



A STUDY ON GEN Z AND SOCIAL MEDIA: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

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ABSTRACT

Social media: Generation Z members are born around the years 1997-2012, they grew up in a digital age where social media is the new day go to in terms of self-expression, communication, sharing of knowledge and entertainment. The social media can enable you to connect to the world, share knowledge and also great opportunities both online and offline but it has its own downsides of disconnection to the real world, reduced productivity, mental health problems or loss of privacy.

The aim of the study is to explore social media impact on Generation Z and consider its pros and cons. The convenience sampling was used to select a sample of 65 Gen Z respondents. Study goals Include understanding social media usage patterns, the benefits that are experienced from usage and risks of overuse. The study shows that information technology even though it brings significant opportunities in terms of learning and correspondence with other people, has negative effects on personal relationship, quality of education and mental health when used in excess.

KEYWORDS: Digital lifestyle, online communication, social media, Generation Z, and mental health

INTRODUCTION

The social media has had a direct successive impact on the way people interact, communicate and get information. Over the past ten years, we have been growing more and more reliant upon digital platforms that allow real-time communication and information sharing across national borders. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Snapchat have become a vital place for networking, interaction, entertainment and information sharing. This would allow users to connect with other people, create content and build communities over the internet. All age ranges have reached a record number 1 position about how active by using social media groups generation Z.

Gen Z is generally considered those born from about 1997 to about 2012 who have grown up in a digital world given the significant presence of digital technologies throughout their lives. Gen Z has been brought up with social networking sites, smartphones and fast Internet, unlike earlier generations. This is so to an extent that social media has a strong impact on their patterns of day to day life, way they communicate with each other and the lifestyle decisions that make up the most prominent part of who they are. Apart from just being a communication platform for most of the Gen Z users, social media also acts as a learning and entertainment hub where their creativity and self expression can flow freely.

Social media sites offer many benefits to Generation Z members. They enable individuals to connect with their friends and family regardless of distance. Moreover, users can avail themselves of online teachers and teaching resources as well as updates from local and global news on social media, turning it into an informative platform. Many young people also use social media to help build personal brands, showcase their

talents and explore career opportunities. Influencer marketing, digital entrepreneurship and online content creation gave every young user a possibility to grow personally and professionally.

It has also enabled social media collaborators to raise the profile of social protests. The digital platform gives young person an opportunity to be a part of discussions on world events, social issues and environmental issues. Thanks to social media, community member can now plan campaigns, exchange ideas and support causes they believe in. As a result generation Z is more aware and engaged in many forms of social movements compared to past generations. However, despite these advantages, there are also several disadvantages and risks that may arise from the use of social media. When used excessively, social media can lead to addiction, decline in productivity and poorer academic or work performance. Social media provides a source of connection, but for many young people, it eats up so much time that it can get in the way of getting on with life and having face-to-face relationships. The long-term use of social media information could still change how individuals perceive reality which often leads to comparisons with others in a negative way.

Another major concern are the consequences of social media usage on emotional and mental health. Studies have shown that excessive use of social media has high correlation with anxiety, depression, tension and low self-esteem. The psychological pressure on young users can be enormous as they feel the need to maintain a certain online image, gain likes or comments and be up to date all the time. Moreover, issues such as online harassment, cyberbullying, and invasion of privacy have said to prevail on social networking platforms. Some exposure to the lives portrayed on social media leads to unreasonable expectations and dissatisfaction with one's own life. Other users, who create a soothing form of best impression



content mainly refer to the good side of their lives only and therefore expose other people to exclusion. This tendency, known as "social comparison," can damage his self-esteem and self-confidence and lead to mental health problems in young people. It is these opposing forces that make social media commonly known as a two-sided sword. And vice versa it gives you a chance to establish relationships, communicate, learn and be creative. However, the over-use and uncontrollable use of it breeds bad effects like addiction, distraction and mental health issues.

