

Generation Z: A product of the world around them

Morgan Vincent / WEB Editor-in-Chief

First Person Narrative

In recent years, it has been said that Generation Z is the downfall of society. With the rise of the “millennialism life-style,” many people believe that Generation Z is only getting worse.

As a 17-year-old girl, I have grown up with all the technology, slang and icons that symbolize the generation, yet I feel as if I try my hardest to not conform to what the generation has become. I love the era I have been raised in, but when a whole generation gains a bad reputation, it can become irritating.

With a simple scroll through Twitter, I will see loads of new slang words or catchphrases that may appear offensive at first glance. Many previous generations feel as if these new phrases are a way to mock them or purposely keep them “out of the loop.”

These catch phrases were not anything new. Back in 2013 when Vine made its debut, many users started to use silly quotes and catchphrases from there, myself included. Some of those sayings are still being used today and many Generation Z'ers recognize them instantly.

Recent phrases like “Ok Boomer” [saying that someone in the age range of the baby boomers has said something that makes them seem ignorant] have set off a strong reaction from the baby boomer generation, people born from 1946-1964. The phrase has been so popular that it has gained some negative worldwide attention.

News outlets and media platforms have turned against

Generation Z saying that we have portrayed a rude and unprofessional attitude that all started online.

Another bad mark our generation is the rise of “fake celebrities.” Many Generation Z'er's look up to influencers who gained fame from Instagram, YouTube or TikTok. Other generations look down upon this because they believe these celebrities can be lazy or gained fame from doing nothing.

Asking my parents if I could see a famous YouTuber on tour, they looked at me like I was crazy and did not understand the hype. I have also noticed that my younger sister and I do not really watch live TV. We would rather stream a show on Netflix or follow our favorite YouTubers. Simply put, our

generation lives through media platforms.

For a while now, retail stores have been dying out. Generation Z is only adding to this problem. I receive packages shipped to my house at least once a week for products I could have easily picked up at Target.

Many people blame the upcoming

generations for this problem, but services such as Amazon and stores offering a ‘Buy Online Pick Up in Store’ program started to gain popularity with the older generations first.

Realistically, I know that not everyone in my generation acts like this. Most of the negative attention being brought to Generation Z can be blamed on the convenience of technology.

I believe we are all a product of how we were raised. A whole generation cannot simply be called out for a disturbing behavior when there has been low points surrounding every generation previous.



Source: Stohion/Samantha Cole

Members of Generation Z have felt that their parents and other older members of society have had a hard time keeping up with trends and relating to them. They feel as though their adult counterparts do not understand how the world has changed from when they were teenagers.

Generational changes create worldly divide

H. Suzie Lee / Co Editor-in-Chief

Opinion

“Ok, boomer,” Chlöe Swarbrick, a New Zealand politician, responded to opposition spokesman.

Ever since Swarbrick used the phrase in November 2019, the phrase became more insanely popular amongst the younger generation, used frequently in TikTok videos and Internet memes. The catch phrase is used to mock narrow-minded, old-fashioned, negative, judgemental, older generation people--especially the ‘baby boomer’ generation. (Baby boomers are the generation that was born between 1946 and 1964; this generation experienced post-war government with high consumerism.)

Baby Boomers are particularly conflicting with the younger generations--millennials and Generation Z--because they are often viewed as uninterested and opposed towards climate change, gender and racial equality and life value differences.

One of the most famous TikTok videos features an older man, assumed to be a member of the Boomer generation, said that “millennials and Generation Z have Peter Pan Syndrome, they don’t ever want to grow up; they think that the Utopian ideals that they have in their youth are somehow going to translate into adulthood.”

In reaction to the video, the younger people responded with “Ok, boomer,”

completely neglecting and dismissing the comment that the older man has made in the video. Videos tagged with #OkBoomer on TikTok have been viewed more than 1.7 billion times and the views are still increasing as of now.

Swarbrick said in her speech talking about climate change, “How many world leaders for how many decades have seen and known what is coming, but have decided that it is politically expedient to keep it behind closed doors? My generation and the generation after me do not have that luxury.”

Generation Z, the generation born after 1995, have the highest interest in climate change and overall environmental problems.

