhatsApp users when compared to other generations (Koçak & Yüksek Vergiveren, 2019).

This study focuses on Generation X parents who have children categorized as Generation Z. The interpersonal communication approach between parents and children differs from communication with peers, especially since some families have to live separately due to various demands, such as the need to study (Kartini & Ramadhana, 2019). This distance often results in heavy reliance on instant messaging (IM) to maintain contact. Generation X uses short message platforms to support work and meet relational needs, such as socializing with relatives (Matassi et al., 2019). Conversely, Generation Z primarily uses WhatsApp for school and social purposes (Matassi et al., 2019).

Students who reside separately from their parents frequently utilize text-based computer-mediated communication channels, including WhatsApp, for sharing information. WhatsApp has a large user base due to its user-friendly features that are accessible to a wide range of people, resulting in effective communication through this instant messaging application (Nahwiyyah & Dewi, 2020). WhatsApp's features, such as message exchange or chatting, free voice and video calls, are secure and straightforward to use. Nahwiyyah & Dewi (2020) state that "WhatsApp is an easy-to-use application." This messaging app is familiar to both Generation X and Generation Z.

This study will explore how individuals from generation X and generation Z utilize the WhatsApp application to engage in text-based computer-mediated communication. Presently, text-based computer-mediated communication is one of the most extensively utilized communication options. According to Usman et al., (2019), WhatsApp is recognized as the most favored instant messenger globally, with a daily active user base of 1 billion users. Furthermore, in Indonesia, WhatsApp users make up 58% of the population.

The researcher selected this topic to address gaps in prior research on text-based computer-mediated communication. As technology continually advances and integrates into daily life, CMC evolves in parallel. Therefore, further investigation into CMC can address lingering questions from previous studies. Herawati (2011) noted that technological advancements and innovations have the potential to alter communication behaviors and processes. The advent of the internet has made communication possible without limitations of time and space, which can prompt changes in user communication behaviors. This study aims to provide insights into the social presence of parents and children in CMC.

Due to the constraints of in-person meetings, there is an increasing reliance on technology. The advancement of technology has led to a plethora of innovations, including text-based applications that aim to connect individuals who are geographically distant. However, the adoption of such technology requires an adjustment process. WhatsApp, for instance, serves as a computer-mediated message platform that enables effective communication among students who are separated from their families (Putri & Syafi, 2020).

The objective of this study is to explore the phenomenon of social presence between generations X and Z in computer-mediated communication through the WhatsApp text-based application. Specifically, the research problem is formulated as follows: How does social presence manifest between these two generational

cohorts? The primary aim of this research is to identify the key factors that influence the occurrence of social presence in this context. By shedding new light on this topic, this study seeks to make a valuable contribution to the existing literature on computer-mediated communication and generational differences.

Literature Review

Social Presence Theory in Computer Mediated Communication

According to Thurlow et al., (2007), computer-mediated communication (CMC) refers to the process of communication that takes place among multiple individuals within a specific context and purpose, utilizing computers. Additionally, Susan Herring characterizes CMC as a form of communication that transpires through a computer intermediary (Thurlow et al., 2007). The drawbacks of text-based CMC include the absence of nonverbal cues, asynchronous timing, and challenges in conveying natural language, which can impede effective communication (Thurlow et al., 2007).

Thurlow et al., (2007) categorizes various types of communication into four groups: (1) unfriendly or sociable, (2) insensitive or sensitive, (3) cold or warm, and (4) impersonal or private. The level of interpersonal contact in communication is influenced by social presence, which is conveyed through visual cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact. The social presence model suggests that the presence of fewer visual cues results in a lower social presence, but it does not emphasize the importance of a person's relationship in communication. However, the model also highlights that physical presence or face-to-face communication is not a guarantee of warm, personal, or friendly communication.

Garrison et al., (2000) propose a tripartite framework for social presence, comprising emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion. Social presence refers to the extent to which a user is able to project their personal characteristics to others within the Community of Inquiry (CoI) using communication media. The context of computer-mediated communication (CMC) affects the level of social presence, and users must gauge the appropriate time to use different media. According to Garrison et al., (2000), physical presence or face-to-face (FtF) communication is more easily maintained once a significant level of social presence has been established.

