

Examining the Impact of Artificial Intelligence Applications on Generation Z Through the Example of ChatGPT

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the attitudes (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) of Generation Z towards ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence application developed by OpenAI. A conforming sampling method was used. The data collected were analyzed using MAXQDA software. According to the research findings, the most important factors in deciding to use ChatGPT are friends/social circle and social media. The most significant variable in the motivation for using ChatGPT is access to information. The prominent dimensions in ChatGPT usage behavior are academic life, assignments, and information acquisition. In the emotional dimension of attitudes towards ChatGPT, the most prominent variable is curiosity, followed by admiration, anxiety, excitement, and doubt. In negative evaluations of ChatGPT, ethical and security concerns and distrust of the information obtained stand out. Participants are aware of various risks associated with the use of AI: the risk of replacing human interaction, posing a threat to social skills and emotional regulation; ethical issues and data security concerns, increasing participants' need for fact-checking behavior. This research focuses on a significant gap in the field by examining how Generation Z's attitudes (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral) towards the ChatGPT artificial intelligence application are formed, which dimensions and factors influence Generation Z.

Key words: ChatGPT, Generation Z, Attitude

JEL Code: M30, Z13

1. Introduction

Generation Z is a generation that has become familiar with digital tools, the internet, applications, digital games, and social media platforms during a period when digitalization and digital transformation have affected all social and

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technological structures. They have established connections and relationships with these platforms and have engaged in communication, interaction, participation, and collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated their tendency to use technology and caused a dramatic change in the global retail and e-commerce landscape (Shi, 2024; Alameeri et al., 2021). Artificial intelligence technologies shape the spirit and mindset of today's world and everyday life. With the data, big data, and processes obtained through AI approaches, applications, and techniques such as behavioral, cognitive, machine, and deep learning, scientists and technology enthusiasts want AI to be able to speak, learn, understand, interpret, and interact with humans just like humans do. Such AI technologies are defined as chatbots. OpenAI, a US-based company founded in 2015, developed ChatGPT, and version 3.5 was released in November 2022. This state-of-the-art artificial intelligence chatbot uses machine and deep learning techniques.

ChatGPT and other tools based on large language models (LLMs) have sparked the latest wave of chatbots, impacting numerous industries (Xia et al., 2025). The evolution of ChatGPT has been motivated by the goal of identifying an extremely advanced and capable artificial intelligence language model that can assist in various tasks, including data analysis, data translation, and text generation (Nazir and Wang, 2023). In March 2023, the ChatGPT-4 family was released (Skavronskaya et al., 2023). Generative AI applications like ChatGPT (e.g., GPT-3.5 and GPT-4) significantly impact the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of human life (Choi et al., 2023). ChatGPT-4 (2023) uses supervised learning on a large dataset of 1.76 trillion, followed by reinforcement learning using both human and AI feedback, and can process instructions that are more reliable, creative, and much more detailed than GPT-3.5 (Nazir & Wang, 2023). ChatGPT is a powerful chatbot designed to interact with humans through interpretation, generation, and effective conversation (Xia et al., 2025). ChatGPT can generate text due to its capacity to understand and generate natural language like human language (Ajrlouni et al., 2023). ChatGPT accepts both image and text input, and its reasoning abilities and coding capabilities have been significantly improved compared to GPT-3.5 (Yu, 2023). The ChatGPT4 model represents an impressive expanded language model (Holmes et al., 2023). Current applications of ChatGPT:

- Customer support and service
- Personal assistants
- Content creation
- Language translation
- Education and private tutoring
- Creative writing and storytelling
- Mental health support
- Code writing and programming
- Healthcare and medical assistance by ChatGPT
- Legal and compliance assistance with medical imaging and radiology (Nazir & Wang, 2023).

2. Literature Review

One of the most important attitudes of today is ChatGPT. The Z generation, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is the first generation to grow up in a completely digital environment, and this has greatly influenced their interaction with technologies such as artificial intelligence. Often referred to as “digital natives,” this generation seamlessly integrates artificial intelligence tools into various aspects of daily life, including education and shopping (Kavitha & Joshith, 2024). As a result, artificial intelligence technologies are beginning to be seen as essential resources that enhance efficiency and provide personalized experiences (Ng et al., 2019). This generation views these applications as valuable support tools (Alanzi et al., 2023). However, this close relationship with artificial intelligence also brings concerns about ethical issues, data privacy, and excessive dependence on technology (Magni et al., 2023). Generation Z's positive or negative evaluations of ChatGPT are examined within the framework of the concept of attitude in social psychology.

