GEN Z'S PREFERENCE FOR ENGLISH DIGITAL LEARNING MEDIA

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Abstract

This study explores the preferences of Generation Z for English learning media and the factors influencing these preferences. Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, demonstrates a strong inclination toward modern digital platforms such as social media, video streaming services, and learning apps like Duolingo, which offer flexibility, interactivity, and visually appealing content. The study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys of 77 respondents aged 15–25 years and qualitative interviews with four participants. Key findings reveal that ease of access, visual appeal, and relevance to personal interests significantly influence Gen Z's media choices. Challenges include distractions, short attention spans, and a lack of motivation in self-directed learning. The findings highlight the importance of designing media that aligns with Gen Z's learning styles, incorporating interactive and gamified elements to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. This research provides valuable insights for educators and developers to optimize digital media for effective English learning.

Keywords: Generation Z, English learning media, Preferences, Digital Platforms

INTRODUCTION

English language learning has undergone major changes over the generations. In the days before technology took off, students struggled to find adequate English learning resources. Now, in the digital age, Gen Z - the generation born between 1997 and 2012 - lives in a world that is highly connected to technology. They actively utilize various digital media platforms such as social media, video streaming services, podcasts and news sites. Interestingly, even though most of them live in countries where English is not the primary language, many prefer to use English to access a variety of content. This phenomenon demonstrates the global appeal of English, which is often considered an international language and a gateway to access global knowledge and trends. Therefore, Gen Z can use various English learning technologies including Skype, Twitter, podcasting, and YouTube (Nahdi et al., 2024).

English-language content allows them to connect with the global community, keep up with popular trends, and acquire extensive knowledge. On the other hand, English provides access to diverse perspectives and information that may be difficult to find in local languages. However, in the midst of the abundance of information available, Gen Z is also faced with the

challenge of sorting out quality and relevant content, which has been described in this study discussing the prevention of genz in English media this preference is important because gen z is a generation more "selfish" in doing what they like, so if it is not liked it can be a factor in their failure to learn.

In this case, preference is an individual's inclination or choice towards something, such as a way of learning, media, or information format. In the context of online learning, users' preferences can affect their level of engagement and motivation. Understanding these preferences is important for customizing content delivery, so as to improve learning outcomes and student engagement (Ilin, 2022). preferences strongly influence learning. Research (Ilin, 2022) shows that understanding user preferences can increase engagement and motivation in online learning. When learning content is tailored to individual preferences, such as the preferred media type (video, audio, or text), it can improve the learning experience and academic outcomes (Ilin, 2022).

There are several learning media, for example, traditional and modern. Traditional learning media refers to the use of local cultural games and activities as tools to teach material, such as English, to students. Examples include traditional games, folklore and creative activities and television (Gultom et al., 2023). Modern learning media refer to tools and resources used in the learning process that utilize the latest technology to enhance the learning experience (Putra et al., 2023) in this case there are several examples of modern learning Interactive Learning Videos, Mobile Applications and online platforms.

factors that influence genz like to learn through social media Ease of Access, Visual and Interactive. ease of access from Social media provides quick access to a variety of information without time and place limits. Platforms such as Instagram and YouTube often have educational content available for free, for example the YouTube audience who have a learning style, Visual and Interactive. Gen Z likes content that is interactive, short, and visually appealing. Formats such as short videos or carousel posts on social media support a fast and flexible learning style. for example, on the Instagram app where reels usually create English content such as @Aarons. English which makes reels learn English. The problem is that gen z is used to social media and prefers to learn through social media, many gen z do not really learn. for example, many gen z follow Aaron English to learn grammar, the fact is that

their grammar remains bad because they do not really learn and understand. the characteristic of genz is bored quickly With constant exposure to content, their attention span tends to be shorter, so they like fast and to the point formats. Genz current learning capital is visual capital where Gen Z is more interested in visual-based learning such as videos, infographics, and engaging presentations. The use of color, animation, and aesthetic design can increase their attraction and understanding of the material.

When learning media does not match a student's learning style, they often struggle to understand the material. For example, a visual learner may find it difficult to understand material through verbal explanations only without visual support. If the learning media or methods do not match this learning style, students may find it difficult to capture and understand the material presented. In addition, material that is too complex or full of technical terms can also confuse students, especially if the material is not presented in stages.

