

# The Relationship Between Social Media Platforms And Health Screening Awareness Among Gen Y And Z In Malaysia

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## Abstract

This research aims to investigate how social media platforms can boost health screening awareness among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia. A total of 400 Gen Y and Z were selected from five zones in Malaysia. The study used convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling. Data collection was carried out using online convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling. The results indicate that social media platforms and features effectively publicised health screening awareness among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia. More precisely, there is a significant relationship between social media platforms and understanding of health screening among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Social media, health screening, Gen Y and Z, Malaysia

## INTRODUCTION

Increasing adoption of behaviours associated with Western lifestyles among Malaysians is linked to increased cancer risk (Schliemann et al., 2020). According to Micha et al. (2014), Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, has one of the highest intakes of saturated fatty acids globally. It shows that the lifestyle of Malaysians is unhealthy and may cause potential diseases without noticing.

According to The Global Cancer Observatory (2020), cancer incidence among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia is expected to increase 11% by 2040 (from 7,955 cases to 8,833 cases). These cancer cases could be prevented by identifying the symptoms earlier and seeking solutions. Therefore, raising health awareness is essential in cancer prevention to identify any modifiable risk factors. To avoid any potential diseases, health screening is necessary for everyone. According to Wilson et al. (1968), health screening is the presumptive identification of unrecognised disease or defect

by applying tests, examinations, or other procedures that can be used rapidly.

Health screening sorts out people who probably have a disease from those who do not. This does not mean that health screening is intended to be diagnostic; people with positive or suspicious findings must be referred to a doctor for diagnosis and necessary treatment. The purpose of screening is to identify people in a healthy population who are at higher risk of a health problem or a condition so that early treatment can be offered. This, in turn, may lead to better health outcomes for some individuals who undergo health screening (Raffle et al., 2019). However, the awareness of health screening among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia is still low.

Routine health screening is one of the keys to lowering chronic disease-related healthcare. Screenings for diseases can help avoid and detect diseases at an earlier, more treatable stage. Health attitudes and awareness are positively associated with health

behaviours, stimulating and discouraging people from using health screening services. People who know they are at risk of developing a chronic condition are more inclined to take preventative measures. Being diagnosed with a chronic disease would be exceedingly distressing for their families, partially due to the enormous financial implications of such conditions. People have shockingly poor knowledge of chronic diseases, which could be why they don't get necessary health checks (Chien et al., 2020).

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to a research, *Factors Associated with Non-Participation in a Health Screening Programme and its Barriers: Findings from the Community Empowers the Nation Programme (KOSPEN), Malaysia 2016* by Kuay (2020), stated that younger age groups were more likely to be non-participants in health screening program compared to those who aged 60 years and above. Most of the respondents said that they were not aware that health screening was conducted in their areas. It indicates that the younger generation is unaware of health screening and is not even interested in it.

Therefore, raising Gen Y and Z's health screening awareness is essential. Improving attendance at health screening programs is challenging and requires new strategies (Burioni et al., 2015). Thus, more efforts should be made to create awareness for behaviour change among Gen Y and Z. The current mediums to promote health screening are websites and social media. Most medical centres (Sunway Medical Centre, Prince Court Medical Centre etc.) publish information about the health screening services they provide so that people can understand more about health screening. However, the website is too passive to promote health screening because it could not reach people who are not concerned about the importance of health screening, like Gen Y and Z. The use of websites to promote health screening is to target people who are interested

in health screening only (Roomi, 2020), it could not raise awareness among Gen Y and Z.

Meanwhile, social media has become popular for promoting products and services. Clinics and medical centres also use social media such as Facebook and Instagram to promote health screening. They try to use social media to make more impressions in the targeted population to maximise their reach. But still, typically, social media advertising is not effective enough to promote health screening awareness among Gen Y and Z because the algorithms in social media platforms only recommend content that is potentially interesting for the users (Golino, 2021). If the user did not search any keyword related to health screening, the algorithms would not promote any health screening advertisement to the user.

