How augmented reality affects Gen Z's online behaviour on social media platforms

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Social media and internet use trends have been dramatic in recent years, especially among the youngest generation. The changes described above are not coincidental but have their origins in the core principles of sociology, providing a novel lens through which to examine the development of social media platforms and the transformation of Generation Z's online habits in the context of chinese international students. However, Wijaya et al. (2020), mentioned that the sociological theory of "social construction" thought provides a stable foundation for this investigation. The theory argues that the members of society actively create and build their shared reality via communicating with one another. Schwarz (2022) states that customer segmentation based on a demographic factor such as age is acceptable and modern in emerging innovations since new generations become more accustomed to technology and their everyday usage as they grow up with them. Individuals born between 1995-2012 are considered part of "Generation Z". Additionally, they account for 40% of the global consumer market. Generation Z, referred to as "tech natives," are heavily involved in the digital realm and receptive to new technology like augmented reality (AR).

Innovations in the digital marketing landscape have been dramatic over the last decade due to technical advancements. As per Reinikainen et al. (2020), analysing social media and the online behaviours of Generation Z provides an intriguing sociological prism through which to examine the dynamic interaction between technological advances, lifestyle, and humanity. For social constructionists, the social environment in which we experience reality is crucial to forming our perceptions of that reality (Sun et al. 2022). Hence, social media platforms serve as the blank slates upon which members of Generation Z have experimented and refined novel modes of interaction with one another and with the larger world at large, all of which have played a part in the continuous production of their digital identities and the broader cultural environment.

Augmented reality has spread rapidly, positively affecting various industries and activities. In this context, Kumar (2022) stated that the expanding popularity of augmented reality has drastically influenced Generation Z, transforming how they communicate with the world surrounding them. Since they were newborns in the digital age, members of Generation Z have taken to "augmented reality (AR)" swiftly. The generation is expanding to embrace a unique dimension of comprehensive possibilities due to "augmented reality (AR)" applications that

bring scientific and historical topics to life in the classroom, AR-powered social media lenses and interactive games. However, Ameen et al. (2021) highlighted that Generation Z's social existence and purchasing habits are all being affected by augmented reality. Generation Z can now visually try on clothing and accessories or imagine furnishings in their residences using augmented reality "try-before-you-buy" capabilities, which has changed online shopping. The tech-savvy demographic particularly values AR's social features, such as multiplayer AR games and shared augmented reality circumstances, since these allow them to engage with their friends and peers in exciting new ways.

From sociological perspective, Gen Z are used to using cutting-edge technology in novel ways and actively participating in social media platforms to spread their ideas. Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest are popular social shopping apps among the Z generation. On TikTok, "#amazonfinds" has more than 6.7 billion views, while "#tiktokmademebuyit" has more than 2.3 billion. It has been found that nearly 30% of Gen Z's said a simple checkout procedure was highly significant to them (Forbes, 2023). Hence, it highlighted the importance of identifying influencing factors of AR technology implementation and its impact on Gen Z's social media behaviour. In addition, Javornik et al. (2022) stated that understanding how Gen Z's engagement with social media and services delivered through AR technologies influences their perception of themselves, purchasing habits, and sense of self-worth is crucial for the future of the cosmetics industry and the self-esteem of the consumers that comprise this demographic. Nevertheless, there is a lack of study on the developmental psychological elements of Gen Z's interactions with cutting-edge technology (Ameen et al. 2022). There is a lack of studies analysing how the services supplied by beauty firms and made possible by the combination of AR and social media affect how Gen Z handle their public personas, sense of self-worth, and propensity to purchase.

1.2 Aim

Social constructionism's theoretical implications are made in this research, in addition to the findings' practical implications for influencing Generation Z's social behaviour and sense of self-worth via AR technologies throughout the customer experience (Kumar, 2022). Initially, this research expands the existing body of knowledge on topics like impression management, consumer behaviour, and self-expression by investigating the potential for improvement in these areas via the use of cutting-edge technology in the context of the customer service process (Ameen et al. 2022). Moreover, it adds to the literature on the use of augmented reality to

improve customer service by delving into how this technology has affected the way consumers of Chinese international students (Gen Z) see the augmentation of services, their online behaviour, and their social media confidence.

For the young generations, particularly Generation Z, social media has become integral to everyday life. The influence of social media on consumers' online buying behaviour and identity creation has attracted significant attention and debate, and "augmented reality (AR)" innovation is only one example of the enticing digital technologies emerging due to technological advancements (Nazarova and Nalibaeva, 2022). Investigation issues in the modern period concentrate on how Generation Z creates and uses their digital identity, engages with companies and advertising, develops their consumption ideals, and shares their ideas via online expression. The research focuses on the habits and mindsets of Generation Z (chinease international student) online, namely what are significant most to them.

Research Questions:

- Why Gen Z use AR on social media?
- How does social media affect chinese international student's (gen Z) consumer behavior?
- How do social media AR impact gen Z's online identity?