The lack of connection of the material to real life is also a factor. When material is irrelevant or feels distant from everyday experiences, students may struggle to understand it or lose interest in learning more. The speed at which the material is delivered also plays an important role; if the material is delivered too quickly without pauses or opportunities for questions, students may lose focus or fail to capture the essence of the lesson. Authentic materials are learning materials used in language teaching contexts that come from the real world and are not altered or customized specifically for learning purposes examples of authentic materials written text, social media, video and audio

previous study by Irzawati et al. (2024) on the contribution of Twitter to their English development. In this poll, 84 Gen Z participants indicated that Gen Z prefers digital media, such as language learning apps, videos on YouTube, English threads on Twitter or social media platforms, to learn English. They feel that digital media is more interactive, flexible and can be accessed anytime. For example, apps like Duolingo, twitter provide a customized learning experience, which is perfect for Gen Z's self-learning style.

Generation Z has a unique way of choosing English learning media that suits their learning style. They usually prioritize platforms that align with their learning preferences, such as YouTube to support visual learning styles, or apps like Duolingo that offer interactive experiences through gamification Content that is relevant to their interests, such as popular

culture-themed videos or global trends on TikTok, is also appealing. In addition, flexibility plays an important role, with media that allows self-directed learning anywhere and anytime being a top choice. Additional features such as quizzes, immediate feedback and personalization options make the learning experience more engaging and tailored to individual needs (Sanchez et al., 2020).

While many studies have addressed the role of technology in language learning, studies that specifically examine the relationship between Generation Z's learning media preferences and their learning styles are limited. In addition, aspects such as the effectiveness of interactive features, personalization capabilities and cultural relevance in digital platforms for English language learning have not been widely explored. This creates an opportunity to deepen the understanding of how these elements can influence learning experiences and outcomes.The purpose of this study is to prefrence how Generation Z chooses English learning media that suits their learning style, as well as the factors that influence these preferences.

However, the limited number of studies that specifically address Gen Z's preferences for English learning media indicates a gap that needs to be investigated more deeply. One of these groups is Gen Z, which is the center of attention for previous generations because they are the ones currently enrolled in higher education and getting ready to enter professional life (Maqbool et al., 2020). Therefore, the gen-z generation is very fortunate to live in an era that is very advanced in the field of science and technology, and thus at the same time is not in accordance with the old educational patterns that are outdated (Prijanto, 2022).

Therefore the purpose of this study is to investigate the types of digital media most frequently used by Generation Z students for learning English and to examine the specific features of social media content that influence their motivation to engage in language learning. This includes exploring elements such as visual appeal, short video formats, animation, and other interactive components that align with Gen Z's learning preferences. By achieving these objectives, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how digital platforms can be effectively utilized to enhance English language acquisition among Gen Z learners.

Furthermore, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What type of digital media is most frequently used by Gen Z students for learning English?

2. What features of social media content (e.g., visual appeal, short video format, animation) influence Gen Z's motivation to learn English?

This study holds significant academic value as it addresses the gap in existing literature regarding Generation Z's preferences for English digital learning media, particularly within the context of social media usage. As digital natives, Gen Z students exhibit unique learning behaviors characterized by a preference for flexible, visual, and interactive content. By exploring the factors that influence their media choices—such as ease of access, visual appeal, gamified features, and real-life relevance—this research provides valuable insights for educators, instructional designers, and digital content developers aiming to create more effective and engaging learning environments. Furthermore, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how informal digital platforms can be optimized to support self-directed language acquisition, while also highlighting the challenges posed by superficial engagement and digital distractions. Ultimately, this study serves as a foundation for developing pedagogical strategies that are better aligned with the learning styles and technological fluency of the Gen Z cohort.

METHOD

This research used a mixed method, which combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Generation Z's preferences for English learning media. The quantitative approach is used to collect numerical data through a survey, which aims to identify patterns and trends in learning media preferences. Meanwhile, the qualitative approach was conducted through in-depth interviews to explore the reasons behind those preferences, providing a deeper insight into the factors that influence their choices.

This method was chosen because it allows researchers to analyze the data holistically, both in terms of broad generalizations and contextual understanding. By using mixed methods, this research is expected to provide more valid and relevant results in the context of Generation Z's needs and characteristics. Quantitative research is the first step to find out how much Gen Z preferences about learning media.