Therefore studying the impact of social media on Generation Z's life and understanding how to balance its pros and cons becomes paramount. Researchers will be able to contribute an in-depth understanding of how social media usage cannot only affect their behavior and opinions, but even the general well-being of Gen Z peoples. The goal of this research is to assess the impact of social media on Generation Z and whether its benefits outweigh any potential disadvantages.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary goals of this research are:

1. To examine how Generation Z uses social media.
2. To determine how social media benefits Generation Z.
3. To investigate the adverse consequences of excessive use of social media.
4. To determine whether social media affects productivity and mental health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Anggreani and Rahmawati (2025)

These authors studied Generation Z and their social anxiety association with social media addiction. They found that people who exhibited more social anxiety are also likely to use more social media applications.

2. Cao et al. (2024)

Cao and colleagues explored on how social media data can be utilized to track mental health issues with machine learning techniques. The researchers found that patterns of social media posts can help detect early signs of depression and anxiety.

3. Haidt (2024)

Jonathan Haidt went on an expedition to see how smart phones and social media affected the mental health of today's youth. He stated that the digital technology had been embraced at a high rate and transformed the experiences of childhood dramatically.

4. Hu (2024)

Hu studied generation Z: its driving forces and the psychological impacts of using social media among the participants. The study reported that social media platforms did not provide as much pressure on self-actualization, yet they may prove to be emotionally stressful in recognition of online comparison and increase to social pressure.

5. Azem et al. (2023)

Azem and colleagues performed a systematic review that examined the association of social media use with depression

among adolescents. It was an important paper as they established a clear correlation between increased social media use and higher levels of anxiety, sleeping problems and low self-esteem. The researchers concluded that social media use and the onset of mental health conditions in early adolescence merit monitoring.

6. Zsila and Reyes (2023)

Zsila and Reyes examined the both positive and negative effects of social media on individuals. The findings of the research conducted by them emphasized that social media allows people to establish connections, provides wide access to information, and improved their connection with society.

7. Braghieri, Levy, and Makarin (2022)

This study looked at how Facebook affects the college mental health of students. The levels of student anxiety and depression rose once the social media platforms were introduced, said the researchers.

8. Dhelim et al. (2021)

Dhelim et al have investigated the use of social media during COVID-19 pandemic. Their research revealed that social media are very helpful in connection-related problems, while they mainly used to convey feelings which expresses emotions when it comes to difficult times.

9. Anderson and Jiang (2018)

Anderson and Jiang studied teenagers' use of technology and social media. They found that most teenagers were using social media platforms on a daily basis and they saw these as being an integral part of their social life.

10. Zyoud et al. (2018)

He then moved onto the bibliometric analysis by Zyoud et al, which covered global research on social media and psychology. The study indicated that research in the area of social media over the last 10 years has increased substantially due to its prevalence in human behavior.

11. Twenge (2017)

When Jean Twenge studied the habits and behaviours of Generation Z, the kids born between 1996 and after (nicknamed that "iGen" generation), she had similar findings. Even the study concluded that there is an aggressive impact of using smartphones and social media on how young people communicate and spend their time.

12. Valkenburg and Peter (2013)

Valkenburg and Peter investigated the consequences of online communication on adolescents/young adults. Their research indicated that social media platforms facilitate and promote social engagement among individuals, enhancing a sense of friendship through constant communication.

13. Kuss and Griffiths (2011)

Kuss and Griffiths investigated the association between social media usage and psychological well-being. The focus of their



study was on the fact that an excessive use of social networking platforms may well lead to behavioral addiction.

14. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)

Kaplan and Haenlein defined social media as "Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Halfenl, 2011). Their study described how social media platforms have changed communication from the traditional way of one-way communication to an interactive digital stage.

15. Boyd & Ellison (2007)

One of the first definitions from online social networking sites was written by Boyd and Ellison. They defined social media platforms as web-based services that enable individuals to create profiles and connect with other users for interaction over an online network.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Generation Z spends more time on social media — which has a significant impact on mental well-being.

H2: The relationship between Generation Z and how social media usage improves communication and social connectivity

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research method is used in this study that focuses on the effect of social media towards Generation Z based on the primary data collected by a close-ended questionnaire that targets their social media behavior and transparent positive and negative view about it.