1.3 Structure

Maintaining a structural process is necessary during the investigation to get authentic information. In the introduction section, the background of this research, underlying aspects and questions are highlighted. The literature section gives insight into this investigation's conceptual framework, which helps explore key influencing factors and social perspectives of Gen Z's online social media behaviour. Moreover, the methodology section highlighted the relevant investigative strategies that accelerated the investigation.
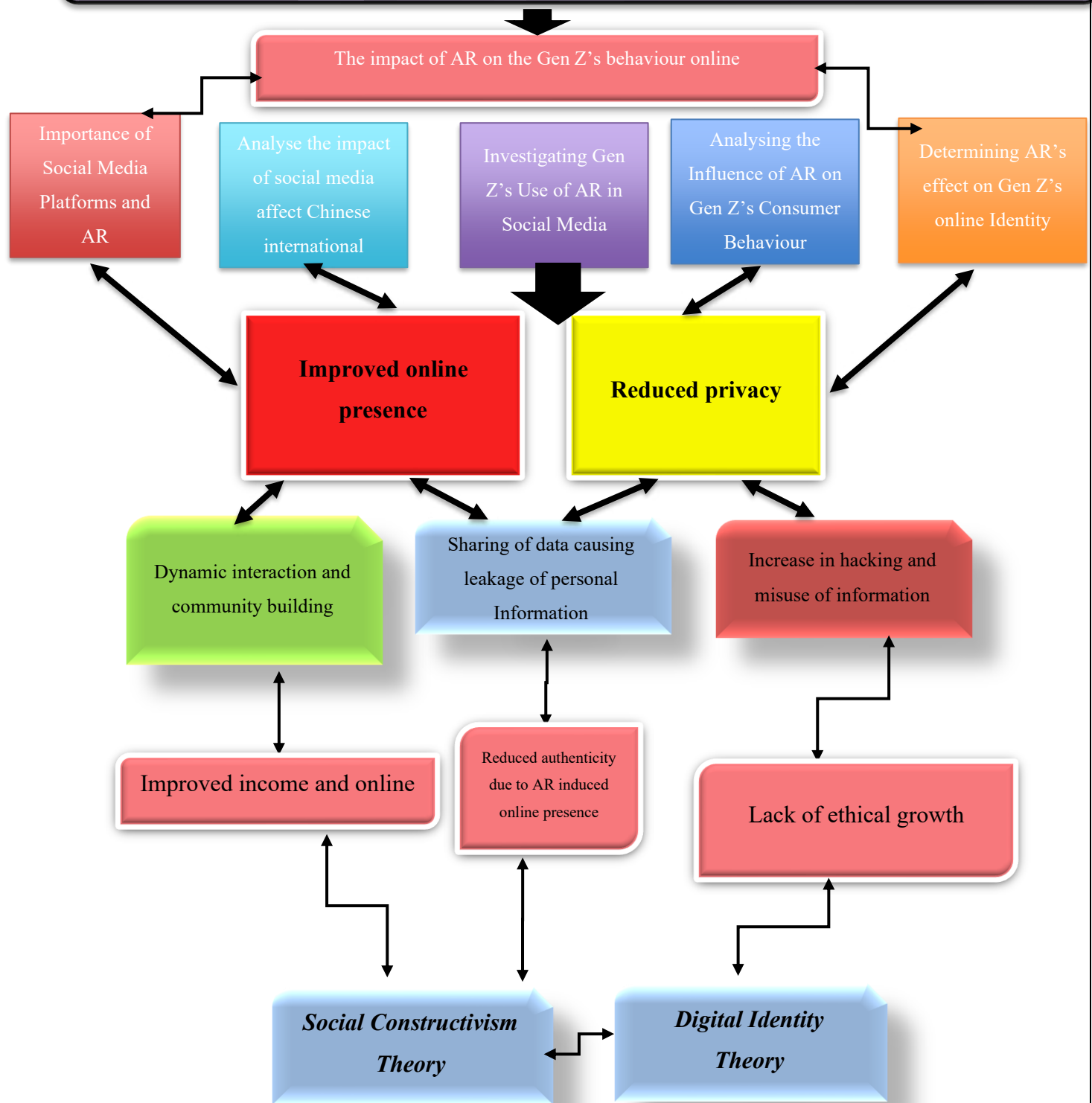
2.0 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

The development of technology and growth of social media platforms have multiplied rapidly over the years. This chapter focuses on the relation between Gen Z and the use of Augmented Reality (AR) that has an impact on their behaviour as a consumer and online identity. AR technology uses tools that can impact the lifestyle and choices of Gen Z users (Campaignindia, 2023). Therefore, as a part of this research, the literature review chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of these dynamics and identifies any existing gaps that need to be discussed.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A "conceptual framework" is considered as a structure that is used in academic research to gain a concise understanding of the research topic. Researchers use conceptual frameworks to analyse and interpret the findings of research and gain prominent understanding of the outcome of the study. In this research, the conceptual framework provides an outline of the relationships between the Gen Z users and AR and estimates ideas and theories that are an essential part of the investigation. From this investigation, it is evident that Gen Z refers to individuals who were born between the year "1995 to 2012" (Indiatoday, 2023). This generation has been determined based on their upbringing in the digital era. However, AR was introduced as a training tool for the airline industry during the 1990s (sciencedirect, 2023). Recently, AR has been considered as a popular technology that is widely used in "social and educational" contexts. Therefore, this research encapsulates the benefits and challenges faced by Gen Z's while using AR in social media platforms.

Apart from understanding the importance of AR as a tool in influencing Gen Z users in social media platforms, it is essential to understand its influence on their consumer behaviour and online identity. As such, the "social constructivism and the digital identity theories" have been critically discussed as a part of the investigation. These theories help analyse how individuals actively construct their reality through social interactions. Additionally, AR also play a vital role in evaluating how Gen Z's are capable of shaping their online personas. Hence, it is evident that the implementation of relevant theories provides superior understanding of the effects of Aumented Reality on the behaviour of Gen Z's and is consistently used throughout the course of the literature.

How augmented reality affects Gen Z's online behaviour on social media platforms

The impact of AR on the Gen Z's behaviour online

Importance of Social Media Platforms and AR

Analyse the impact of social media affect Chinese international

Investigating Gen Z's Use of AR in Social Media

Analysing the Influence of AR on Gen Z's Consumer Behaviour

Determining AR's effect on Gen Z's online Identity

Improved online presence

Reduced privacy

Dynamic interaction and community building

Sharing of data causing leakage of personal Information

Increase in hacking and misuse of information

Improved income and online

Reduced authenticity due to AR induced online presence

Lack of ethical growth

Social Constructivism Theory

Digital Identity Theory

2.3 Gen Z's Use of AR in Social Media

Figure 1: Social Constructivism Theory

(Source: Cdn.sketchbubble, 2023)