Although social presence can be maintained through computer-mediated communication (CMC), it is still prone to misunderstandings due to the lack of visual cues. According to Garrison et al., (2000), visual cues play a significant role in establishing a social presence. However, CMC has limitations in this aspect. To address this, Walther (1992) suggested the use of emoticons and other virtual symbols to compensate for the loss of visual cues and enhance social presence in CMC.

According to Rettie (2003), social presence is an indication of the significance of others in communication that is mediated by interpersonal interactions. It is associated with the notions of 'immediacy' and 'intimacy'. Immediacy refers to behavior that fosters closeness with others, which can be exemplified in computer-mediated communication (CMC) by the feedback received in response to a message, whether it is instantaneous or delayed. This will be explored further in this study. Intimacy, on the other hand, pertains to the degree of closeness expressed through verbal and non-verbal behavior in interpersonal interactions. In instant messaging (IM) applications, intimacy can be facilitated by built-in features that enable users to convey their emotions to their interlocutors. For instance, the WhatsApp application offers features such as emoticons, stickers, and video calls that allow users to perceive visual cues from their counterparts.

According to Rettie (2003), the concept of social presence can be divided into three themes: co-presence, co-location, and mutual awareness. Goffman (1959) defines co-presence as a physical distance that separates individuals but where the sense of presence of the other can still be felt through certain mediations. Co-location refers to the ability to communicate and interact in the same space through computer-mediated communication. Biocca (2001) describes mutual awareness in mediated social presence as the psychological and emotional awareness of the presence of others. Psychological involvement in social presence includes the concepts of importance, immediacy, intimacy, and self-disclosure (Biocca, 2001), while behavioral involvement refers to the manifestation of social presence through behavioral interactions.

Social Presence in a Text Based Instant Messaging Platform

According to Hermawan et al., (2021), WhatsApp serves as a communication tool that enables the exchange of information through instant messaging. This audio-visual platform provides a reliable means of message delivery between individuals. Fauzi (2017) highlights the features that make WhatsApp a popular choice among users, including its simple messaging, free voice and video calls, group chats, message syncing with desktops, and the ability to share photos, videos, documents, and voice messages. Additionally, Tutiasri & Kusuma (2020) note that WhatsApp users can communicate using various multimedia formats, such as messages, pictures, audio, and video calls.

Khair Amal (2019) detailed the numerous advantages of WhatsApp. These included its ease of download, small installation data size, ability to unite communities in one chat room, relatively fast message delivery, and facilitation of picture, video, document, voice message, GPS, link, emoji, bold, and italic sharing. These features provide an emphasis for messages. Bimo (2021) research also highlights a unique WhatsApp feature - the use of stickers - which fulfills the emotional and functional aspects of text-based computer-mediated communication. Utilizing these features in WhatsApp indicates the presence of intimacy in social interaction. As non-verbal cues are limited in computer-mediated communication, these features allow individuals to communicate more closely by expressing their feelings to others.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative descriptive methodology, utilizing both inductive and descriptive data analysis approaches. The study utilized purposive sampling to ensure comprehensive and in-depth data collection. The participants of the study were active students and their parents from the Faculty of Communication and Informatics at Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The sample selection criteria consisted of students belonging to the Z generation who live independently from their parents and parents belonging to the X generation.

The primary methodology for data collection involved in-depth interviews that adhered to the research objectives. Generation Z students from the Faculty of Communication and Informatics were interviewed face-to-face by researchers, and four parents of concerned students, who were of generation X, were interviewed via telephone. Secondary data was also collected from documentation that supported the primary data. The analysis technique utilized an interactive model, as outlined by Miles & Huberman (1994), which involved continuous analysis until the necessary data was obtained. The analysis process involved three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by sorting and categorizing the collected primary and secondary data according to the focus and theme of social presence. During the data presentation stage, the researcher presented findings based on two categories, immediacy and immediacy. The conclusions were drawn accurately based on the results and evidence gathered from the data collected in the field.

