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## Online Health Navigation: The Experiences on Social Media Use of Generation Z Filipinos and their Health Behaviors

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study explored the experiences of social media usage of Generation Z Filipinos about their health behavior. The grand tour question was "Can you tell me about your experiences with social media usage concerning your health behavior?".

**Methodology:** A descriptive phenomenological research design was adopted, using Colaizzi's (1978) method of data analysis. Data saturation was achieved from 6 participants drawn from the Generation Z age group, aged 18-25, active account owners, and frequent users of social media. Data were collected through individual, semi-structured interview questions.

**Results:** Results revealed major themes such as: (1) Social media as Universal Medium, (2) Social media as Open Access Health Resource Hub, (3) Social media as Conductive Learning Gizmo, (4) Social media as Industry of Misinformation & Fake News, and (5) The Healthy Adaptation.

**Conclusion:** There were occurrences of both positive and negative experiences in the usage of social media concerning the health behaviors of Generation Z Filipinos. The participants explained and described that they can freely access health information online, can use them as quick references and public sources of new learnings as well as able to share them with fellow netizens, however, participants shared a common experience concerning rampant circulation of misinformation on social media platforms. Thus, practicing critical thinking, being mindful of one's social media consumption, and seeking information from reliable sources were all recommended as essential steps to ensure the positive and balanced impacts of social media on health behaviors.

**Keywords:** GenerationZ, Social Media, HealthBehavior, OnlineInformation

### INTRODUCTION

Technology has advanced significantly throughout the course of the 21st century, which has significantly improved human communication in a variety of ways. Today's world has experienced both technological advancements and the growth of media, and social media is one of the greatest contributions of innovations in technology. Websites and online programs that enable users to generate and distribute content to various audiences are referred to as social media. It has profound effects on the way many individuals live their daily lives. In a study that focused on the effects of social media on some people's lives, it was determined that many people's lives have been digitized and are now able to be measured and tracked (Thomas, 2016). Due to the infinite access to and sharing of information available through social media, anyone becomes empowered (Amedie, 2015). Due to the information that is made available to individuals through social media, which is being used as a source of knowledge more frequently, it helps to shape how many people think about various societal or global concerns (Westerman, 2013).

Humanity has always been concerned with health-related matters. Universal health coverage is one of the 17 sustainable development projects in the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" of the United Nations. This program emphasizes the popularization of health knowledge and the promotion of the physical and psychological health of the entire population (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019). The results of academic research



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on health concerns show that people's health behaviors have a big impact on their levels of health (Zhang et al., 2018). Deliberate attention should therefore be given to understanding the elements that influence health behaviors in the new media era and finding ways to improve public health. It is said that the primary channel and venue for health communication is the media. The usage of media affects health behaviors (Nabi et al., 2019). Because of the unique significance that social media platforms play in influencing the public's view and encouraging healthy behaviors, pertinent research is starting to concentrate on this medium of communication (Huo et al., 2019).

More and more young people are now using social media to find out about health-related topics including physical activity, food and nutrition, as well as body image. However, there are only a few thorough empirical studies on the nature and format of the health-related information that young people access, create, and share. It's crucial to keep in mind that social media and digital technology are seen as key means of communication and social engagement for many of the young people we teach, coach, research, care for, parent, and assist. We must understand how young people interact with social media, what they learn from it, and how it could affect their behavior if we are to connect with them, gain an understanding of their lives, and provide help. While there are sure to be many beneficial influences in young people's lives, there are also likely to be vulnerable times when the sheer size, intensity, and universality of social media may act to exacerbate those vulnerabilities. It is crucial to comprehend how social media functions in important domains of young people's lives because it is undoubtedly a very potent and dynamic aspect of modern youth culture. Research and policy on young people's use of health-related social media are found to be lacking in direction. As a result, many responsible adults are ill-equipped to safeguard young individuals from social media's harmful influences and to make the most of online platform's potential as a tool for health promotion (Goodyear et al., 2018).