The integration of augmented reality with social media platforms has become a prominent trend in recent times. This is seen especially among Gen Z users, wherein technology and social media has reshaped the way Gen Z interacts and behaves online. However, it is important to explore the concept and development of social media over the years to understand the application of AR and how it has become an integral part of the online interest of Gen Z users. With the development of technology, social media has evolved rapidly. Currently, there are numerous social media platforms that include "Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok" and many more (Ortiz-Ospina and Roser, 2023). Generally social media platforms help users to create and share their ideas and creativity online with individuals from all parts of the globe. This interaction of individuals on social media platforms can be expressed with the "social

constructivism theory" which demonstrates how human development is related to the interactions of individuals with one another (Lombardo and Kantola, 2021). This is similar to the case of using digital media platforms as it enhances community building which is an integral part of the "social constructivism theory" as relevant in Figure 1. However, the development of social media and the application of AR often affects individuals negatively. It is relevant in the case of Gen Z users wherein social media serves as a digital platform for self-expression and identity formation.
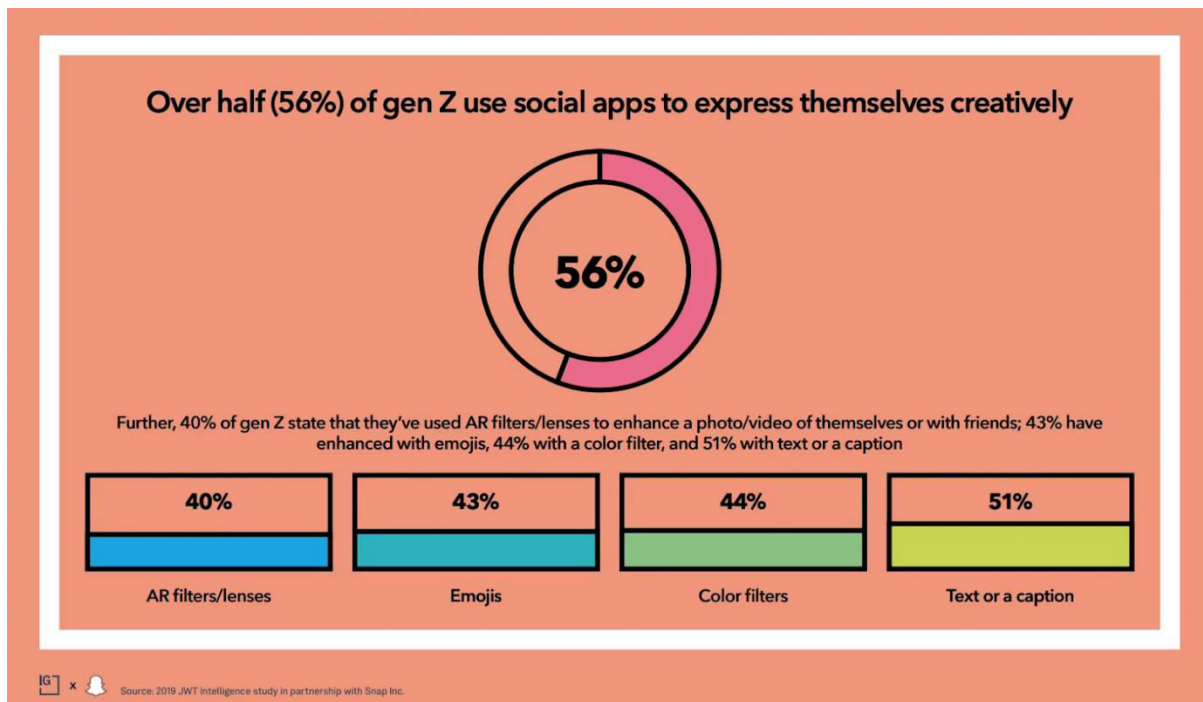

Figure 2: Gen Z's use of social media for self-expression

(Source: Arinsider, 2023)

AR has an impactful outcome on all Gen Z users, whether or not from a Chinese background. The introduction of AR has revolutionized the way individuals interact with the digital world. They often curate their online personalities that sometimes differ from their original being (Munsch, 2021). On the other hand, by using augmented reality, around "56% Gen Z users" are able to find motivation and interests that help them to gain creativity and self-expression as seen in Figure 2. This is similar in China wherein AR have had a transformative impact on its users. This is more specifically in Gen Z users as the fusion of AR and social media has changed the way they communicate and perceive reality. Some of the most common social media platforms in China include TikTok, WeChat and Douyin (Cui and Kertész, 2021). These platforms

incorporate air filters and apex which allow the users to enhance and modify their appearances which mostly has a negative effect on the mindset of the users. Most of the Gen Z users use such filters to maintain their online identities. Although the usage of such filters may promote creativity it is often seen that most of the Chinese Gen Z users suffer from low self-confidence regarding the beauty standards as a result of using such filters in real-time (Cui and Kertész, 2021). Similarly, beyond personal expression, air has also transformed the way Chinese Gen Z users consume social media content, for instance, as seen in the case of Snapchat's AR filters, which allows them to participate in viral trends. On a positive note, such filters can often be interactive and can help in building a community while promoting a source of entertainment. Additionally, air can be used by uses to create visually interactive stories by overlaying digital animations. This again helps users to interact with one another while conveying messages in innovative ways. Therefore, it is relevant that the implementation of AR on social media platforms have affected the Gen Z users both positively and negatively, and has a profound impact on their online behaviour.