The new media alternative technology such as Facebook and Twitter can change the perceptions and KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice) about the lack of awareness on health screening in Malaysia. Facebook is one of the current communication mediums used by most healthcare centres or hospitals to promote health screening, but the previous results were ineffective. However, Facebook is still selected because it brings many benefits to the publicising process of health screening. Meanwhile, Twitter's active users always stay in the know because Twitter interfaces their users with the most recent, real-time trends and contributes to social listening. In this case, it is also an extraordinary way to get a read on the health-based topic's public reputation.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Effectiveness of Facebook and Twitter**

According to Statista (2022), Facebook has approximately 2.93 billion active users as of the first quarter of 2022. Out of the number, it was discovered that 25.2% and 48.9% of users belong to Gen Z and Gen Y, respectively. Therefore, this has proven that most of these two generations constituted the most enormous,

most significant and constantly active on social media. It means that Facebook also has the great potential to break into the health domain and promote health screening to shape and influence one individual's or user's perception of social norms on health behaviour (Zhang et al., 2013).

Facebook is now the largest social media platform, used by more than two billion people monthly (Lua, 2022). This indicates that approximately 36.9% of Facebook users are from the world's population. Furthermore, the statistics published in Meta's advertising resources also stated that the number of Facebook users in Malaysia at the beginning of 2022 was 21.70 million (Kemp, 2022). Therefore, it clearly shows that Facebook could engage in health screening messages with many people.

The effectiveness of engaging users with health issues through Facebook is also visibly shown. Ventola's (2014) study found that some Facebook groups are open to discussing specific medical conditions. Health organisations, including public or non-governmental authorities, are also using Facebook for health promotion and advertising to spread awareness about the importance of health (Park et al., 2011). In addition, a preventive health tool launched by Facebook in collaboration with U.S health organisations offered preventive health guidance, reminders and suggested moves according to the user's age and gender (Landi, 2019). Through this, users could manage their health issues better by this integrated health feature as it connects users to health resources and check-up reminders.

Besides, Facebook also provides some tools and features that provide an easier way for marketers to share any information. According to Taylor (2021), the Facebook Ads feature has had great success for marketers and is a powerful marketing tool. In this context, Facebook Ads features such as Third-Party Tag Integration, Facebook Analytics and Audience

Insights can help track the type of audiences who will be more interested in the health-based topic. On top of that, the features could assist us in constructing the ideal target group and assembling interests, demographics, Page likes and Facebook usage data (Taylor, 2021). Thus, without doubt, the Facebook Ads feature can increase the exposure of the company's message through its Facebook content and indirectly boost traffic to its core website content.

Robinson (2021) revealed that Twitter is one of the top four social platforms worldwide, with about 300 million users. Currently, Twitter had a total of 4.40 million Malaysian users at the beginning of 2022, which indicates that 13.3% of the Malaysian population are reaching Twitter's ad (Kemp, 2022). In this context, the large number of active users showed that the popularity of this social media platform is still striking, especially among users that are interested in breaking news, business, politics and marketing (Robinson, 2021).

Moreover, the features on Twitter always bring fun to the active users, and it could quickly get everyone along with their iconic elements, which are "retweet" and "quote tweet". This could indirectly engage users to the published message and reach new audiences when anyone retweets the advertisement. The latest feature from Twitter – Spaces, could also boost the exposure of the health information because it is a new way to engage target audiences by having live audio conversations (Siska et al, 2020; Zote, 2021). Zote (2021) further mentioned that Spaces could help create a stronger connection among users from different communities with the discussed topic.

Ola and Sedig (2020) state that health-related issues and information are always discussed by individuals, health organisations, businesses, news organisations and other interest groups through Twitter. Furthermore, observational research on health issues on Twitter indicates that numerous formal and

casual discussions occur (Schein et al., 2010). Ventola (2014) further mentioned that Twitter has conjointly been brought in at medical conferences to discuss and enhance spokesperson presentations by publishing real-time opinions from audiences. Hence, it is convinced that Twitter is an effective platform to engage audiences with health awareness. As a result, the knowledge on health screening awareness could be spread widely through the two social media platforms chosen: Facebook and Twitter.

#### Gen Y and Z Screening Awareness

Publicity on health screening awareness to Gen Y and Z clearly states that generation Y and Z is the targeted stakeholder. Millennials, or Generation Y, were born in or after the 1980s and entered the workforce in the 2000s. Gen Z comprises young adults born in 1995 or later who are better educated, skilled users of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and familiar with the world of social media. This is the first generation to grow up in a digital world, where people live online and engage with their favourite companies through electronic technology (Bernstein, 2015). Generation Z is a technologically advanced generation that sees technology as a tool (Bergh & Behrer, 2016).