### Objectives

This study explored the experiences of social media usage of Generation Z Filipinos about their health behavior.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of social media usage of Generation Z Filipinos and their health behavior?
2. What are the perceptions of Generation Z Filipinos on the utilization of social media in health information dissemination, health education, and health promotion?
3. How do social media shape their health behavior including their insights about the positive and negative impacts of it?
4. What are the participants' recommendations and advice to the other current age generations as well as to the succeeding generations in order to serve and provide guidelines and reminders about the proper usage therefore maximizing the positive gain from the behavioral health-related effects of social media?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Social Media and Health Communication*

Since the start of its commercial use, the internet has proven to have limitless power in health communication. Online health communication, in general, is a scientific and artistic technique that uses Internet technology to disseminate health-related information to the general public and aids in the development of positive healthy ideas, beliefs, and behaviors that promote health management (Jimenez & Bregenzer, 2018). The Internet, a new form of media, can quickly disseminate knowledge about health in a number of ways. It can persuade various target populations or individuals to accept digitally publicized health information, thus enabling the promotion of public health (Webb et al., 2010). In a social media experiment on health communication, Gough et al. (2017) discovered that unexpected data can produce excellent information presentation, funny information can grab users' attention, and educational material can bring more forward.

### *Generation Z and their Social Media Usage*

The Generation Z are those who were born between the years 1997-2012. They are 11-26 years old now (Debczak, 2019). The digital revolution that took place throughout the 1990s gave Gen Z access to Internet technology for the beginning of their existence, and they have been exposed to an unprecedented amount of technology throughout their growth and development. People of Generation Z are thought to be so accustomed to technology that interacting on social media websites makes up a significant amount of their socializing habits. The strong "virtual attachment" that Generation Z is experiencing enables young individuals to overcome the emotional



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and psychological challenges they encounter online. Gen Z's early, frequent, and significant exposure to technology has benefits and drawbacks in terms of social, emotional, and psychological effects (Brosdahl and Carpenter, 2011). Gen Z generally fall into the category of high school to college students or are relatively new to the workforce population, and are usually described as being the most technically savvy and fashion-conscious of all preceding generations. Gen Zs are more likely than other generations to prefer online social sites for communication and interaction with people they know and are happy and feel vital to provide active feedback and comments about the brands/services/issues they use. The need to be involved and informed with other people is the main rationale behind the use of online socializing by Gen Zs (eMarketer, 2011).

### **Social Media and Health Behavior**

Social media covers a variety of disease prevention practices, such as physical fitness and physical activities, anti-smoking behaviors, AIDS prevention, and it can to some extent intervene in individual personal health behaviors (Yang, 2017). The importance of health information in supporting healthy behaviors has been demonstrated by behavioral change theories including the theory of planning behavior and the health belief model. Scholars began to discuss the impact of health knowledge on health behaviors on social media after the Internet became widely used. Facebook users frequently publish health-related content that focuses on understanding diseases and having personal relevant experiences. The applicability, interesting degree, and correlation of information can influence the health behaviors of the users (Asiri, 2017). According to a study that looked into the health literacy of some Beijing and Hefei people, using traditional media frequently, including newspapers and television, is significantly and positively correlated with healthy behaviors (Manning, 2014). Another researcher discovered people who seek relevant information about health and medicine online exhibit healthier behaviors than those who do not (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). Using social media as the primary media type, some studies also looked into how trustworthy new media information was. The findings indicate that regular media use encourages healthy behaviors and that people rely on media for health information when dealing with minor health issues (Scammell, 2019). In this media-based society, the level of public trust in health information provided by the media may have an impact on the association between media use and health behaviors.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This is a qualitative study that used the descriptive phenomenological research design to explore how social media influence the health behaviors of Generation Z Filipinos. Descriptive phenomenology underscores the descriptions of human experience as perceived by human consciousness (Polit & Beck, 2010), hence the appropriate design for the study.