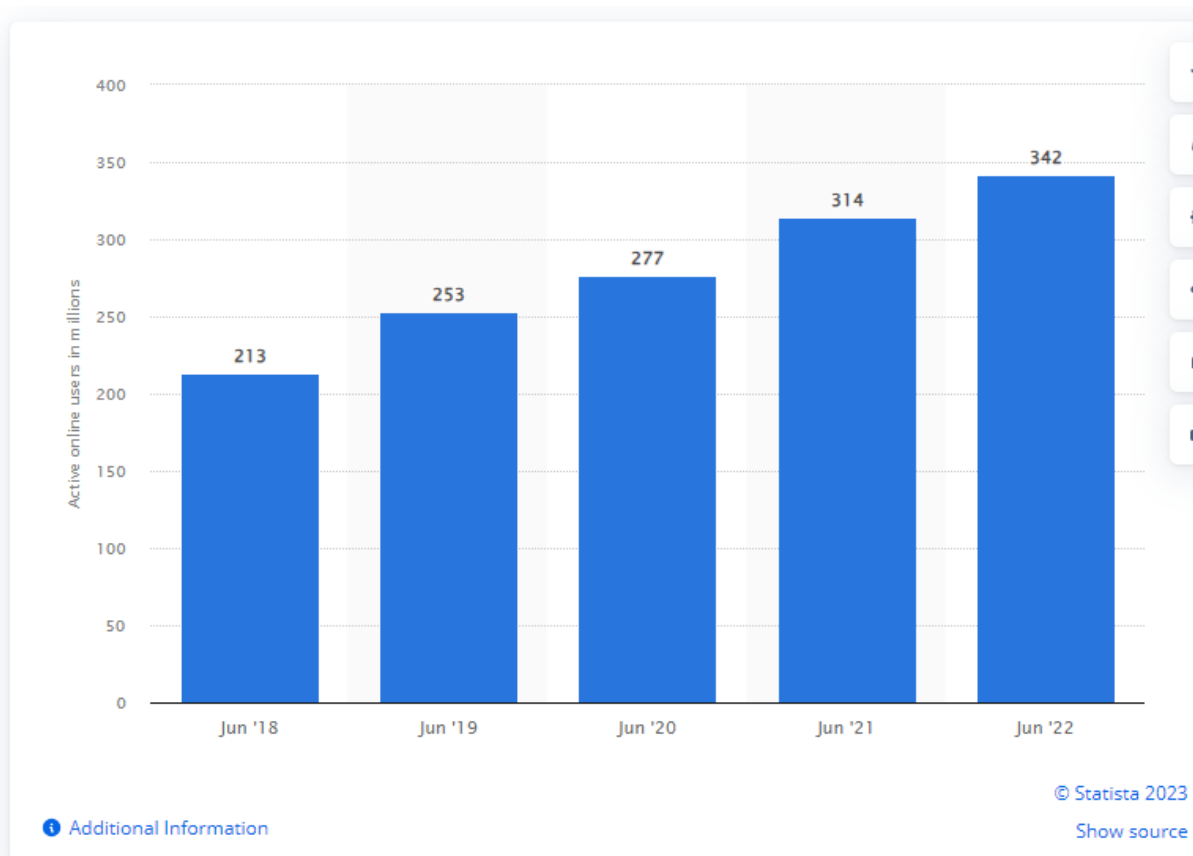**2.4 Influence of AR on Gen Z's Consumer Behaviour**

Figure 3: Number of Generation Z active internet users in China from June 2018 to June 2022

(Source: Thomala, 2023)

Social media and online presence have become an essential part in the modern world. China being one of the highest-populated nation have had around "342 million" monthly active internet users as of 2022 as evident from Figure 3 (Thomala, 2023). As AR continues to evolve, it is essential to understand the online behaviour of Gen Z users in order to navigate the digital landscape and its benefits and consequences. This generation is known to have grown up using smartphones and digital technology. As such, Gen Z users have adopted AR in various aspects of their lives, especially as an important part of their shopping experience. AR greatly affects the shopping and product engagement of users and aids in reshaping the digital landscape. According to Topalova (2021), one of the most important changes in consumer behaviour of Gen Z users has been the creation of an immersive shopping experience with the help of augmented reality. With the advancement of technology, specifically in the field of AR consumers are able to try on product before purchasing them. These include clothing products, furniture for their houses or appliances for the kitchen. This effectively enhances the shopping experience of the consumers by reducing the uncertainty, thereby enhancing their purchase decisions.

PERCENTAGE OF GEN Z COLLEGE STUDENTS THAT _FOLLOW_ ONE OR MORE BRAND BY PLATFORM

— % OF GEN Z COLLEGE STUDENTS THAT _ENGAGE_ WITH BRANDS

Platform	Follow	Engage
Instagram	51%	29%
Facebook	50%	27%
Twitter	30%	17%
YouTube	26%	13%
Snapchat	19%	7%

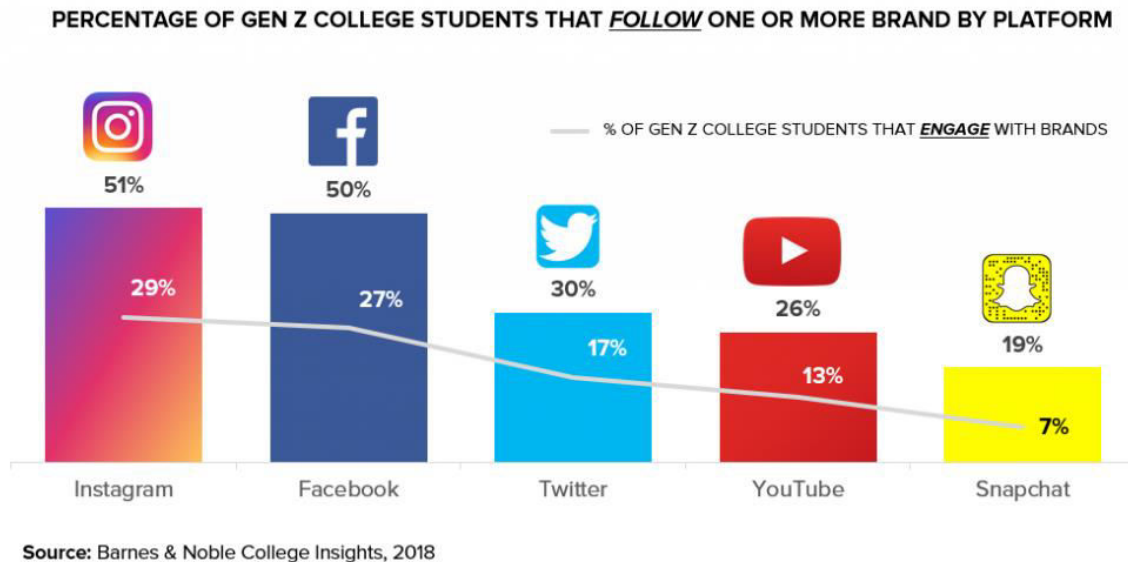**Source:** Barnes & Noble College Insights, 2018