First conceptualized in social psychology in the early 19th century, attitudes are considered a fundamental aspect of human behavior (Nicolas, 2024). As Allport (1935, p. 804) noted, attitudes can be described as learned predispositions to respond consistently positively or negatively to an object or idea (Serralvo, 2024). Psychological theories such as classical and operant conditioning, social learning theory, and cognitive dissonance theory provide a foundation for understanding how these attitudes develop (Acosta-Enriquez et al., 2024). Attitude is the object of evaluation and is defined as an evaluation of psychological objects, people, and events represented by dimensions such as positive or negative, good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, or likable or unlikable. (Ajzen, 2001; Nameghi & Shadi, 2013; Svenningsson et al., 2022; Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2018, p. 523).

The conceptual and theoretical framework related to attitudes and the model used in research are consistent with the Theory of Rational Choice (the usefulness of the attitude object, the desire for it, and the reason for preference are explained) and the Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behavior (both theories were developed to explain the relationship between attitudes, intentions, and behaviors). Our surroundings are filled with objects. Among these objects, those that become attitude objects are the ones we are aware of, assign meaning to, and evaluate positively or negatively (Arkonaç, 2016, p. 159; Aronson et al., 2012, p. 356). People develop beliefs and values about their environment, experiences, and objects (Ertürk, 2017, p. 197). Attitudes are highly organized, long-term tendencies of emotion, belief, and behavior (Baron & Byrne, 1977) (Cüceloğlu, 2014, p. 521). In short, attitudes are evaluations people make about other people, objects, or ideas (Aronson et al., 2012, p. 356). Attitudes are an effective way of understanding the world (Myers, 2017, p. 124). People can use peripheral and central persuasion methods when forming attitudes toward objects. In environmental persuasion, the persuasiveness of a speaker comes to the fore, while in central persuasion, it

emerges when evidence and positive thoughts are responded to (Myers & Dewall, 2017, p. 520).

Generation Z is a generation that generally includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012. This generation represents a unique combination of cultural, technological, and economic influences (Jayatissa, 2023), and these influences shape their characteristics and behaviors (Atay, 2024). In the context of work, the relationship between Generation Z and ChatGPT applications is explained in terms of integration with technology, mental health awareness, continuous learning and development, social media and communication, and shopping preferences.

Integration with Technology: Generation Z is defined as “digital natives” because they were born into technology and grew up with it. This generation, which intensively uses smartphones, social media, and various online platforms, is highly proficient in digital communication and accessing information (Goh & Baum, 2021). This comfortable relationship with technology affects not only their personal lives (Purwianti et al., 2024) but also their expectations in education and the workplace. This generation views intuitive and user-friendly technological solutions as standard both in the classroom and at work (Nabahani & Riyanto, 2020). The ability to access information and digital communication instantly has reinforced this generation's desire for quick gratification and preference for fast-paced environments, reflecting their desire for efficiency and immediacy (Mahecwara et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused significant changes in shopping habits and perspectives, and according to many researchers, this process has reinforced Generation Z's relationship with technology, making it a fundamental part of their identity (Agrawal, 2023). In addition, Generation Z individuals place a high value on social responsibility and ethical consumption. Many in this generation prefer brands that align with their values, demanding authenticity and transparency from brands (Rice & Potts, 2024). This expectation of moral alignment is also reflected in their career goals; Generation Z desires to work for organizations that demonstrate sensitivity to social and environmental issues (Barhate & Dirani, 2021). As a result, this generation often exhibits a strong critical perspective, referred to as a “BS filter” (the ability to easily discern unnecessary or insincere messages); they are more selective about content and more critical of marketing strategies (Rice & Potts, 2024). The impact of social media on psychological well-being is a significant concern, and research indicates that these platforms have serious effects on self-esteem and social relationships (Hu, 2024).

Mental Health Awareness: Generation Z is more open and sensitive to mental health issues. This generation is not afraid to express their mental distress and is more willing to seek help than previous generations (Smaliukienė & Bekešienė, 2020).

Continuous Learning and Development: Generation Z values education and lifelong learning. They are very interested in interactive and group-based learning methods supported by practical applications (Budiman & Franky, 2021). Similarly,

in the business world, they seek opportunities that will contribute to their personal development and advance their careers, rather than just working (Lazar et al., 2023).

Social media and Communication: For Generation Z, social media platforms are not just communication tools but also spaces for self-expression and social interaction (Agrawal, 2023). This generation regularly interacts with the content produced, which influences their perceptions and consumer behavior, and they tend to prefer brands that offer personalized experiences and effectively utilize artificial intelligence (Ameen et al., 2023).

Shopping Preferences: The shopping habits of Generation Z have distinct characteristics shaped by the influence of artificial intelligence. Research shows that when Generation Z consumers are supported by artificial intelligence technologies that make the shopping process more intuitive and user-friendly, their propensity to purchase increases (Vionita & Siburian, 2024).