The survey was taken from 77 respondents. The survey consistent of 10 question using likert scale. The requirements to become respondents of this survey are the gen z era born 1997-2012 aged 15-25 years. Next, this qualitative method research uses interviews to retrieve information and reasons why gen z era really likes learning media. This interview was conducted with 4 sources that have been selected by the researcher. The data collection method is carried out in 2 stages, the first stage with quantitative method with a survey approach and the second qualitative method with an interview approach.

The validity of the research Gen Z Preference for English Learning Media aims to ensure that the instruments and methods used are able to measure aspects are in line with the research focus. This research applies a mixed method, which combines a quantitative approach through surveys and a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews.

On the validity of the quantitative instrument, the survey used a systematically structured questionnaire to explore Gen Z's preference for English learning media. The questionnaire was pretested to ensure that each question was clear, relevant and easily understood by the respondents. In addition, the sufficient number of respondents, as many as 77 respondent, provides a strong basis for generalizing the research results.

To ensure the validity, the researchers consult the instrument to the expert. The expert was two lesturers who teach Technology Enhanced Language Learning for more than 10 years. The survey used a systematically structured questionnaire to explore Gen Z's preference for English learning media. The questionnaire was pretested to ensure that each question was clear, relevant and easily understood by the respondents. In addition, the sufficient number of respondents, as many as 77 respondent, provides a strong basis for generalizing the research results.

Content validity in this study is also maintained by ensuring that each question asked has a solid theoretical basis, referring to previous studies such as Ilin (2022), Nasution (2019), and Sanchez et al. (2020). On the other hand, for qualitative data validity, interviews were conducted with four purposively selected interviewees to gain an in-depth understanding of the reasons behind Gen Z's preference for certain media.

The results of the interviews were then validated through data triangulation, by comparing findings from interviews, surveys, and references from previous research. Overall, validity in this study was achieved through the use of complementary mixed methods.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
This chapter outlines the findings related to Gen Z students' use of digital media in learning English. The first part identifies the most frequently used platforms, while the second examines the content features that influence motivation. Insights are drawn from both survey data and interview responses, highlighting patterns shaped by Gen Z's digital behavior and learning preferences.

RQ 1: **What type of digital media is most frequently used by Gen Z students for learning English?**

The findings from the survey indicate that social media platforms are the most frequently used type of digital media among Gen Z students for learning English, with 46.84% of respondents selecting platforms like Instagram and Twitter as their primary learning tools. This reflects a broader trend in which young learners integrate language acquisition into their everyday digital habits. Social media is often perceived as a dynamic, interactive, and visually appealing space that offers authentic language exposure through captions, comments, reels, and short videos, which aligns with the visual learning preferences of many Gen Z students.

In addition to social media, video streaming platforms such as YouTube were reported as the second most preferred media by 20.25% of participants. These platforms offer a vast array of English-language content from educational videos and vlogs to language tutorials which allows learners to develop listening comprehension and vocabulary in context. Furthermore, language learning applications like Duolingo ranked third, chosen by 17.72% of respondents, suggesting that while structured digital learning tools are appreciated, they are not as dominant as more informal and social-based media.

Table 1. Percentage gen'z preference for English digital media

No	Type of Digital Media	Percentage (%)	Description
1	Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, etc.)	46.84%	Most frequently used; integrates learning with daily digital habits; visually engaging; interactive
2	Video Streaming (YouTube, etc.)	20.25%	Offers diverse content like vlogs, tutorials, and educational videos for contextual learning
3	Language Learning Apps (Duolingo, etc.)	17.72%	Structured and goal-based learning tools, though less preferred than social media
4	Podcasts	3,80%	Audio-only content; less interactive and less preferred
5	Printed Materials (Books, etc.)	2,53%	Traditional format; not as engaging or flexible.
6	Others (Games, TikTok, Films, Google Translate)	< 2% each	Minor preference; used occasionally but not the main choice

Less frequently chosen media included podcasts (3.80%), printed materials (2.53%), and other tools such as games, TikTok, films, and Google Translate, each garnering less than 2% of responses. These results suggest that while a wide variety of media are available, Gen Z students overwhelmingly gravitate toward platforms that are integrated into their daily digital routines, especially those that support flexibility, personal interest, and visual engagement.

In summary, the data strongly indicates that social media leads as the dominant digital media English learning among Gen Z, followed by video-based platforms and interactive learning apps. This trend highlights a shift toward informal, personalized, and self-directed learning experiences facilitated by platforms that Gen Z already uses regularly for communication and entertainment.