Figure 4: Percentage of Gen Z users that follow a brand by social media platform

(Source: bncollege, 2023)

Retailers and e-commerce platforms have also capitalised on this trend to gain profitability in their business. It is prominent from Figure 4 that brands use online and digital platforms to market their products. This has been effective especially for Gen Z users who spend a large amount of time on social media. As such, brands acquire these platforms to maket their products with the help of AR. Alongside according to Djafarova and Bowes, (2021) the clothing and furniture sector, beauty and cosmetic industry has also greatly benefited with the introduction of agreement reality. AR tools allow users to virtually try on beauty and makeup products such as lipstick and eyeshadow shades which allows them to enhance the shopping experiences. These make online shopping more engaging and reduces the chances of purchasing a wrong product. Moreover, it also enhances the customer experience as most of the time the products meet their expected requirements. Likewise, game companies have greatly excelled in promoting their business by encouraging users to explore the elements of their games with engaging AR tools (Duffett, 2020). Companies are also able to customize and personalized their products for the needs of their consumers. This allows brands together to the preferences there by increasing the customer service and experience. AR also helps in making enhanced decisions as the tools provide recommendations and reviews which allows Gen Z them to make informed choices. Further, there are several devices which help in price comparisons to find the best deals of a particular product. AR also allows the Gen Z users to maintain brand loyalty while moulding their purchasing behaviour (Dabija et al. 2019). Therefore, it is everything that the introduction of AR has offered an immersive shopping experience for the Gen Z users while engaging them with different brands which fosters interactivity and allows the customisation of products. This helps to elevate decision making process of the consumers and helps in redefining brand loyalty of the Gen Z users.

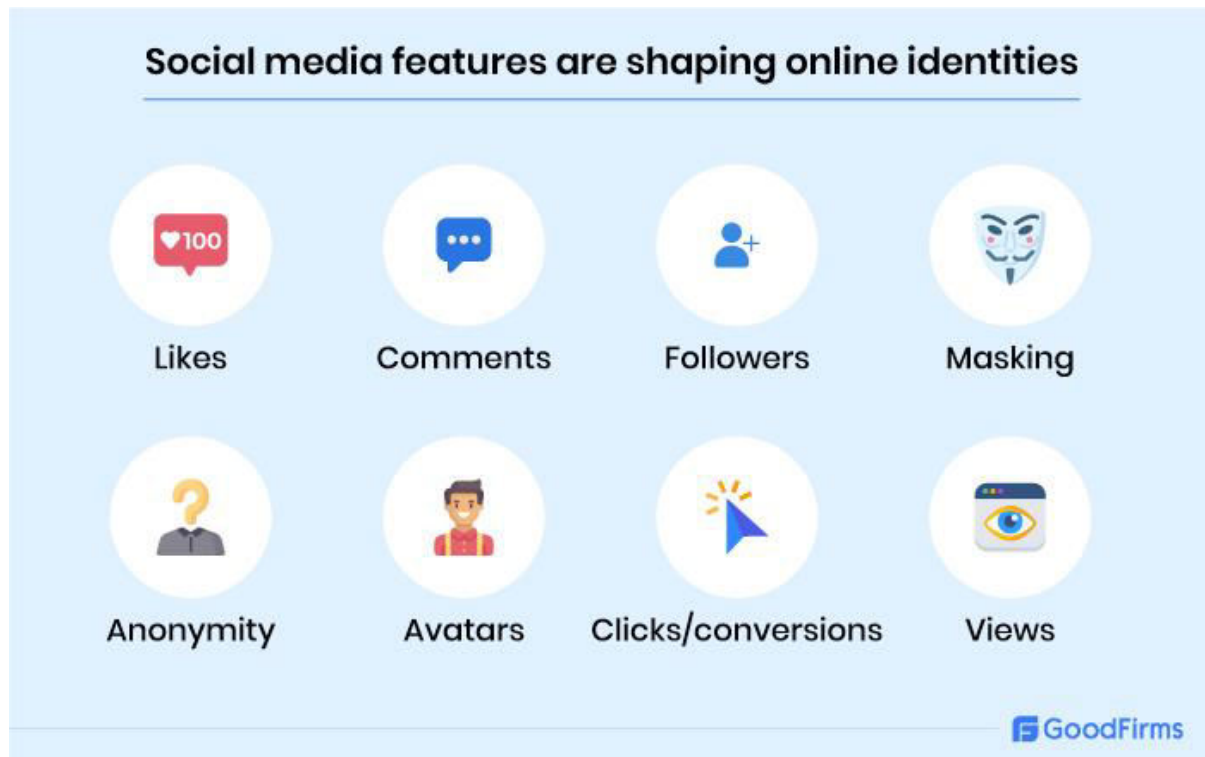**2.5 AR's effect on Gen Z's online Identity**

Figure 5: Social Media and its impact on Online Identity

(Source: assets.goodfirms, 2023)