After data acquisition, validation was performed through the data triangulation process, which involves comparing and re-checking data from different sources to ensure accuracy. As pointed out by Bachri (2010), triangulation refers to the practice of cross-checking data to enhance its validity. In this study, source triangulation and method triangulation techniques were used to ensure validity. Source triangulation involved comparing interview results with secondary data, while method triangulation was achieved by checking and re-checking data collected through various techniques.

Results

The researcher categorized the results of the interviews with the informants into five analytical categories. These categories are the use of instant messages, emojis and stickers, WhatsApp status, text messages, and phone calls. The informant data identified in this study are as follows:

Table 1: Informants Table

No	Generation X			Generation Z		
	Informants Code	Age	Gender	Informants Code	Age	Gender
1	Informant T	46	Female	Informan M	23	Female
2	Informant S	47	Male	Informan Y	21	Female
3	Informant SA	54	Female	Informan R	21	Male
4	Informant E	54	Male	Informan Ro	20	Male

Source: generated from research data

The Use of Instant Messaging

Instant messaging platforms serve as a dependable mode of communication to stay connected with family members when living apart. Unlike face-to-face interactions, messaging platforms allow for unrestricted communication without any time constraints or connectivity issues. Although the majority of participants in this study reported higher communication intensity during face-to-face interactions, as verbal and non-verbal cues are conveyed effectively, online communication is preferred as an alternative method of social interaction (Xiao, 2018). However, informant E reported more precise communication with their children through the intermediary of WhatsApp when living separately. This finding is consistent with a research by Bordia (1997), which suggests that computer-mediated communication (CMC) requires longer interactions and active participation from all users, leading to more frequent exchanges. Informant E stated that the reason for relying on WhatsApp more often was due to the inability to meet their child in person, which led to a strong desire to stay informed about their child's well-being.

"... yes, because earlier we were serious people. If it's not important, we rarely talk. I chat more often when he's in Solo than at home. The problem is that you can see it at home too." (Interview with informant E, 26 October 2022)

Informant R conceded that WhatsApp has not been successful in conveying the yearning for one's parents, despite the possibility of communicating verbal and nonverbal messages through the app.

"... even though the verbal and non-verbal have been fulfilled a little, but direct interaction is more enjoyable, yes, the feel for fulfilling that desire." (Interview with informant R, 11 October 2022)

Informants R and M reported feeling uncomfortable using WhatsApp as their primary means of conveying emotional messages, preferring instead to meet in person. They find that face-to-face communication allows for more natural emotional expression and greater personal satisfaction. This preference for in-person communication is not unique to specific generations; however, WhatsApp can still be useful in bridging the distance between individuals who are physically apart. In this way, individuals can maintain a sense of closeness by sharing stories about their daily lives. Tandyonomanu & Tsuroyya (2018) have noted that face-to-face communication remains an important aspect of human connection and can facilitate more comfortable self-expression.

WhatsApp has successfully enabled its users to experience a sense of presence despite physical distance between interlocutors. However, one informant, R, has not been able to feel the presence of his parents on WhatsApp as he feels disconnected from them when they are far away. Similarly, another informant, SA, confessed that she could not feel her child's presence during WhatsApp communication due to the distance between them, yet she chose to understand their separate situations. These informants do not believe that WhatsApp is capable of presenting their parents' presence adequately. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Cortese & Seo (2012), which revealed that face-to-face communication facilitated a greater sense of social presence compared to instant messaging. On the other hand, other informants expressed comfort in

using WhatsApp as they could sense the presence of other people through the messages exchanged, which enabled them to stay informed about their distant families' well-being.

The Use of Emoji and Stickers

Generation Z has a particular preference for using emojis and stickers to convey messages, in order to demonstrate affection and express emotions. Moreover, sharing emojis or stickers via messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp, may also serve as an indicator of their intimacy.