### **Population and Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to identify the key informants of the study. The inclusion criteria are: a) Natural-born Filipino aged 18-26; b) has a personal active account and an active user of any social media or online networking platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter; c) has been exposed or was able to see or watch any health promotion, health education, and health info dissemination contents posted on social media platforms. Criteria b and c were determined using preliminary survey to identify qualified key informants.

### **Instruments**

An interview guide was used, which included questions such as: "Tell me about your experiences in using social media in relation to your health behavior". Follow-up were also used to encourage participants to expound on their experience such as: "Tell me more about your feelings and thoughts on the utilization of social media in health information dissemination, health education, and health promotion"; "How do these social media contents influence your health behavior?".

### **Data Collection**

Prior to the interview process, participants were initially screened if they qualified as key informants based on the inclusion criteria. Their voluntary participation was secured by making them sign an informed consent form. During the individual, semi-structured interviews, the participants were also encouraged to describe both positive and





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negative aspects of the phenomena as well as their advice or recommendations for future social media users and succeeding generations.

### Treatment of Data

Data gathered were analyzed (hand coding) employing the phenomenological analysis (descriptive) method of Colaizzi (1978). This method of descriptive phenomenological approach used in this study aided to reveal emergent themes from the free responses obtained from the key informants, as well as their interwoven relationships (Wirihana et al., 2018).

### Ethical Consideration

The study involved human participation through in-depth face-to-face interview. Measures were observed to ensure the privacy, confidentiality, autonomy, and integrity of participants, adhering to relevant guidelines, regulations, and standards following the Philippine Data Privacy Act and the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

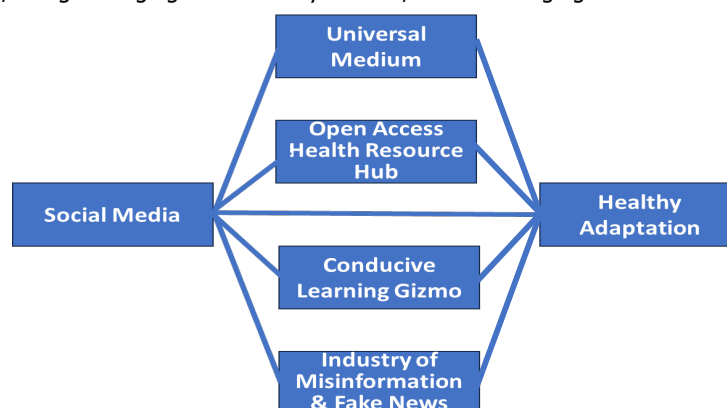
The participants were 6 individuals, aged 18-25. They were all Natural-born Filipinos, have at least one personally owned active account; active users of any social media or online networking platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter; and have been exposed to online links and sites containing health promotion, health education, and health info dissemination contents posted on the mentioned social media platforms.

**Table 1**

*Demographics of the participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age
PA	M	18
PB	M	24
PC	M	25
PD	M	23
PE	F	18
PF	F	22

As reflected in Table 1, there were 6 participants in the study, indicated in their own pseudonym. There were 4 males and 2 females, all ages ranging from 18-25 years old, hence belonging to Generation Z.



**Figure 1. The social network engine to healthier change**



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Figure 1 depicts the thematic tree of the study. The five (5) major themes derived from data analysis about the experiences of Generation Z on the usage of social media and their health behavior are Social media as a Universal medium, Open Access health resource hub, Conducive learning gizmo, Industry of misinformation and fake news, and eventually the Healthy adaptation.