Technology has greatly developed over the years and has led to users having their own online identities. Social media plays a vital role in shaping these identities with the introduction of likes, views, comments and followers as seen in Figure 5. Again, it is evident that these social media platforms use masking and avatars to generate online identities for Gen Z users. Air has greatly transformed the way Gen Z users interact with the digital world. It has also influenced how they construct and present their identities on various digital platforms. Gen Z users have grown in a world saturated with technology and it hampers their privacy greatly. There is a significant chance of data leakage and hacking of profiles which can be used to wrong purposes. According to Choi (2023), Gen Z users are often seen to embrace technology as a way to express their identities online. In this context, data leakage has become a great concern as it can hamper the overall growth and be challenging for many Gen Z users (Ye et al. 2020). AR has again played a significant role in redefining the beauty standards for Gen Z users using filters that are capable of modifying the facial features. Again, AR also allows them to apply makeup virtually which has shifted their perception of beauty overall. As a result, uses often face challenges in accepting the

diversity and individuality of the appearances (Choi, 2023). The prevalence of filtered and edited images and videos on social media platforms reflects an unauthentic potrayal of themselves. This has contributed to a stigma of perfection and has excluded having an inclusive approach towards beauty and self expression.
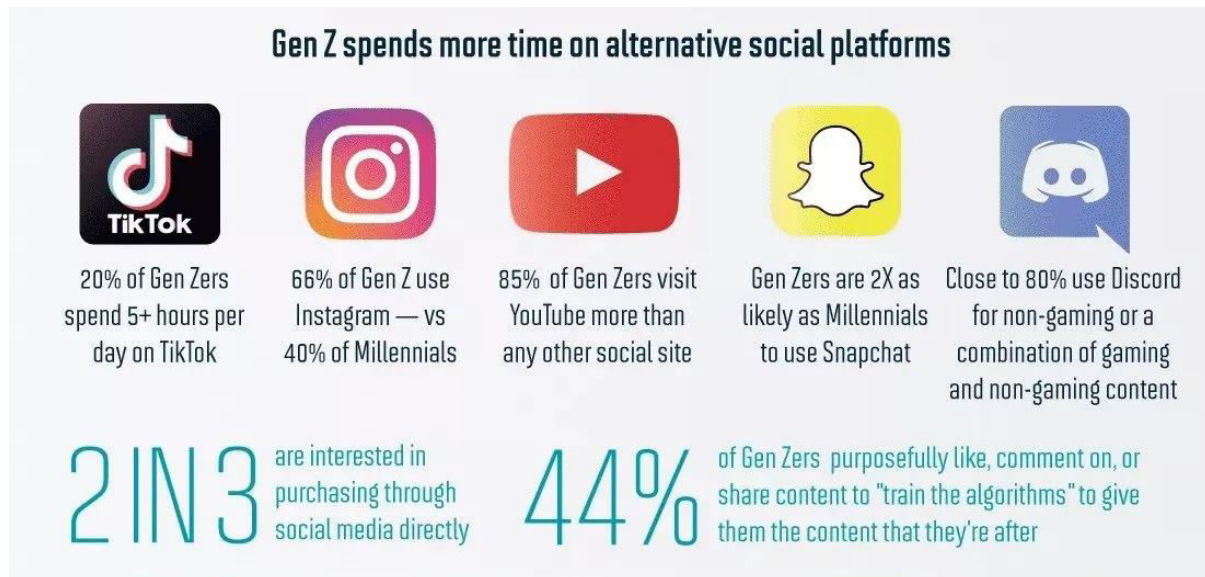

Figure 6: Time spent by Gen Z users on online platforms
(Source: amplify.nabshow, 2023)

Despite the challenges of AR in the beauty industry, it has helped Gen Z to build interactive and engaging communities. Social media platforms incorporate multiple AR features like virtual hangouts, collaborative games and live telecasts that help the Gen Z users to boost their online presence and create opportunities to bond with peers who share similar interests and identities (Chiu and Ho, 2023). The use of AR on social media has also benefited the users by allowing them to generate a source of income. Social media platforms are known to generate profitability and income as multiple brands reach out to influencers and content creators to market their products (Chiu and Ho, 2023). This allows change the Gen Z users to build connections and community while generating a stable source of income. Figure 6 prominently shows that around 20% of Gen Z users spend "5+ hours on TikTok" alone. Similarly, "66% Gen Z users" use Instagram as compared to "40% millennials." Figure 6 also demonstrates how "44% of users" use social media algorithms such as likes and comments to boost their online presence (Munsch, 2021). In this reference, the "digital identity theory" can be effectively used to understand how social media and AR can affect the online presence of an individual (Bouncken and Barwinski,

2021). The "digital identity theory" often encapsulates how the digital presence can have an impact on an individual's overall growth and personality. It is true that augmented reality has fundamentally shaped the online identity of Gen Z users by offering them a platform to gain self-expression, build online communities and generate a source of income (Munsch, 2021). However, it is also relevant that AR can have a significant negative influence on Gen Z's identities by providing a wrong impression on the beauty standards, thus lowering their self-confidence. Again, there is a lack of privacy of the users when they continuously use social media platforms to share their personal data. Therefore, as technology continues to evolve, users must construct their online presence by understanding the positive and negative of the digital world.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature review provides an ample amount of discussions on the influence of AR on Generation Z's online behaviour, consumer behaviour and online identity. However, there are several potential gaps in the literature which include the lack of discussion on the long-term effects of AR. Similarly, AR has a variable impact as per cultures and there have been limited discussions on the same. The ethical concerns of using AR have also not been discussed in this research. Likewise, the generational differences of using technology needs to be discussed in detail (Munsch, 2021). Therefore, it is prominent that there are several opportunities for future research and analysis of the topic.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Philosophy

One of the significant parts of research methodology is research philosophy which is categorised into several categories. Classification has been made from which the three most important categories are excavated. These are known to be ontology, epistemology and axiology. The philosophical paradigms help in enabling the decision that a researcher is required to adopt so that the research questions can be resolved. Tamminen and Poucher, (2020) stated that the selection of research philosophy impacts the practical implication and the decision is taken by understanding the differences and focus of diverse research. Moreover, the data collection technique is first analysed before the selection of the research philosophies.

There are four main philosophical choices such as pragmatism, realism, interpretivism and positivism. As per Nickerson, (2022), interpretivism philosophy is the part of the epistemology domain that is focused on explaining the feelings and experiences of research. On the other hand, the positivism approach mainly focuses on hypothesis development and is considered to be followed in a highly structured methodology to produce quantifiable observation. Apart from this, Al-Ababneh, (2020) reported that realism helps in understanding the reality of this situation by understanding the existence of the objects and pragmatism is the layer that helps to understand the multiple realities that can exist in a situation. In this research, the incorporation of *interpretivism research philosophy* has been made so that interpretation of the social roles of all the significant elements by integrating the human interest into the study.