Health difficulties, particularly non-communicable diseases (NCD), are becoming more prevalent among Malaysian millennials. NCDs are illnesses that are not contagious and cannot be spread from one to another and are typically chronic diseases which endure for a long time and evolve slowly. A survey conducted by Mind Share Partners (Stieg, 2019), a non-profit that works with businesses to promote mental health services, investigates the impact of mental health concerns on employees. Half of the millennials and 75% of Generation Z respondents had left a job due to mental health difficulties, both willingly and grudgingly. According to this report, Millennials and Gen Z are more concerned with mental health than physical health.

Many people are keen to search vast internet resources for health information. On the other hand, millions would rather not know whether they are at risk for certain diseases by taking a medical test (Hoffman, 2013). They rarely seek medical advice about their health or undergo routine screening tests. Consequently, chronic diseases are afflicting an increasing number of young people. If left untreated, these health issues might lead to chronic and potentially fatal conditions. The last National Health and Morbidity Survey uncovered some surprising details about millennial and Gen Z health: 8.6% are diagnosed with diabetes, 14.7% suffer from hypertension, and 13.9% are categorised as obese.

According to Test (2022), Millennials & Gen Zs have a different perspective on health than others, right down to the definition of the term. Previous generations associated healthiness with "not getting sick," whereas millennials equate it with eating well and exercising. They're more concerned with preserving their daily health than getting in for their annual physical. To the millennials and Gen Z, preventative care is more important, and they preferred to go for a daily exercise than go to the doctor or do any screening test.

## METHOD

### Research Design

Due to its purpose and goals, a quantitative research design was used in the present study. In addition, a correlational study design was applied in line with the research objective.

### Respondents

The population for this study consisted of 400 respondents recruited from five zones in Malaysia; Northern, Central, East Coast, Southern and East Malaysia. Survey respondents were recruited through convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling. A convenience sample simply includes the individuals who happen to be most

accessible to the research. While similar to a convenience sample, a voluntary selection is mainly based on ease of access.

**Instruments**

This study will participate by 400 respondents comprising youth aged 18 and 30 from different demographic backgrounds. In addition, the questionnaire forms were distributed through online Google Forms. Thus, with the large population in that area and the ability to internet access, individuals to connect to the online social media platforms will achieve the study research objective.

Respondents must provide their written informed consent and are assured of their participation anonymity. A structured questionnaire will be used to elicit information about the study objectives. The online Google form will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

**Data Analysis**

The quantitative data will be analysed using statistical analysis SPSS. This analysis determines demographic relationships, communication channel preferences, and effectiveness.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

Data analysis was mainly conducted to fulfil the presumption of running the SPSS. After that, the SPSS measurement model and the structural model were assessed.

Table 1 below highlights that Gen Y and Z in Malaysia spend between 5 to 12 hours on Facebook and more than 13 hours on Twitter.

Table 1: Gen Y and Z Usage of social media by Hours

	<b>Continuou sly (&gt;13 hours)</b>	<b>Often (9-12 hours)</b>	<b>Sometimes (5-8 hours)</b>	<b>Rarely (1-4 hours)</b>	<b>Less 60 minutes</b>	<b>Never</b>
Facebook	44 (10.8%)	108 (26.6%)	112 (27.6%)	87 (21.4%)	34 (8.4%)	15 (5.2%)
Twitter	169 (41.6%)	78 (19.2%)	62 (15.3%)	77 (19.0%)	11 (2.7%)	3 (2.2%)

This study explores the frequency of social media usage among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia. Table 2 explains that most of the respondents very frequent and frequently share information (84%) on social media platforms, besides that

to get information (82%) and for learning purposes (81%). Meanwhile, Gen Y and Z in Malaysia are never used social media platforms to access porn sites (74%), disseminate false news (73%), and incite hatred (71%).

Table 2: Frequency and purposes of social media usage among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia

	<b>Never (%)</b>	<b>Sometimes (%)</b>	<b>Not Sure (%)</b>	<b>Frequently (%)</b>	<b>Very Frequently (%)</b>
for entertainment	3	14	13	43	27
to manipulate	64	13	15	6	3

to deliver information	5	12	12	47	25
to incite hatred	71	9	11	6	4
to get information	5	9	5	41	41
to disseminate false news	73	8	9	6	4
to persuade	33	17	24	18	8
to imitate negative behaviour	71	9	10	7	3
to educate	6	11	18	40	25
to invite others' privacy	65	13	11	8	4
for learning	5	7	8	47	34
to access porn sites	74	9	9	5	4
to build friendships	3	8	12	44	32
to share information	2	8	6	47	37

Table 3 below shows the activities on social media among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia. Most respondents like to use the hashtag (#) to get information, learn, and share information. Additionally, hashtag (#) indicated the highest

percentage, which is 82.7%, compared to other activities, such as tagged to share information (75.8%), joining group page (71.2%), 'share' or 'repost' post entry (62.3%), 'like' post entry (48.5%), and post the comment (34.5%).