This study uses convenience sampling to receive responses from 83 members of the target population Generation

Z. The questionnaire will be comprised of close-ended and Likert question on the respondents social media usage.

Descriptive statistical method such as mean, median, mode frequency distribution and percentage analysis will be used to analyse this data. The tabular and graphical tools (e.g., tables, charts) will also be used to present the results. Additionally, the effect of social media activity on perceived influence would be analyzed using statistical inferential methods (i.e., T-test and Z-test where appropriate) as well as to test research hypotheses formulated.

Regardless of the analysis that happened to be done (descriptive, such as mean, median and mode; or inferential statistics, such as one sample t-test). The average response of the selected Likert-scale statements of 15 statements 1567 between 1 and 5, was compared against a neutral of 3, using an independent sample t-test. The correlation analysis of the social media use to the perceived communication and mental health implications among the Generation Z was qualified by that analysis.

The analysis will reveal trends in Generation Z social media usage and assess whether social media is both a positive effect yet also detrimental to use to agree with the double-edged sword of social media.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Out of the online questionnaire, a total of 83 responses were collected to analyse whether the use of social media influences Generation Z, and the results were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency distribution, percentages mean median and mode.

1.Age Group Distribution:

The majority of the respondents (43.4% are residents of And finally, that point forages up low on the rung to the 19 21 age bracket; so The sample is just. just young in-general who are engaged in social networking sites.

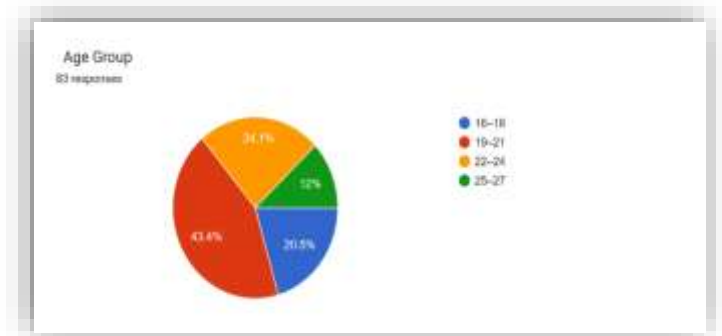


Fig 1

2.Gender Distribution

53% respondents in the sample are female. and 47% male respondents; it is a relatively equal sex representation.

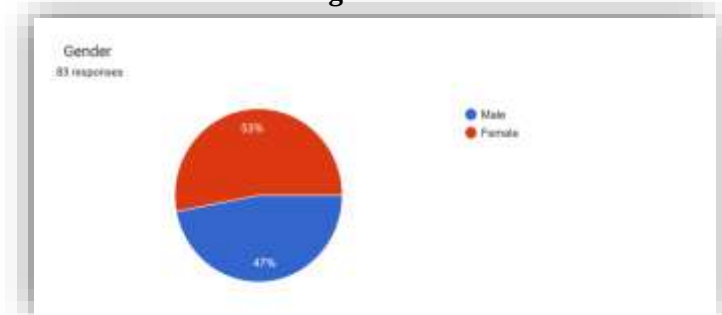


Fig 2

3. Occupation:

The majority of the respondents are working professionals. It was 34.9 percent, then self-employed people, demonstrating that use of social networks extends to former students to professional fellow colleagues of Generation Z.

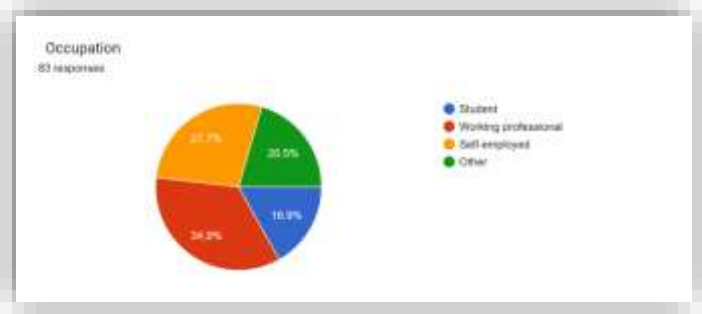


Fig 3

4. Most Used Social Media Platform:

The total of 30.1% is the respondents reported YouTube as their most-often use the information you are conditioned on, increase in the use of this. information consumption and entertainment.