Justification

The selection of interpretivism research philosophy has been identified to be suitable as the research has emphasized incorporating the use of qualitative analysis. As per Alharahsheh and Pius, (2020), interpretivism research philosophy is to emphasize qualitative analysis over quantitative one. Moreover, the research has also focused on understanding the meaning by obtaining an appropriate interpretation of the data by understanding the experience. It is noted that the adoption of qualitative methodology is required to be investigated with different tests that are supported by interpretivistic philosophy (Bleiker *et al.* 2019). On the contrary, Ikram and Kenayathulla, (2022), reported that positivist research philosophy is mainly focused on obtaining objective observation by measuring and analysing numerical data. The selection of positivism was not justified as replicability of findings or generalizing is focused by it so that variables in

the research can be understood to focus on the casual relationships that are formed. The research is focused on understanding the impact of augmented reality on Chinese international students so that the perspective of Gen Z can be understood. It required subjective analysis rather than extracting numerical data. Again, Interpretivism philosophy is concerned with elaborating different aspects of the research issue by deploying the utilisation of multiple methods so that meaning can be focused. Moreover, exploring the subjective experience of Chinese international students and measuring the impact by exploring the viewpoints have been useful as it also satisfies the research aim and objective. Therefore, the selection of interpretivism research philosophy is justified to be accurate as it helps in gaining knowledge by exploring the viewpoints of different individuals.

3.2 Research Approach

Concrete conclusions are required to be gained after the conduction of research so that meaningful results can be obtained. The approaches used in the research help in understanding the thoughts and behaviour of the individuals in different manners. These are known to be the quantitative research approach and qualitative research approach. As per Mehrad and Zangeneh, (2019), the quantitative research approach involves collecting and evaluating the numerical data so that statistical understanding can be achieved by analysing human perception. On the other hand, the author also argued that the qualitative research approach helps in evaluating the non-numerical data to understand the subjective opinions of the individuals. Due to the incorporation of interpretivism research philosophy, the adaptation of the *qualitative research approach* has been made so that a strong subjective understanding of the research topic can be obtained.

According to the findings of Kuckartz, (2013), qualitative research is very advantageous in uncovering different ideas and opinions by understanding the trends so that an in-depth understanding can be acquired by understanding the problem of the research. The intentions of the individuals that is the Chinese international students have been given priority so that the attitude can be analysed and interpretation can be provided appropriately. The research approach has also been selected so that highly complaints phenomena can be interpreted systematically. On the other hand, Schoonenboom, (2023), opined that Quantitative research is very beneficial in understanding the opinions and motivations of the individual by finding the reasons so that the development of ideas and hypotheses can be supported. The use of a quantitative research

approach has not been suitable as the development of hard facts and numerical data to establish the cause-and-effect relationship was not required to understand the impact of augmented reality. As per Bulmer, (2021), the qualitative research approach has a holistic nature that helps in uncovering different information. It has also helped in discovering various ideas and engaging to gain in-depth analysis of the topic. Moreover, due to the inclusion of sociological topics, the establishment of subjective thoughts over the generalized facts presented with a quantitative approach has been analysed to be relevant. Therefore, the integration of the quantitative research approach is appropriate as it helps in synthesizing the data with the use of an inductive strategy.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Data collection

The procedure of collecting and measuring relevant information with the use of standardized techniques is known to be the data collection method. These methods are selected by understanding the specific purpose of the research so that concrete solutions can be obtained by understanding the main focus of the research questions. Evaluation of the outcomes is done specifically by remaining relevant to the research topic so that informed decisions can be made (Lobe *et al.* 2020). The research is primarily focused on deploying the utilisation of qualitative methods so that the most direct methodology can be integrated within the study to collect detailed information. Apart from that, it has been analysed that the focus of the research is to investigate the impact of social media on Gen Z to analyse their behaviour which is required to understand the experience to describe the feelings of the participants. For this reason, the ***interview method*** has been integrated into the research with the use of a qualitative approach.

It has been found by Eppich *et al.* (2019), that an interview using the qualitative research approach can be categorised into three different forms such as structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The method of structured interview includes the utilisation of uniform design but this method does not sufficiently target the individuals to acquire different information. On the other hand, unstructured interviews do not have proper direction and this is conducted by entirely relying on the statements provided by the respondents in the interview. However, semi-structured interviews are known to be the method that combines the procedure of structured and unstructured interview methods for which obtained data are in a more detailed version. The ***semi-structured interview method*** is identified to be the most suitable one over the

structured and unstructured interviews as this interview method provides the flexibility and direction that research requires by eradicating the limitations of the other interview methods for collecting data.

Before starting to collect data by using the interview method, a few questions have been developed and research has been conducted so that in-depth questioning can be facilitated. The interview was conducted approximately for 25 minutes with the adaptation of a face-to-face approach so that quick responses and timely adjustments could be maintained to keep track of the data. According to Saarijärvi and Bratt, (2021), the enhancement of trust is done with the use of face-to-face interviews that also impact the communication techniques that are deployed. Therefore the integration of the semi-structured interview has been conducted in the face-to-face format with the use of Chinese and English languages as the interviewees belong to different countries and regions which are required to use the regional languages for better expressing views and thoughts. The data has been collected by obtaining the consent of the interviewees by distributing the consent form and participation sheet for better analysis of the collected data.