### ***Social media as Universal Medium***

**Table 2**

*1<sup>st</sup> Major Theme: Universal Medium*

Theme	Description	Quotations
Universal Medium	Connecting the World in the Digital Age	<p><i>PA<sup>4</sup></i>: "Halos buong araw ay online ako sa Facebook, ito na rin kasi yung main way na ginagamit ko para maging updated at makipag communicate sa family, friends, classmates and teachers ko."</p> <p><i>PA<sup>6</sup></i>: "Online nalang din ako nagbabasa at nanonood ng mga balita, sometimes movies and series din, pati rin mga videos about health issues, I can say na halos lahat ng mga nangyayari sa paligid eh naipo-post and accessible na online."</p> <p><i>PB<sup>2</sup></i>: "I use Facebook particularly to watch videos about healthy living."</p> <p><i>PC<sup>2</sup></i>: "Meron akong active accounts sa Facebook, Instagram and TikTok."</p> <p><i>PC<sup>3</sup></i>: "Doon ako nanonood ng mga nursing tutorial videos specifically topics about pharmacology."</p> <p><i>PD<sup>5</sup></i>: "I have active accounts on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and TikTok, I must say likewise with almost all of the people in the world, that's a trend."</p> <p><i>PD<sup>7</sup></i>: "I mainly use them for communication, entertainment and for learning/education as well."</p> <p><i>PE<sup>3</sup></i>: "I am currently an active user of Facebook, Instagram and TikTok."</p> <p><i>PE<sup>4</sup></i>: "Sa panahon ngayon, lahat ng ways of communication ginagamitan na ng social media, almost all information available din online, kumbaga kung hindi ka marunong gumamit nito eh parang hindi ka taga-planetang earth haha."</p> <p><i>PF<sup>3</sup></i>: "Halos sa lahat ng social networking sites meron akong account kasi necessity na siya sa araw-araw."</p> <p><i>PF<sup>6</sup></i>: "Pang all around na yung gamit ng social media."</p>

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have facilitated real-time communication across continents, it is present everywhere. People can effortlessly connect with friends, family, and even strangers from different countries, eliminating the barriers of time and distance. Social media reaches millions of users on free access platforms (Schein, 2011). The universal accessibility of social media has made it possible for individuals to interact with diverse cultures and societies, breaking down traditional communication limitations. Through social media, news and information can spread rapidly, reaching a global audience within seconds. This instant dissemination of information, in example in healthcare, enables individuals to stay updated on world health-related events, medical science breakthroughs, and the latest health practices, creating a global sense of health awareness and well-being. According to Edington (2016), there are tens of thousands of health-promotion-related social media websites that are currently available to the public. Social media's emergence as a universal medium has undoubtedly changed the way we communicate, share information, and connect with one another. Its influence stretches far beyond geographical borders, connecting people from diverse backgrounds and cultures in ways



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previously unimaginable. As we continue to embrace the digital age, it is essential to recognize the responsibility that comes with this powerful medium. By utilizing social media for positive global engagement, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and promoting social progress, we can harness its universal potential to create a more interconnected, empathetic, and harmonious world.

### Social Media as Open Access Health Resource Hub

**Table 3**

*2<sup>nd</sup> Major Theme: Open Access Health Resource Hub*

Theme	Description	Quotations
Open Access Health Resource Hub	Enjoying Free Communication and Knowledge Sharing	<p><i>PA<sup>10</sup></i>: "As an aspiring doctor, it helps me freely access and read online information about medicine which makes me become more interested and motivated to pursue the dream."</p> <p><i>PA<sup>11</sup></i>: "Posted information teaches me what to do in simple emergency situations like performing first aid. It transforms me to being emergency equipped."</p> <p><i>PA<sup>12</sup></i>: "It also helps me determine what kind of OTC medicine to take whenever I don't feel good."</p> <p><i>PB<sup>7</sup></i>: "It is good because health-related content on social media is available, accessible, and free for anyone who wants to take the time to read and watch it."</p> <p><i>PB<sup>8</sup></i>: "They are very easy to access."</p> <p><i>PE<sup>12</sup></i>: "Yung mga online posts ay nagbibigay ng mga free health tips like how to identify the symptoms of some diseases and how to prevent them."</p> <p><i>PE<sup>13</sup></i>: "This readily available information increases awareness of some health issues and add knowledge about different medical conditions, treatments, and procedures."</p>