Social media dominates as the most preferred medium for learning English among Gen Z, followed by video-based platforms and language learning apps. The overall trend indicates a strong preference for flexible, visual, and self-directed learning methods that align with students' digital lifestyles.

RQ 2 : What features of social media content (e.g., visual appeal, short video format, animation) influence Gen Z's motivation to learn English?

The interview data suggests that a variety of features in social media content strongly influence Gen Z's motivation to learn English. A recurring theme that emerged across participants is the importance of visual appeal. Social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are rich

with colorful, animated, and aesthetically engaging content. These visual elements not only capture attention but also enhance understanding, especially for visual learners. As stated by participant A said, "On YouTube, it's the visuals that stand out, because we also need colorful videos, sometimes there are even animations participant B." For Gen Z learners, who are frequently exposed to high-impact digital content, static or text-heavy learning materials are perceived as less effective. The dynamic nature of social media visuals helps maintain attention, especially in informal or low-pressure learning contexts.

In addition to visuals, the format of the content itself—specifically short, concise videos—is a crucial motivating factor. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels deliver English-learning content in under one minute, which aligns well with the limited attention span and busy lifestyle of Gen Z students. This format encourages what can be called incidental or passive learning, where users absorb language unconsciously while engaging in leisure activities. For instance, participant c shared, "On Instagram and YouTube, we don't usually intend to study, but when scrolling and we come across interesting content, we end up learning anyway.participant D " This insight reflects a broader learning behavior in Gen Z, where exposure to micro-content during casual scrolling can lead to vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation practice, and exposure to authentic language in context.

Another significant feature is the combination of audio and visual elements, which supports Gen Z's dominant visual-auditory learning style. Respondents expressed that when video content includes both spoken dialogue and visual cues, comprehension becomes easier even when some parts of the language are unfamiliar. Participant A explained, "I prefer visual-audio because even if I don't understand the audio, I can rely on the visuals to figure out what it means Participant B said." This shows that multimodal input such as subtitles, facial expressions, contextual images, and voice tone works together to provide meaningful language exposure, making English more accessible.

Furthermore, participants consistently highlighted the ease of access as a practical advantage of social media platforms. Unlike traditional learning platforms or formal applications, social media does not require downloading, registration, or structured schedules. As Meita explained, "If an app is too complicated, I don't even want to open it. But if it looks good and is easy to use, I feel more motivated to learn." This quote emphasizes that frictionless access and simple interfaces lower psychological and practical barriers to learning, encouraging consistent engagement even outside formal study sessions.

Finally, the relevance of content to real-life situations significantly affects motivation. Gen Z students prefer learning material that is directly applicable to daily communication and social interaction. For example, participant C highlighted, "Like we learn the simple present, but we don't

even know how 'Can I go to the bathroom?' in English. That's really important." This underscores a disconnect they feel between academic English and practical use, and shows how social media fills that gap with everyday language, slang, idioms, and conversational patterns. The language used in these platforms reflects authentic communication, which is rarely covered in formal textbooks.

In conclusion, the features of social media content that most influence Gen Z's motivation to learn English include attractive visual elements, short-form video structure, audio-visual integration, user-friendly access, and practical relevance to everyday communication. These features align closely with the learning habits, cognitive preferences, and technological fluency of Gen Z, making social media not just a convenient tool, but an effective and motivating platform for English language acquisition.

Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the research questions and relevant literature. It explores the factors that influence Generation Z's preferences in using digital media for learning English and how specific features of social media shape their motivation and engagement. By comparing the results with previous studies, this discussion highlights the alignment between Gen Z's learning habits and the characteristics of digital platforms, while also addressing the opportunities and challenges that arise from their media choices.