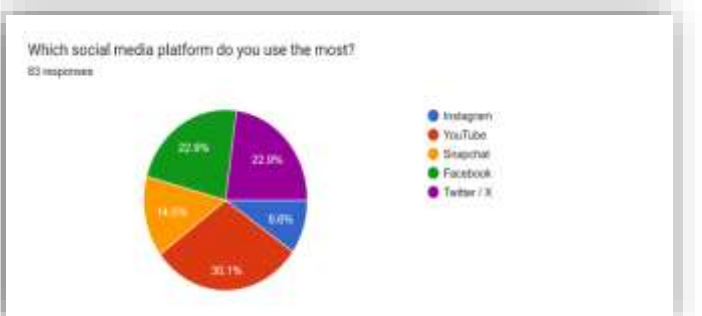


Fig 4

5. Time Spent on Social Media:

A very low percentage of the respondents (33.7%) spend 1–2 hours a day on social media, whereas the bulk of shares 3–6 hours a day, indicating moderate to high engagement.

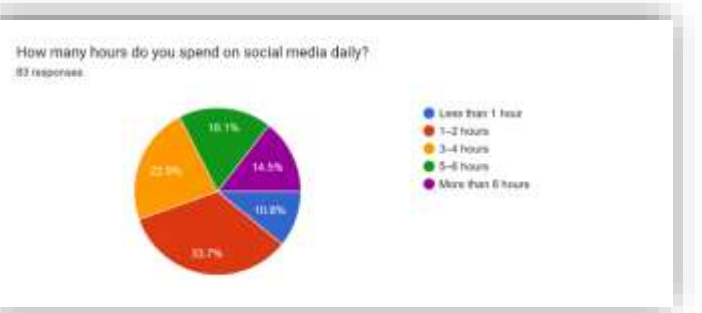


Fig 5

6. Purpose of Social Media Use:

Most respondents are on social media mainly for news and information (26.5%), followed by education and communication, hence social media has more than one function informational and social functions.