Social media has democratized communication like never before. In the past, traditional media channels controlled the flow of information, limiting access to those with financial resources or institutional power. However, with the advent of social media platforms, everyone can now become a content creator and share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with a vast audience. In a study by Beck (2014), it was reported that 48.5% (474/977) of web users aged 15-30 years old used the Internet for health purposes. This open access to communication has provided a voice to marginalized communities, underrepresented individuals or groups, freelancers, online influencers, and content creators. It has enabled them to raise awareness about their health-related experiences, advocate for health rights, and share their acquired medical expertise and knowledge about health sciences. In a research paper, it was identified that the use of social media by people looking for health information has increased significantly. It was shown that 59% of young adults in America (80% of internet users) reported that they have accessed health information online. This report stated that people use online social tools to gather information, share stories, and discuss concerns (Fox, 2011).

### Social media as Conducive Learning Gizmo

**Table 4**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Major theme: Conducive Learning Gizmo*

Conducive Learning Gizmo	Empowering Health Education & Data Presentation in the Digital Age	<p><i>PA<sup>13</sup></i>: "I enjoy the visual effects nung mga videos online, matatandaan mo yung mga dinidiscuss."</p> <p><i>PA<sup>16</sup></i>: "You can place your questions and clarifications din sa comment section."</p> <p><i>PC<sup>10</sup></i>: "The mode of information dissemination is dynamic. There is</p>
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the use of animations, sound effects, and images to catch the attention of the viewers."

*PC<sup>11</sup>*: "Due to the visual effects that are appealing to the eyes of the viewers, the presentation looks more reliable and not boring. The learning retention becomes higher."

*PD<sup>14</sup>*: "Yung mga contents like videos discussing health matters are very informative, very easy din to play or save it, pwede mo rin nga i-pause and balikan if may instances na busy ka."

*PD<sup>15</sup>*: "Madalas din yung length ng mga videos are maiikli lang, straight forward yung mga information so madali mung matatandaan, matututo ka agad."

Social media excels in providing visually engaging content, making complex health information more digestible and appealing to audiences. Health presentations can utilize infographics, videos, animations, and images to convey key messages effectively. Visual content helps capture the attention of viewers and enhances their retention of critical health information. Moreover, social media's interactive features, such as polls, quizzes, and live Q&A sessions, enable active engagement with the audience. This fosters a sense of participation and encourages viewers to ask questions, seek clarification, and discuss health-related topics, ultimately enhancing the learning experience. Gough et al. (2017) conducted an experiment on health communication in social media and found that astonishing information can generate great information presentation, humor information can attract the attention of users, and educational information can bring more forward.

### ***Social media as an Industry of Misinformation and fake news***

**Table 5**

*4<sup>th</sup> Major theme: Industry of Misinformation & Fake News*

Industry of Misinformation & Fake News	Putting Health at Risk due to Unverified and Unreliable Information	<p><i>PA<sup>13</sup></i>: "Some online content creators commonly on Facebook look credible but they spread false information leading to unwanted scenarios."</p> <p><i>PA<sup>15</sup></i>: "Since I cannot trust the information anymore, definitely irereject ko na and I will not apply or follow it, hindi ko babaguhin yung kasalukuyang alam ko na and I will just continue kung ano na yung nakasanayan o nakalakhan ko."</p> <p><i>PB<sup>15</sup></i>: "Some or a lot of fake news is circulating in social media."</p> <p><i>PC<sup>18</sup></i>: "The information is unfiltered thus could lead to a bigger health problem as evidenced by the recent covid vaccine scare."</p> <p><i>PD<sup>19</sup></i>: "In reality, talamak talaga</p>
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online yung fake news so dapat talaga maging maingat kasi mahirap din madalas idistinguish kung alin yung totoo sa hindi."