Factors Influencing Generation Z's English Language Learning Media Preferences

One of the main factors influencing Generation Z's English learning media preference is ease of access. Growing up in a digital and fast-paced environment, they tend to prefer media that can be accessed flexibly without being bound by time or place. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and learning apps like Duolingo give them the freedom to learn whenever they want, in line with their dynamic and mobile lifestyle. Visual and interactive learning styles are also important considerations. According to (Khasanah, 2023) Gen Z prefers visually appealing materials, such as short videos, infographics or aesthetically designed presentations. Their tendency to get bored quickly makes short, interactive and visual learning formats more effective in capturing their attention and maintaining their focus. Congruence with personal interests and lifestyle also influences their choices. Content related to pop culture, global trends, or created by favorite influencers is easier to attract their learning interest. When learning material feels relevant and close to their daily lives, they will be more motivated to absorb the information. Furthermore, media that has interactive features and allows personalization is highly preferred by Gen Z. Features such as quizzes, live feedback and gamification systems provide a

more enjoyable learning experience and make learning feel like play. Apps like Duolingo are an example that effectively combines these elements (Urba et al., 2024).

However, there is an important challenge that needs to be addressed, which is the lack of deep understanding. While many of them consume English content through social media, not all of it involves serious learning. Gen Z tends to prefer quick and entertaining content, but this is often not enough to build a strong understanding of the material. The mismatch between learning media and individual learning styles can also be a barrier. If the material is delivered monotonously or relies solely on text without visual elements, then students who have a visual or kinesthetic learning style will find it difficult to understand the content, resulting in low motivation and learning outcomes.Linking the material to real life also has a big impact. When learning is not linked to everyday (Rahma Arifatuzzahra et al., 2024). experiences or feels too abstract, students will lose interest and have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the material. Therefore, contextualized and applicable delivery is essential. Finally, Generation Z shows a strong preference for authentic material. They are more interested in real-life content, such as social media posts, documentary videos or podcasts, as they feel more relevant and less contrived. This approach gives learning a more natural feel and blends in with their daily lives (Yulyani, 2024).

The Role of Social Media Compared to Traditional Media

In the context of English language learning by Generation Z, social media has a much more dominant role compared to traditional media. Social media offers flexibility, speed and interactivity that conventional media such as television, radio or textbooks can hardly match. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok and quiziz(Dhamayanti, 2021) allow Gen Z to access English-language content instantly, in visually appealing formats, and often customized with the latest trends. They can interact directly through comments, quizzes or gamification features that make learning fun and less boring. Meanwhile, traditional media tends to be one-way, less responsive to individual needs. The content presented is often not easily re-accessible, and does not allow personalization according to each student's learning style. This makes traditional media less effective in addressing Gen Z's dynamic learning needs that prioritize speed and relevance.

social media is not just a means of entertainment, but has evolved into an active and adaptive learning tool for the younger generation. The role of social media in supporting this learning process marks a significant shift from conventional learning methods to a more modern, personalized approach that is in line with technological developments and the characteristics of today's digital generation (Hertiki, 2014).

Frequency and Effectiveness of Various Media

In today's digital era, Generation Z's frequency of using digital media for English learning is much higher than other media. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and learning apps like Duolingo or Babbel are used almost every day because they are easily accessible and provide a fun learning experience. Gen Z tends to spend a lot of time on social media, so they are indirectly exposed to English through the content they consume.

Short video content, audio podcasts, and educational threads or posts are part of their daily activities that support their informal learning process (Shamim & Riaz, 2023). In terms of effectiveness, digital media is considered more capable of adjusting to Gen Z's learning needs and preferences. Interactive videos, quizzes with immediate feedback, and attractive visual designs make the learning process feel more fun and less boring.

In addition, this media allows for independent and flexible learning, where users can set their own time and material they want to learn. In contrast, traditional media such as textbooks or television tend to be used less often and are considered less attractive due to their rigid and non-interactive format (Nurbani et al., 2025). However, the effectiveness of media also depends on how it is used. Although digital media is often used, if it is not utilized seriously or only consumed passively, the learning outcomes can be less than optimal. Therefore, it is important for learners to choose media that suits their learning style and use it consistently and focusedly in order to achieve maximum results.

Challenges in Using Digital Media for Learning

While digital media offers many advantages in the learning process, its use is also not free from challenges, especially for Generation Z. One of the main obstacles is the lack of consistency and discipline in learning. Due to the easy access and entertaining nature of social media, many students are tempted to switch from educational content to entertainment content, which disrupts their focus on learning. In addition, Gen Z's short attention span makes it difficult for them to absorb material that requires in-depth understanding if it is delivered through a quick and concise digital format. Another challenge is the flood of information. On the internet, not all educational content is of good quality or suitable for learning needs. Often, students have difficulty distinguishing between valid and less credible material. This can lead to misconceptions or misunderstanding of the material (Matos et al., 2016). In addition, the lack of direct interaction with teachers or study partners in using digital media is also a weakness, because they cannot directly ask questions when experiencing difficulties.