Table 3: Activities on social media among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia

	Yes	No
"Like" post entry	241 (48.5%)	159 (28.3%)
"Share" or "Repost" post entry	206 (62.3%)	106 (37.7%)
Post comment	137 (34.5%)	263 (65.5%)
Join group page	286 (71.2%)	114 (28.8%)
Tagged to share information	305 (75.8%)	95 (24.1%)
Using a hashtag (#)	333 (82.7%)	67 (17.2%)

To evaluate the effectiveness of messages through video on social media platforms among Gen Y and Z in Malaysia, table 4 shows that most of the respondents actively post a video link on social media platforms; as indicated, 67.7% of respondents like sharing information

through video. In addition, 65% of respondents agree that information through video is easier to understand than printed media, and 57.5% concur that video messages are more influenced.

Table 4: Respondent's preferences for publicity through video

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
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Video messages uploaded on social media are more influential than print media.	50 (12.5%)	120 (30%)	230 (57.5%)
I can easily understand information through video compared to print media.	28 (5.5%)	118 (29.5%)	260 (65%)
I like to post a video link	37 (9.1%)	92 (23.2%)	274 (67.7%)

Twitter and Facebook are still currently the type of preferred messages by Gen Y and Z in Malaysia. Table 5 indicated entertaining content obtained the highest numbers of frequency and percentage. Out of 263

respondents with 65.8%, indicated that entertaining content is the most preferred type of message, followed by storytelling for educational purposes (63.7%) and information with memes and humour (61%) followed.

Table 5: Type of messages

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Story-telling education purpose	21 (5.3%)	124 (31%)	255 (63.7%)
Information with memes and humour	55 (13.8%)	101 (25.2%)	244 (61%)
Entertaining content	22 (5.5%)	115 (28.7%)	263 (65.8%)

**Discussion**

Social media is indeed a platform where people refer to it to find additional information and current issues in addition to existing news platforms in Malaysia. This research concurs with the study carried out by Golino, 2021 that stated social media advertising content must be effective to promote health screening awareness among Gen Y and Z. This gives an advantage to the health sector in promoting the importance of health care and health screening. Many health issues are successfully played out on social media platforms to raise community awareness, especially among generations Z and Y. Health organisations can use social media platforms to promote healthy lifestyle choices, identify disease outbreaks, explore human

behaviour and assess public perceptions of health issues.

Features such as hashtags can further elevate the health screening market, cultivating the practice of conducting health screening as recommended. This is because the hashtag will help the issues central to rising on the What’s Happening feature, especially on Twitter. Through these features, the topic of health screening can be highlighted. Using hashtags linked to conversations and issues can increase the chances of someone interested in the event getting involved with the Tweet. Twitter will also allow for a worldwide trend and enable the press to cover it. Twitter retweets help by sharing Tweets with all followers and the share button on Facebook to indicate that they are

reposting someone else's content. Twitter retweets and Facebook share buttons also support awareness to happen quickly. Retweets and shares can be used to garner attention from Gen Z and Gen Y.

To promote healthcare information, particularly health screening to the Gen Y and Z, it is essential to know about their media habits and experience with generational marketing. At this point, social media stands out because it offers various platforms to engage in online health community communications, such as chat rooms, newsgroups, forums or post types. Besides that, Facebook has also been adopted by public health authorities and organisations to promote health and behaviour changes.

There are several ways that healthcare agencies or organisations can utilise social media features as strategies to achieve their goals. First and foremost, making reels and developing different types of social media posts can achieve the outcome of promoting health screening to Gen Y and Gen Z. They are avid consumers of video content. They will watch videos to seek out the information they're interested in. Thus, health screening can be promoted through story-telling education videos to draw adolescents' attention and raise their awareness.

Therefore, public health authorities and organisations should focus on utilising the algorithm according to the preferences and insights of Gen Y and Z to promote health screening. In addition, making health information memes with humour and entertaining content can create a high engaging outcome to reach out to Gen Y and Z.

## LIMITATION

The current analysis is quantitative. It is recommended that further research be carried out to gain insights into all viewpoints of the phenomena under review through a qualitative or mixed-methods design. Future researchers should investigate the relationship between the

current study's variables. Also, this study selected Facebook and Twitter as social media platforms. It is proposed that other social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube also should be further investigated.

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