*PD<sup>20</sup>*: "If verified and proven true and correct naman yung mga information then it is safe to try. If maging effective and beneficial sa health, then I will surely adapt to it."

*PE<sup>14</sup>*: "Not all uploaded videos provide accurate information."

*PE<sup>15</sup>*: "The information is misleading kasi generalized lang at hindi personalized yung assessment and so it is hard to apply to self, ending, I am scared and so I won't believe and I won't change my current ways na tested ko na."

*PF<sup>8</sup>*: "Very common na sa online world yung false info and fake news kaya hindi talaga ako agad-agad naniniwala without verifying the whole story."

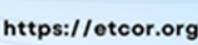
*PF<sup>9</sup>*: "Delikado yung ganitong mga information, instead na makatulong eh malamang maka-harm pa."

All the participants reported a common experience of a rampant circulation of misinformation on social media platforms. Their answers are similar and generally come up with expressing social media as a risky and unreliable source of health information. The participants shared why misinformation does not help people in different aspects. The advent of social media has undoubtedly transformed the way we consume information, facilitating instant access to news and updates from around the world. However, with this convenience comes the darker side of social media, the rampant spread of misinformation and fake news. Fake news is one such danger. Even though it hasn't been verified, fake news has a respectable and polished appearance, making it difficult for individuals to constantly tell it apart from real/true news (Kumar et al., 2018). Social media's viral nature allows information to spread rapidly and reach a massive audience within minutes. While this can be beneficial for spreading genuine news and important updates, it also means that false information, if not promptly corrected, can have far-reaching consequences, and worse is irreversible health consequences. According to a study, social media primarily makes it possible for false information to spread widely across all social media platforms. The person who reads these false reports and misleading information suffers harm as a result (Shu et al, 2017). Misinformation can quickly gain traction through shares, retweets, and likes, perpetuating falsehoods and distorting public perception. People are more likely to encounter health information that reinforces their existing health beliefs and behaviors, leading to confirmation bias. This phenomenon makes users susceptible to accepting and spreading misinformation that aligns with their preconceived notions, further polarizing society. A study said that the majority of fake news is directed at a particular segment of the population with the intention of advancing a particular ideology through inciting divisive opinions and polarizing society (Chen & Sharma, 2015). Social media platforms do not have a strict level of editorial oversight or fact-checking mechanisms. Information can be shared without proper verification, leading to the dissemination of unverified or blatantly false news. The absence of credible sources and fact-checking procedures allows misinformation to thrive on social media.





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## The Healthy Adaptation

**Table 6**

*5<sup>th</sup> Major Theme: The Healthy Adaptation*

Theme	Description	Quotations
The Healthy Adaptation	Changing towards the optimum healthy body state and behavior	<p><i>PA<sup>20</sup></i>: "Dati hindi talaga ako palainum ng tubig, pero simula ng napanood ko yung video online discussing the importance of drinking a lot of water, ayun lagi ko na ngayong sinisigurado na nakakainom ako ng marami."</p> <p><i>PA<sup>21</sup></i>: "Dahil sa mga nababasa kong posts online from the medical experts, nagkaroon ako ng mga idea about sa mga home remedies and over the counter meds na pweded kong inumin para lunasan yung mga simple kong sakit."</p> <p><i>PB<sup>21</sup></i>: "I have read an article that you need to walk 8000 steps to have a good healthy body, now I am targeting 10,000 steps every day."</p> <p><i>PC<sup>24</sup></i>: "I have peers who showed hesitant in getting the vaccine but I relied on the posted evidence online of the clinical trials which convinced me to get vaccinated which helped me and protected me from getting or acquiring the covid-19 during its peak."</p> <p><i>PC<sup>27</sup></i>: "Itinigil ko na yung labis na pagpupuyat dahil sa mga napanood at nabasa ko sa Facebook."</p> <p><i>PD<sup>24</sup></i>: "Hindi na ako ngayon pala kain sa mga fast food chains, marami kasi akong nabasa online about the bad effects sa katawan natin ng mga processed foods."</p> <p><i>PE<sup>25</sup></i>: "Now at least dahil sa mga information na shine-share online, I have more knowledge now of the foods not to eat to avoid getting higher risk of having cancer."</p> <p><i>PF<sup>23</sup></i>: "Nainspire ako doon sa mga napapanood ko na they value exercise kaya ang gaganda ng hubog ng katawan nila."</p> <p><i>PF<sup>24</sup></i>: "I make it a point na din na nakakapag exercise ako 1 to 2 times in a week at namomonitor ko yung timbang ko."</p>