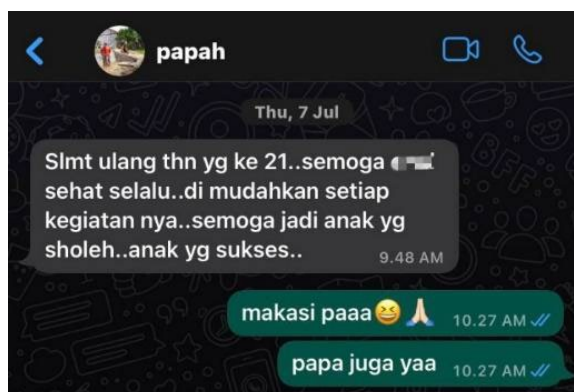


Figure 1: Screenshot of informant Ro's chat on WhatsApp

The informant, Ro, shared a screenshot displaying the emojis he used while messaging his parents. Emojis can enhance the friendliness of text messages, and according to research by Tandyonomanu & Tsurouya (2018), they can also effectively convey emotions. The screenshot illustrates how emojis can prevent text messages from appearing formal or curt. Interestingly, the generation X cohort tends to avoid using emojis to express emotions or feelings. Informant S, who belongs to generation X, stated that he does not typically use emojis or stickers in private chats with his family, considering it unnecessary and indicative of laziness. He believes that communication with parents should not be characterized by laziness.

"Let's just talk, why do you have to use emotes? Yes, not an approach, but what is it? Respect. For the Javanese, it's 'ngajeni'." (Interview with informant S, 26 October 2022).

In contrast to other informants, informant R disclosed that he refrained from exchanging emojis or stickers with his parents due to personal beliefs about gender norms. Prada et al., (2018) have noted that women tend to use emojis more frequently than men. Despite the infrequency of sending emojis or stickers to his mother, informant R has identified specific circumstances and occasions that prompt him to do so.

"Use the sticker occasionally to avoid misinterpreting. Because my mother doesn't understand what I mean and what I type. Also, don't get snappy." (Interview with informant R, 11 October 2022)

The Use of WhatsApp Statuses

It is a widespread practice among children of Generation Z to conceal their parents from their WhatsApp status. Typically, they exhibit their status exclusively to their peers, sharing humorous content that they do not want their parents to see. This illustrates how the younger generation is more discerning in determining what information to reveal on the internet (Attrill, 2012). Nevertheless, this does not hold true for informant Y, who does not feel the necessity to hide anything from his parents. Nonetheless, he concedes that he seldom updates his WhatsApp status, citing laziness as the primary reason.

"... what I uploaded on WA, the status on WA also my parents knew in advance" (Interview with informant Y, 3 October 2022)

Generation Z uploads statuses to showcase their activities on campus or to display their sense of humor with friends, while Generation X uses statuses to share advice or aphorisms.

" Like today I made a status like pearls that morning, I took it from another application. (Interviews with informants S, 26 October 2022)

"... Mother's status is mostly motivating." (Interviews with informants SA, 28 October 2022)

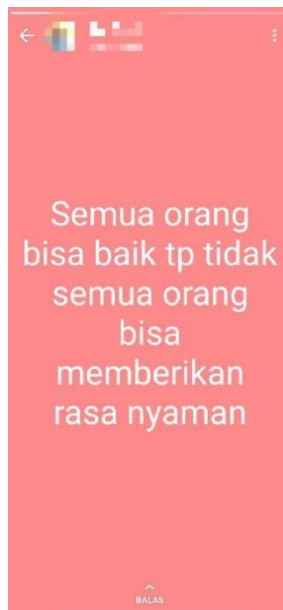


Figure 2: WhatsApp status screenshot from the informant SA

The provided screenshot illustrates how individuals belonging to Generation X typically upload their WhatsApp statuses. This particular demographic frequently utilizes the status feature within WhatsApp to impart motivation or aphorisms to others. Uploading statuses often serves as a catalyst for communication between parents and children, as parents frequently respond to their children's status updates. Thus, one effective approach for Generation X to foster communication with their Generation Z children is to offer feedback on the statuses they have posted.