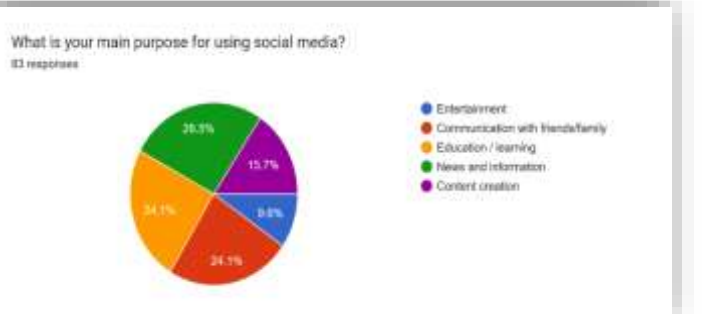
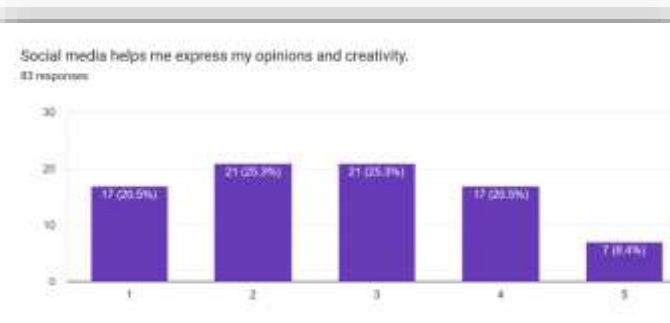
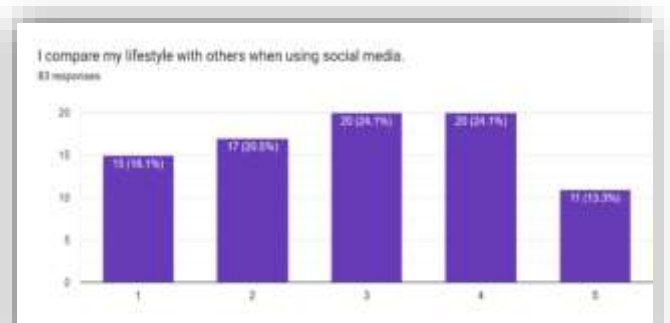
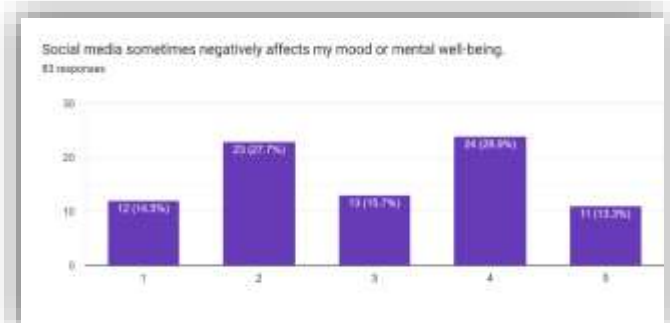
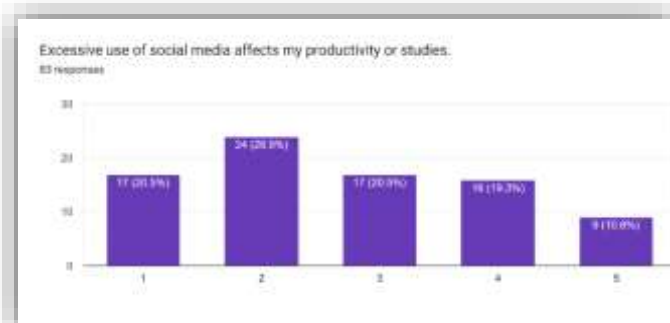
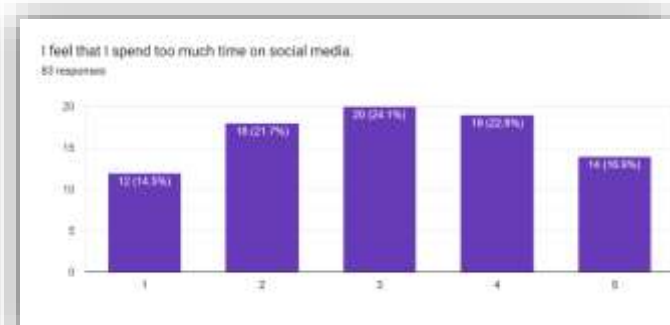
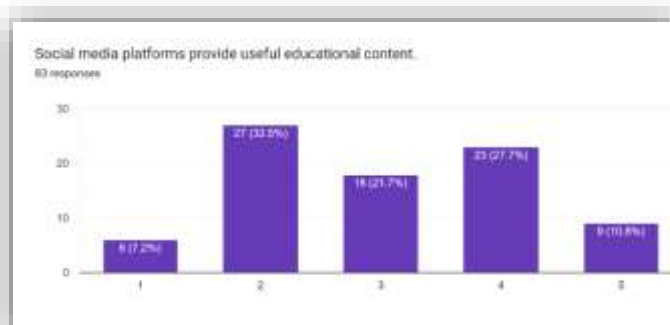
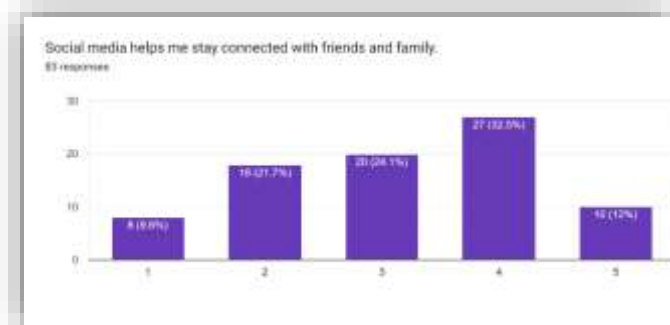


Fig 6



Descriptive Statistics (Likert Scale Analysis):





One-Sample T-Test Results

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Social media helps me stay connected with friends and family	3.16	1.18	1.21	0.232	Slight agreement but not statistically significant
Social media negatively affects my mood or mental well-being	2.99	1.30	-0.08	0.933	No significant difference from neutral
Overall, social media has a positive impact on daily life	3.14	1.29	1.02	0.310	Mild positive perception but not statistically significant

Interpretation

1. Descriptive Statistics

Mean values that are admittedly near to neutral indicate a slightly positive and unclear perception.