Last but not least, the dependence on devices and internet connections is a barrier, especially in areas where access to technology is still limited. Without adequate infrastructure support, utilizing

digital media can be ineffective. Therefore, although digital media brings many conveniences, there needs to be appropriate strategies and guidance so that its use really supports the learning process optimally.

Preferred Learning Style and Content Recommendations

Many learners, especially Generation Z, prefer a visual learning style that uses images, infographics, videos and diagrams because visual media helps them understand complex concepts faster and remember them longer. In addition, interactive learning is also very effective as it involves hands-on engagement such as quizzes, polls or game-based learning that encourages active participation. Social learning is also a favorite, where students can collaborate and interact through group discussions or activities, as well as leverage platforms like Instagram that allow them to share and discuss through comments, stories and shared content.

The microlearning approach of presenting material in small, focused chunks has proven effective in retaining students' attention and aiding the gradual learning process. In addition, using multiple media at once, such as text, audio, images and interactive elements, can cater to different learning styles and reinforce understanding. In terms of content, it is recommended to use authentic materials taken from everyday language use on social media (Nurbani, 2020) such as posts, stories, or captions that are relevant to students' interests.

The use of multimedia such as videos, voice notes and animated GIFs can also make learning more engaging. Learning should focus on the context and practical use of language, for example by presenting everyday terms, idioms, or popular culture references to make the material feel closer and more motivating (Manjillatul Urba et al., 2024) Inviting students to actively create and share their own content in English can also improve their practical skills. In addition, interactive features on Instagram such as quizzes, polls, and Q&A sessions can be utilized to provide immediate feedback while encouraging reflection on learning. Finally, linking the material to current trends, challenges or memes that are popular among Gen Z will make learning more relevant and grab their attention.

Digital media has also proven to be very effective in aiding comprehension of English materials. Features such as audio-visual aids and downloadable resources allow users to understand complex material more easily. Platforms such as the British Council and Duolingo offer pronunciation guides, listening activities and grammar exercises that cover different aspects of language learning holistically(Khawas & Agustina, 2024). This allows learners to develop listening, speaking and grammar skills simultaneously without the need for traditional classroom instruction.

Gen z prefer media that suits their learning style, especially audio-visual and interactive formats. Visual aids such as animations and colorful interfaces, coupled with audio elements such as native speaker dialogues, create a dynamic learning environment. Interactivity is also an important point, as offered by gamification apps, which provide immediate feedback and a learning path tailored to each user's progress.

The relevance of content to real-life applications is also an important factor. Gen Z tends to value platforms that focus on practical communication skills rather than abstract grammar rules. For example, content that teaches conversational English for everyday needs, such as asking for permission or ordering food, is considered more useful than traditional grammar exercises(Permani et al., 2025). However, some participants noted that some platforms lack advanced content relevant to college students, suggesting a gap that developers can fill.

While traditional methods provide a good foundation in grammar and structure, most participants found them too rigid and less engaging than digital media (Susanto et al., 2021). Digital media provides flexibility, variety of content, and more engaging self-study opportunities. In addition, traditional media tends to lack quick and comprehensive feedback, which is an advantage of AI-enabled digital platforms. However, the use of digital media is not without its challenges (Khawas et al., 2025).Self-motivation is a major challenge, as the lack of a structured schedule often leads to procrastination. Other issues include unstable internet access and distractions from other apps on digital devices. Some participants (Warini et al., 2021) also wanted advanced content that was more relevant to students' needs.

To improve the effectiveness of learning media, participants suggested several things. Learning media should include diverse and interesting content, and adjust the level of difficulty to the learner's needs. A focus on practical communication skills, however (Sari, 2019) gamification and interactive elements were also considered important to maintain interest in learning. In addition, more affordable or even free access will increase the inclusivity of the platform. Developers also need to ensure that the media supports a variety of learning styles, including kinesthetic methods that are less frequently accommodated.

Overall, Gen Z highly values English learning media that is accessible, engaging and relevant to their needs. The combination of audio-visual aids, interactivity and practical content makes digital platforms very appealing to this generation. However, challenges such as content gaps and digital distractions need to be addressed to increase the effectiveness of these mediums and make them irreplaceable learning tools for this tech-savvy generation. Several previous studies have explored the role of digital media in English language learning, particularly among Generation Z. Irzawati et al.