"... yes, sometimes I comment too. It's the least that matters. It means we have seen it and we have responded, it means we are". (Interviews with informants E, 26 October 2022)

The Use of Text Messages

The distance between family members does not necessarily affect the level of closeness among them when they are separated. Even when they are in close proximity, they can maintain their connection through frequent and meaningful communication. This can be facilitated through the use of instant messaging platforms, as noted by Barus & Pradekso (2018), who observed that students strive to stay in touch with their parents despite their hectic schedules. In such instances, they rely on messages to keep each other updated, as shared by informant M who reported the types of information they conveyed to their parents.

"... There are things that need to be known in life updates right away, for example, the monthly money has run out. So it should be reported immediately." (Interviews with informants M, 3 October 2022)

Generation X parents believe in communicating with their children based on their needs and desires, even when their child lives apart from them. However, they tend to maintain control over every aspect of their child's life. The informant SA confirms:

"... if I didn 't send a message, have a look at the child's development, what's the status" (Interview with informant SA, 28 October 2022)

Despite the close relationship between parents and their children who live separately, the communication through WhatsApp is not as intimate as face-to-face communication. The reason behind this is the asynchronous nature of WhatsApp communication, which can result in users taking longer to understand the emotions behind messages. Informants also indicated a preference for sharing stories in person, as it provides a greater sense of satisfaction and relief. For example, informant Ro shared an experience about their mother which highlighted that no technology could surpass the benefits of direct communication.

"Mother used to say, even if you see it in person via a video call, yes, you can't get rid of that feeling of longing. So no matter how often you want to chat, even though you're far away, you still don't feel that close." (Interviews with informants Ro, 13 October 2022)

Despite the distance, children endeavor to update their parents about their campus lives through frequent pictorial correspondence. This is typically achieved by sending snapshots of ongoing activities to keep their parents informed about their current situation. The parents, on the other hand, feel reassured about the well-being of their child upon receiving such updates. This provides an avenue for parents to monitor their children's activities remotely, even in their absence. This approach is corroborated by informants R and SA as depicted in figure 3.



Figure 3: Screenshot of informant R's chat on WhatsApp

Informant R shares photos of his activities and busyness in figure 3, which was initially done to update his mother. Due to his busy schedule, his parents informed him that he may not always be available on WhatsApp, particularly if his mother needed to communicate with him. Consequently, he resorted to sending pictures as a way to assure his mother that he was preoccupied with activities.

When sending messages via WhatsApp, parents, or the generation X group examined in this study, tend to utilize acronyms more frequently than generation Z. Unfortunately, this can result in children being unable to comprehend the intended message of their parents. Additionally, text messages are more prone to

misinterpretation than other features of WhatsApp. Despite these challenges, informant R acknowledged that he was able to grasp the emotions his mother conveyed via WhatsApp by analyzing the grammatical structure of her messages, both in text and in person.

"... maybe everyone has a different grammar huh. If the explanation is long enough, sometimes I also like to misinterpret it. (Interviews with informants R, 11 October 2022)

Similarly, informant S stated that they had comprehended the emotions conveyed by other individuals through the written messages. This understanding was acquired by analyzing the manner in which the individuals had expressed their feelings in the compiled texts.

"... because my principle is other people, or children or wife, or other people is write while thinking first, while writing, pouring writing, now that represents his feelings ". (Interviews with informants S, 26 October 2022)

The informants possess an inherent understanding of the emotions conveyed in the messages, owing to their previous direct interactions. This understanding assists them in comprehending the emotions expressed through text. O'Rourke (2008) highlights that to fathom the nature of synchronous interaction in text-based computer-mediated communication, one must closely scrutinize their interaction with the text.

According to informant R, his communication on WhatsApp appeared formal because he preferred to convey concise messages that were easy to understand. Informant E, a member of Generation X, also shared a similar sentiment, noting that WhatsApp conversations tend to revolve around important matters. Despite this, none of the informants reported any specific communication restrictions or guidelines within their families. However, they all acknowledged and respected each other's schedules, allowing for optimal communication. The family heavily relies on WhatsApp as their sole online communication platform.