2. T-Test Results

Anything statistically significant (actually, results that aren't statistically insignificant) indicates that users experiences will vary from 10 to 90% of the time.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will offer details into how the use of social media can impact Gen Z, and help in evaluating the proposed hypothesis on whether communication through social media impacts mental health.

- Hypothesis H1:** that more time on social media shape the mental health of Generation Z, was only partially supported by data. The vast majority of respondents responded that they spent 1-4 hours of social media platforms every day, which is a moderate rate of engagement. Some respondents acknowledged that they find social media helpful in terms of entertainment and education, although some of them also noted that excessive use of social media can lead to a decrease in productivity, loss of concentration or increased mood swings. The statistical descriptive analysis of the subscales on mental well-being and productivity showed that the mean values in the subscales were slightly above the neutral point of the statements. The findings show that although it has various advantages, the prolonged use of social media may have negative psychological effects on some individuals.
- Hypothesis H2:** experience higher communication connect and utilization of social media: Get your Generation Z. Only a slow acceptance was given to the hypothesis! Most of the respondents think that social media has connected with them tighter nets friends and

family, people share data with each other as well as they can reach those farthest away. From the analysis, it can be said that mean scores for all of the items referring to public relations elements of communication and information exchange exceeds neutral. Social media appears to play an important role in sustaining relationships and fostering social connectedness more among the younger people who use social media.

It also however revealed the respondents perception of the social media as both good and bad in its effects. Therefore, despite its helpfulness in connectivity, information exploration and creativity, a number of users cited the negative aspects of the time consumption, information exploration and creativity. There were many respondents who indicated that their experience with social media is highly dependent on the frequency and reason of their visits to these sites. On the whole, the results indicate that social media represents a two-sided sword towards Generation Z, yet when wielded without overindulgence it is a valuable tool in terms of communicating, learning and even socializing. On the other hand, an overuse or uncor uncontrolled use may adversely affect the productivity and emotional well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote Balanced Social Media Usage:** Users, more so Gen-Z, My Psychiatrist In A Bag immediately draw out the plugs of ones achieve a sufficient level of balance between online and offline activities to avoid over-reliance on such social media networks.
- Sensitize Schools & Colleges:** Awareness programs at schools, colleges and organizations are to be performed for the youth on the psychological impact of being active on social media.
- Educate for Mindful Engagement:** Teach social media platforms to add features such as Screen time



reminder, tracking usage, Digital Well-being Dashboard, etc.

4. Maximum Utilization Of Quality Content and Knowledge Providing Opportunities: Platforms should also promote, engaging educational content, skill-building opportunities, and any sort of informative material which can help make the learning experience of young kids better.
5. Challenges of Online Comparison and the Social Pressure: Your training data goes until October 2023 Initiatives that aim to reduce unrealistic portrayal of lifestyles, and to promote an authentic depiction should relieve negative mental currency concerns among consumers.
6. Report abuse of data privacy and confidentiality: Data privacy and security policies at social media firms should be clear so individuals can make personal assessments about the information they put in cyberspace.
7. Encourage Identity-Reinforcing Social Media Use: Inspire users to use social medias in a way that it helps them interact, work together and get engaged rather than passively scrolling or comparing with others.
8. Promote Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking: Schools should integrate digital literacy programs that provide our youth with the knowledge they need to analyze and evaluate online media thus forming ethical evidence-based social media practices.
9. Encourage More Research on Social Media Consumption: Future researches should further categorize by variables, such as academic standing, mental wellbeing and screen addiction to study the long-term impacts of social media use in Generation Z.

CONCLUSION

Social media as a method for Generation Z has modified their communication, studying practices with the aid of using every other social but proven fruitful within side the affect of connecting them with friends family and entire world except few concerns which do cast off distract younger generation from realities producing short much less productiveness and tendency (2025) As much as it is an important tool for interaction and education, its misuse can lead to side effects such as mood change, social comparison and social dependency. The effect of social media on mental health is dependent on the frequency and purposeful use. In short, social networks are a double-edged sword because they can mean opportunities for Generation Z but at the same time, threats and

based on that emotional backbone we have to build a high moderation commitment.

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