(2024) investigated the contribution of Twitter to Gen Z's English development. Their study found that Gen Z learners favor digital platforms such as YouTube, language learning apps, and Twitter threads due to their interactivity, flexibility, and ease of access. This finding aligns with the present study's results, which emphasize similar preferences for platforms that offer visual, interactive, and self-paced learning.

Similarly, Sanchez et al. (2020) highlighted the effectiveness of gamification in enhancing student engagement through interactive features like quizzes and immediate feedback. Their research supports the current study's conclusion that gamified elements, such as those in Duolingo, significantly improve motivation and learning outcomes for Gen Z learners who thrive in interactive environments. Yulyani (2024) also pointed out the growing trend of using educational content on YouTube, where learners are exposed to real-life English usage through videos, enhancing comprehension and listening skills. This supports the present research's emphasis on the importance of authentic and visual content in engaging Gen Z learners. Maqbool et al. (2020) argued that Generation Z, as digital natives, require learning strategies that suit their tech-oriented habits. Their research revealed that Gen Z learners prefer digital learning environments that are personalized and adaptive. This insight correlates with the findings in this study, where personalization and relevance to learners' interests were found to be crucial factors in media preference. Furthermore, Manjillatul Urba et al. (2024) addressed the ideal learning styles for Gen Z in the digital era, emphasizing the importance of audio-visual and interactive learning. Their findings mirror this study's observation that visual design, multimedia content, and interactivity are essential to capture and maintain Gen Z's attention.

Although existing studies have addressed the general role of digital media in language learning, only a few have specifically focused on how learning style preferences influence Gen Z's media choices. This gap reinforces the significance of the current research in providing a more targeted analysis of the factors influencing Gen Z's English learning media preferences and how these preferences relate to their individual learning styles.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study investigated Generation Z's preferences for English digital learning media, focusing on the most frequently used platforms and the features that influence their motivation. The findings clearly show that social media platforms—especially Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok—are the most preferred tools for learning English among Gen Z, with 46.84% of respondents selecting them as their primary media. These platforms are valued for their flexibility, visual engagement, ease of access, and integration into daily digital routines, which align closely with the lifestyle and learning habits of Gen Z learners. In particular, features such as attractive visuals, short-form video content,

and interactive elements like animations, quizzes, and audio-visual integration significantly enhance learning motivation. Gen Z students favor content that is relatable, authentic, and applicable to real-life communication, which is often found in informal, user-generated content on social media rather than in traditional media or rigid academic platforms.

Moreover, the study highlights that Gen Z learners thrive in personalized, self-directed learning environments that accommodate their visual-auditory learning styles. Applications like Duolingo and platforms such as YouTube provide such environments through features like gamification, instant feedback, and diverse learning formats. However, despite the advantages of digital media, challenges such as distractions, lack of deep comprehension, poor content quality, and dependence on internet access remain pressing issues that can hinder learning outcomes.

Compared to traditional media which tend to be static, one-way, and less adaptable—digital media is seen as more effective in supporting Gen Z's learning due to its dynamic, fast-paced, and interactive nature. Yet, the study also reveals that not all digital content is created equally, and there is a need for more advanced, credible, and contextually relevant materials, especially for learners at higher levels

In conclusion, Gen Z learners highly value digital English learning media that is visually engaging, easily accessible, interactive, and closely connected to their real-life experiences. Educators and developers must continue to innovate and tailor content that not only aligns with

Gen Z's learning preferences but also addresses existing gaps such as content depth, advanced material needs, and focused learning strategies. Doing so will help maximize the potential of digital platforms as powerful tools for effective and meaningful English language acquisition among the digital-native generation,

future studies should explore how digital platforms can accommodate various learning styles beyond visual and interactive ones—such as auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing styles—to ensure greater inclusivity. It is also important to evaluate actual learning outcomes through measurable methods like pre- and post-tests. With the emergence of AI tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Elsa Speak, their effectiveness compared to conventional tools should also be assessed. Researchers should further investigate how socioeconomic factors and access to technology influence Gen Z's ability to engage with digital learning, especially in rural or underserved areas. Finally, cross-cultural studies are recommended to understand differences in media preferences among Gen Z in various global contexts.

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