All of the participants confirmed that social media does have an influence on their health behaviors. The pervasive presence of social media platforms in people's lives has led to meaningful impacts on various aspects of young men's health behaviors. Social media serves as a powerful tool for disseminating health information, promoting awareness about various health issues, and sharing preventive measures. Positive health behaviors, such as regular exercise and nutritious eating, are often showcased on social media by fitness influencers, vloggers, and individuals sharing their personal health journeys. These stories of success and progress can inspire and motivate others to adopt similar behaviors and make positive changes in their lives. As supported by an academic study, media use can influence the acquisition of health knowledge and individual health practices. The "Stanford Heart Disease Prevention Program" is commonly regarded as the beginning of health communication research, and its findings suggest that people who receive a lot of health information from the media and those who have more contact with the media can readily change their health behaviors. To some extent, social media can interfere with individual health behaviors, and they encompass a wide range of disease prevention behaviors, including physical fitness and exercise, anti-smoking habits, and AIDS prevention (Yang, 2017).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This study provided a comprehensive understanding of the perception of Generation Z Filipinos on the utilization of social media in health information dissemination, health education, and health promotion, how social media influence the health behavior of the said population including their insights about the positive and negative impacts of it and does social media have influence to health behaviors of Gen Z Filipinos. Coming up with the results of this study, the researchers were able to conclude that social media can positively influence the health behaviors of



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Generation Z Filipinos. Statements and literature have highlighted the positive contributions of social media to health behaviors. Social media platforms serve as powerful vehicles for disseminating health-related information, enabling the widespread sharing of preventive measures, treatment options, and general health knowledge. Users are exposed to a wide array of information that can empower them to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Health and fitness influencers, as well as individuals sharing their personal journeys, can motivate and inspire others to adopt healthier lifestyles. These narratives of success, combined with visual evidence of progress, encourage individuals to engage in regular exercise, maintain balanced diets, and strive for overall well-being. At the same time, research has illuminated several negative influences of social media on health behaviors. The democratization of content creation on social media can lead to the dissemination of inaccurate health information. Users may rely on unverified sources for health advice, leading to misguided self-diagnosis, self-treatment, and potential harm.

Due to the restrictions of qualitative research, this study was only limited to six (6) participants – belonging to the Generation Z age group. The framework of the study may be improved by using other types of participants who belong to other age generations; or participants may be chosen from experienced persons or professionals other than a general population to have an in-depth understanding of how social media affect them on different aspects of behavioral health. The study may also be enhanced by applying the focus of the study, which is the effect of social media, to a specific situation, experience, or event like a particular global or social issue. This enables future studies to compare and monitor the changes in the behaviors of social media users and the effects of social media on them depending on a given situation. Other experiences may also be explored. Moreover, this study can be improved by using alternative techniques and research approaches related to the focus of the study. Other types of interview techniques may also help to improve the reliability of data collected from the participants. Finally, this study can be improved by focusing on the other parameters of social media.

While social media can be a valuable tool for health education, motivation, and health behavior modification, individuals are being advised to be aware of the potential negative impacts it can have on body image, mental health, and overall well-being. Practicing critical thinking, being mindful of one's social media consumption, and seeking information from reliable sources are essential steps to ensure a positive and balanced influence of social media on health behaviors.

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