According to Greenmatch Findings, 72% of Gen Z is willing to spend more money on goods and services produced in a sustainable fashion.

Swarbrick continued her speech saying that she would be 56 years old by the year 2050; she also stated that the average age of the 52nd Parliament is 49 years old, articulating the generation gap and change between politicians. Other politicians responded with jeering and Swarbrick simply said,

“Ok, Boomer.”

Although the catchphrase is widely used in the internet and more, Bob Lonsberry, a conservative radio host, mentioned that the word “boomer” is the “n-word of ageism.” The tweet is now deleted, but this particular comment sparked an argument amongst generations.

“Generation Snowflake” is the term older generation use to describe the younger generation being weak and dependent on their parents, and prone to taking offense compared to older generations.

“Baby Boomers are particularly conflicting with the younger generations--millennials and Generation Z--because they are often viewed as uninterested and opposed towards climate change, gender and racial equality and life value differences,” Lee said

Considering each of the generations owns negatively connotative nicknames to other generations, the hatred is hard to define as one-sided.

In the 21st century, people continuously divide into many different groups such as race, gender, economic occupation, political opinion and more; however, another division between the generation seems extremely unnecessary and useless.

Generation gaps and intergenerational conflicts are high on stake currently, and the reduced prejudice of each generation must be shown for a better change to lead to a better world.

What Impact has TikTok had on Generation Z?

Lauren Rayman / Editor

Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, VSCO, TikTok--almost every member of Generation Z knows what these apps are and uses them on a day to day basis.

For the past few years, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter have been used and loved by teenagers. Not long ago, VSCO became more popular amongst girls in Generation Z in particular.

Most recently, Generation Z's members fell in love with TikTok. The app, previously known as Musical.ly, was released in April 2014 and re-branded as TikTok in August 2018.

TikTok is an app used by people to make short videos of themselves lip-syncing to a pre-existing sound in the app or creating their own original sounds in their videos.

Although the app was re-branded over a year ago, TikTok has become increasingly popular over the last few months.

“I think TikTok has gotten so popular over the past few months because it’s like a new Vine,” junior Megan Montoney said.

Vine is another app that almost all members of Generation Z know of, but it was shut down in late 2016. TikTok is very similar to Vine in terms of the content posted on it.

TikTok videos are often posted on other social media platforms as well, particularly Instagram and Twitter. Senior Aaron Kim believes this is because of the popularity of the app.

“I see Tik Toks on Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter all the time, and it’s definitely because of it’s fame,” Kim said.

Sophomore Marissa Romano also sees TikTok videos posted on other social media platforms, but she does not believe it is because of the popularity of the app.

“I see them on other social media, but I believe it’s just to show themselves in a funny manner,” Romano said.

Posting TikTok videos on other social media platforms allows people who do not have the app to still see and enjoy them.

Due to the fact she does not use social media that much in the first place, Montoney does not have a Tik Tok account; however, she has thought about making an account simply because almost everyone has one.

Montoney can see the impact the app has on Generation Z without having the app: she sees them on Instagram and friends send them to her. She often hears people referencing the app and even specific TikTok videos almost everyday.

Kim sees the app influencing Generation Z mostly by the music on the app.

“I think it’s definitely influencing our generation because just from the music. I see people listening to new music from TikTok which they’d normally never listen to,” Kim said.

On the other hand, Romano does not believe the app is really influencing Generation Z. She believes there’s “nothing very influential about it.”

People download TikTok for many reasons. Along with just wanting to make people laugh, many people make an account with the hopes of becoming “TikTok famous.”

Many people go viral on the app everyday by chance, which is a big attraction for some people. One of Kim’s TikTok videos went viral, earning over 800 thousand views.

“I have 700-something followers, but I definitely do not consider myself famous. My friends love to make fun of me for it because one of my videos went viral,” Kim said.

Romano thinks that people do not really get TikTok famous, even if their videos go viral.

“I believe for some people it happens once or twice, but other it turns them into a celebrity where their TikTok fame doesn’t matter anymore,” Romano said.

TikTok alone has not made the largest impact on Generation Z, but with the combined usage of other popular apps, it has had a hand in shaping this generation.