3.3.2 Sample

As per Bhardwaj, (2019), the selection of smaller groups from the larger population is known to be the sample in research. There are two types of sampling methods which are for probability and non-probability sampling which is categorised into several categories. In the research, the integration of mixed methods of sampling has been integrated that is ***purposive and snowball sampling***. As identified the research is focused on deploying the qualitative approach which has been focused on exploring the differences and perspectives of individuals so that rich and relevant data can be acquired. Moreover, the context of the research question is focused on understanding the impact of social media AR utilisation by Generation Z which would have differences in opinions that are required to be explored. For this reason, the integration of the purposive and snowball sampling techniques has been included. 7 Chinese international students have been selected from Generation Z who were born from the time period of 1995-2012 and minimum age above 8 years. The sample size belongs to Generation Z's frequent use of social media who have experienced different aspects of augmented reality utilisation and have been proven to be beneficial by providing important information. As per Zickar and Keith, (2023), the main motive of the purposive sampling technique is to acquire different information about the

research topic whereas the snowball sampling technique helps to find eligible potential respondents for the interview to provide several recommendations from the other participants. Therefore, the inclusion of the combination of the sampling techniques has been appropriate and has helped acquire suitable responses by maximizing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the research.

3.3.3 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is the significant procedure to collect and analyse the data by inspecting and transforming different information to support decision-making. The method helps to improve and boost the efficiency of research (Lester *et al.* 2020). In this research, the inclusion of a qualitative research approach has been identified to be suitable for which the semi-structured interview method of data collection has been selected. After collecting suitable information from the Chinese international students from Generation Z using social media frequently and having a great idea about augmented reality utilisation, the main opinions of the respondents have been selected from which the main keywords have been found. These keywords are then transformed into different themes so that the collected data can be appropriately analysed with the use of *thematic analysis procedures*. As per Clarke *et al.* (2015), thematic analysis involves analysing the qualitative data so that subjective experience can be elaborated by understanding the similar patterns and shared meanings across the collected data. It has been useful as it is identified to be the flexible method to analyse several data that have been gathered with the use of the interview method.

3.3.4 Limitations

The qualitative research approach lacks breadth of research which is considered to be lightweight due to the involvement of small sample sizes (Reay *et al.* 2019). Due to the presence of 7 interview participants, this research also lacks the breadth of the research. The subjectivity of the research is often biased. Moreover, findings are often replicated which is very challenging and increases the complexity of data analysis. It is also difficult to maintain anonymity. Balancing of the definition of the scope of the research project is also constructed which limits the clarification of the research questions and objectives.

3.4 Ethics Concern

The maintenance of the ethical standards has been done appropriately so that the code of conduct of the qualitative approach is maintained (Vivek, 2022). The interview participants have been provided with the participation sheet and consent form so that they can participate in the interview by acknowledging all the facts. The interview participants have also been given full independence to step out of the interview if they feel uncomfortable. The demographic information has been secured by maintaining the General Data Protection Regulation of 2018. Moreover, it has been made sure that after the completion and final submission of the research the collected information is completely destroyed.

3.5 Reflection on Methodology

After the completion of the methodological section, I have understood the importance of selecting appropriate methodological techniques so that research can achieve effectiveness. I have selected research philosophy as interpretivism. This is due to the requirement of subjective interpretation that the research required. As noted by Zahle, (2021), the interpretivism research philosophy helps in emphasizing subjective interpretation over objective analysis so that different insights can be gained about the background information. The cultural context has been evaluated appropriately and I have also considered analysing the impact of augmented reality over Generation Z with appropriate exploration. Moreover, I have noted that the differences in the opinions have been explored with the use of this philosophy appropriately to identify the diversity and individualist interpretation of the respondents.

The selection of the qualitative research approach has also been proven to be suitable over the quantitative research approach as I have noticed that the requirement of flexibility and minimization of lost data has been focused in this research. Due to the presence of the interpretivism research philosophy, subjective experience has been given priority that has been appropriately found with the help of a qualitative approach. In-depth analysis and detailed research have been possible with the integration of a qualitative approach. According to Allan, (2020), a qualitative approach is useful in gaining detailed information so that research problems can be resolved. I have understood the requirement appropriately for which I have selected to integrate the utilisation of the qualitative research approach over the quantitative one as numerical findings were not given priority for this research work. I have selected a semi-

structured interview method to be the most suitable one to interact with Generation Z for appropriately analysing the social media behaviour who were born from the time period of 1995 to 2012 and have a minimum age above 8 years. The selection of the semi-structured interview method has been relevant as I have noted that structured then unstructured interviews have different limitations which are managed by this interview method. Moreover, I have analysed that the face-to-face interview format is a significant method of collecting interview data to make timely adjustments and quick responses are kept on track.

I have integrated the utilisation of the mixed method of purposive and snowball sampling techniques which have provided different benefits to meet the context of the research questions. I have noted that the combination of this sampling technique has been proven to be very beneficial to accumulating different facts by making different adjustments. As per Campbell *et al.* (2020), purposive sampling helps in answering the research questions by selecting the appropriate cases or individuals so that background information can be extracted about the research topic. I have noted that the quality of the sample has directly correlated with the selection of the samples using this strategy. Moreover, Parker *et al.* (2019), opined that snowball sampling helps to build the sample population with the extraction of recommendations from other eligible respondents by creating networks that gradually expand. I have realised that this traditional sampling method helps to find the potential participants with effective recommendations that help speed up the sampling procedure. Therefore the combination of purposive and snowball sampling has been proven to be effective and has helped in maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the research. With the adaptation of this mixed method of sampling, 7 respondents have been selected who have participated in 25 minutes of face-to-face semi-structured interviews. I have also taken the consent of the participants so that the sampling and the interviewing can be completed within 1 month ethically and responsibly.

Using thematic analysis, the creation of themes has been possible by identifying the main keywords from the major statements that have been made by the interview participants. As identified by Braun and Clarke, (2019), thematic analysis helps in creating different themes so that the collected qualitative information can be analysed by maintaining the philosophy and procedure. I have also noted that the implementation of this method has also helped in maintaining the purpose of the research questions. I have also identified different limitations in which the lack of breadth in qualitative research has been the major one that reduces

generalizability and makes data analysis complicated. I have also ensured the maintenance of ethics in the work so that the research can be trusted and the presented data are reliable and valid with the maintenance of the consent of the interview participants.

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