In the realm of computer-mediated communication, both generation X and generation Z exhibit a tendency to respond promptly to incoming messages, particularly those pertaining to family matters. However, they may opt to postpone responding due to professional obligations. If a message is particularly significant and demands a lengthy response, individuals may elect to wait until they have ample free time. Informants R and Ro have conveyed that they frequently postpone responses when the timing does not feel appropriate. Informant R customizes their response time based on the message's perceived importance.

"... if it seems like you need an explanation, I'll answer it a little while waiting for your free time. If I'm in college, it's usually postponed first." (Interviews with informants R, 11 Oktober 2022)

When faced with delays in receiving feedback from messages, individuals from generation X and generation Z tend to wait for a response rather than continuously follow up. In cases where a message is crucial and requires an immediate reply, they prefer to make a phone call. Additionally, synchronous online chats have been found to foster a sense of connectedness among its participants (Johnson, 2006).

Generation X is found to be the primary group that initiates conversations on WhatsApp. Nevertheless, Informant Ro reveals a preference for starting chats with his parents when he has some free time. In such instances, he reaches out to his family at home. Conversely, Informant T reports starting conversations on WhatsApp earlier than his child due to infrequent messaging from his child unless prompted by certain situations.

" My daughter doesn't care. Don't care about his mother. Yes, when I ask for money. If she wants me to send her a money, she chat first. If not, never." (Interviews with informant T, 10 October 2022)

According to informant Ro, members of Generation Z do not spend a significant amount of time accessing WhatsApp. They tend to utilize the app solely for responding to urgent messages, and are quick to reply.

Alternatively, they may stay on the platform for an extended period if they have other engagements that pique their interest.

"... it can take a long time on WhatsApp because it discusses group assignments" (Interview with informant Ro, 10 October 2022)

Unlike the previous generation, Generation X spends a significant amount of time accessing WhatsApp on a daily basis, primarily due to work demands. This finding aligns with Matassi et al's (2019) research, which highlights the use of instant messaging by Generation X to facilitate their work-related interests and relational needs. However, informant E's experience differed as he had limited access to WhatsApp and preferred face-to-face meetings with colleagues for work matters due to connectivity issues.

Use of Phone Calls

Generation Z prefers to use phone calls as a means of expressing their emotions, as vocal cues are necessary for effective communication. While they may find text messages sufficient for conveying simple information, they opt for WhatsApp phone calls for more complex matters involving feelings and emotions. According to informant Y, they felt the need to use phone calls to ensure that their parents fully understood their emotional state.

"... because if we call, we can talk. Then our tone is also rich in emotions or sad, right? Our parents also know that we are sad or happy." (Interviews with informants Y, 3 October 2022)

Misunderstandings in interpreting messages are common when communicating through computer media due to the lack of visual cues that are available during face-to-face meetings. However, such misunderstandings can be reduced by cultivating an open and empathetic attitude towards one another. In case of any misunderstanding, individuals usually resort to clarifying their messages through vocal cues, such as phone calls or voice messages, to ensure immediate understanding (Putra & Malau, 2020).

According to Sarla (2020), text messaging is the preferred method of communication for Generation Z. This is due to the convenience and personal connection that it provides. Text messages can be sent quickly, allowing individuals to maintain a sense of closeness with others. While Generation Z tends to avoid making phone calls, they may do so when communicating with family members. Informant Y notes that reading text messages is often preferred over listening to voices, indicating a preference for text-based communication.

" if it's voice notes, we have to listen to them quietly, then the place is quiet, so if we read the text, we can read wherever we can". (Interviews with informants Y, 3 October 2022)

Informant R, who has a busy schedule, prefers using the telephone to facilitate communication. This is because phone calls offer clearer communication and convey messages that can be easily understood. In urgent situations, a phone call can elicit a faster response. Furthermore, making phone calls is deemed more effective and personal than sending text messages (Sarla, 2020).

"... The message was conveyed right away." (Interviews with informants R, 11 October 2022)

Regarding the X generation, some individuals prefer texting while others prefer phone calls as they find it more convenient for communication. However, typically, prior to making a call to their children, they will first inquire about their willingness through a text message.

Discussion

The analysis results, based on five categories of analysis, indicate a connection to the concept of social presence, comprising closeness and immediacy. Social proximity is conveyed through both verbal and non-verbal

behaviors, which WhatsApp users can employ through the platform's provided features. The immediacy of feedback in communication with others is also crucial (Rettie, 2003).

In computer-mediated communication, some informants may not experience a sense of social presence due to the limited interaction available in instant messages (Xiao, 2018). As a result, face-to-face communication is perceived to offer a greater level of social presence (Cortese & Seo, 2012). In addition, Tandyonomanu & Tsuroyaya (2018) point out that individuals may feel more comfortable expressing themselves in person. This is particularly relevant for Generation Z, who tend to be more cautious in sharing personal information online (Attrill, 2012). Consequently, mediated communication tends to create a sense of distance compared to face-to-face communication.

The use of emojis and stickers in instant messaging is indicative of the closeness between the message sender and recipient. This phenomenon is supported by the research of Nahwiyyah & Dewi (2020), which suggests that the use of emojis in computer-mediated communication is influenced by the self-disclosure of individuals with respect to conveyed emotions. By sending emojis to family members, individuals demonstrate their willingness to disclose their feelings, which contributes to building closeness in instant messaging conversations. In addition, the use of emojis and stickers in instant messaging applications allows users to better understand the characteristics of their conversation partners (Prada et al., 2018). This understanding facilitates the expression of emotions and feelings, enabling more effective communication.

The WhatsApp status feature can effectively showcase the level of connectivity between parents and their children, even if they live apart. When users share photos and videos on the public platform, it provides an opportunity for people to leave comments and start discussions (Sahidillah & Miftahurrisqi, 2019). According to Sahidillah & Miftahurrisqi (2019), such discussions can enhance communication. As computer-mediated conversations become more prevalent, they have the potential to improve family communication (Kartini & Ramadhana, 2019).

Text messaging can reflect a sense of closeness and immediacy, as evidenced by the intensity of messages exchanged on WhatsApp by Generation X and Generation Z (Barus & Pradekso, 2018). Despite being busy, students make efforts to communicate with their parents, while parents supervise their children by monitoring their schedules (Barus & Pradekso, 2018). Instant message interactions are easily understood by informants because they can discern the interlocutor's style of engagement with the text (O'Rourke, 2008). To fulfill work and relational demands, Generation Z spends a significant amount of time on WhatsApp, highlighting the concept of immediacy in terms of responding promptly to messages (Matassi et al., 2019). In cases of message delay or misunderstanding, informants prefer calling for a quick resolution due to the absence of nonverbal cues in text messages (Olaniran, 2002). Synchronous communication via text messaging fosters a comfortable and flexible environment that encourages users to be more open (Pearce et al., 2014).

The utilization of phone calls through WhatsApp enhances the concept of immediacy in social presence, allowing for more effective resolution of misunderstandings and emotional expression. In instances where misunderstandings occur during computer-mediated communication, it is common for the recipient to seek clarification, often requiring an immediate response. However, asynchronous text messages may result in a delayed response (Olaniran, 2002), prompting the preference for phone calls as a faster and more efficient means of communication. As emphasized by Sarla (2020), the effectiveness of phone calls surpasses that of text messages.

Conclusion

The study analyzed social presence by examining two key concepts: closeness and immediacy. Five categories of analysis were used, including the use of instant messages, emojis, WhatsApp status updates, text messages, and phone calls. Findings suggest that closeness was fostered through frequent use of emoji and sticker features, commenting on status updates, and sharing news. However, it was acknowledged that direct interaction is more effective in establishing closeness. Immediacy was demonstrated through the use of phone calls to communicate emotions and resolve misunderstandings.

This study has found that variations exist in the perception of social presence in communication on WhatsApp between the generations of X and Z. The older generation, X, who happen to be parents, tend to

prefer staying informed about their children's activities and circumstances. They find comfort in communicating over the phone since the exchange of verbal and non-verbal cues enhances their sense of presence with others. In contrast, the Z generation utilizes the features of emojis and stickers to foster closeness in their relationships. They, however, express less ease in making phone calls and find the exchange of text messages adequate in conveying the presence of others.

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