3. Methodology and Data

In this study, based on the concept of attitude in social psychology, which is defined as individuals' positive or negative evaluations of objects and images (attitude objects), the cognitive, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of Generation Z's thoughts about ChatGPT are examined. Social psychology is the scientific discipline that examines how an individual's behavior, emotions, or thoughts are influenced or determined by the behavior and/or characteristics of others (Cüceloğlu, 2014, p. 514). An attitude is a permanent organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes related to certain aspects of our environment (Alam & Iqbal, 2007). Attitude is explained as a predisposition to respond based on an individual's experiences, knowledge, emotions, and motivations toward themselves or any object, subject, or event in their environment (İnceoğlu, 2011, pp. 22-23). According to social psychology, the elements of attitude are cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The cognitive dimension includes beliefs, thoughts, knowledge, and expectations; the emotional dimension includes evaluative feelings, preferences, and mood; and the behavioral dimension is defined as acting in favor of or against objects or situations related to attitudes (Gámez Gutiérrez et al., 2017; Ebarido & Suarez, 2023; Sánchez-García & Batista-Foguet, 2008; Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2018). In another study, attitude is explained in four dimensions: emotional, cognitive, value, and effort (Garcia-Santillan et al., 2012). The study uses experiencing and employing focus group techniques. In the experiencing focus group, the experiences of the participants in the research topic are investigated, while in the employing focus group, the creative powers of the participants are sought to be utilized (Proctor, 1997). The research was conducted with the approval of the Ethics Committee of Istanbul Nişantaşı University, dated 22.04.2025 and numbered 2025-04, and an "Informed Consent Form" was obtained from the research participants prior to the research.

In this study, the thoughts and feelings of Generation Z participants in the sample regarding the ChatGPT artificial intelligence application, how this application reflects on their daily life practices, their experiences, and their views on how it shapes certain areas of their lives were collected through the focus group technique. The data obtained from a total of 23 participants were transferred to MAXQDA software, which enables qualitative data analysis. The qualitative analysis process of the research was carefully planned and conducted with great care. All data were evaluated based on the content analysis method (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). During the analysis process, each document was examined line by line, and systematic coding was performed by the research questions. In the coding phase, each research question was addressed separately; these questions formed the themes, while the participants' responses formed the relevant codes. The qualitative findings are presented in seven themes based on the answers to the following research questions posed to the participants. These are:

RQ1. Who influenced your decision to use ChatGPT for the first time?

RQ2. What factors influence the motivation to use ChatGPT?

RQ3. What are the sources for gaining initial impressions about ChatGPT?

RQ4. Under what headings can the purposes of using ChatGPT be explained?

RQ5. What are the prominent emotions in the use of ChatGPT?

RQ6. What are the views of Generation Z participants regarding the cognitive and emotional implications of using ChatGPT?

RQ7. What are the main ethical and security concerns associated with the use of ChatGPT?

In this study, experiential and participatory focus group techniques are used to investigate Generation Z's experiences with ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence application, and what creative powers ChatGPT brings to light. The focus group method aims to learn and discover what Generation Z thinks and feels about the ChatGPT artificial intelligence application, how it reflects on their practical lives, their experiences, and even how it shapes a part of their lives. In the research, convenience sampling, one of the non-probability sampling methods, was used. In convenience sampling, the sample is selected from the researcher's (implementer's) immediate surroundings, consisting of familiar and known individuals. For example, by drawing such a sample from students at a university or faculty with whom communication is possible, a questionnaire can be administered (Aziz, 2015, p. 54; Neuman, 2017, p. 321). The sample of the study consists of Generation Z students studying in the communication and media departments of foundation universities in Istanbul who use the artificial intelligence application ChatGPT. In the study, three different Generation Z individuals with a) positive, b) negative, and c) neutral views on artificial intelligence were selected using convenience sampling, and a focus group research technique was conducted. The dimensions of attitude in the context of the study can be explained as follows;

Cognitive Dimension: Your thoughts on ChatGPT,

Emotional Dimension: ChatGPT, the emotions it evokes in you,

Behavioral Dimension: These are the actions you perform when you see and use the ChatGPT platform

According to Table 1, 16 (66.7%) of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 22, 8 (33.3%) were between the ages of 21 and 22, 13 (54.2%) were female, and 11 (45.8%) were male. Additionally, according to Table 2, 13 (54.2%) of the participants have been using ChatGPT for 0-1 years, 11 (45.8%) for 2-3 years, 15 (62.5%) stated that they use ChatGPT occasionally, while 9 (37.5%) stated that they use it frequently.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Personal Information	Categories	Number (n)	Rate (%)
What's your age?	18-20	16	66,7
	21-22	8	33,3
What's your gender?	Female	13	54,2
	Male	11	45,8
How long have you been using ChatGPT?	0-1 yıl	13	54,2
	2-3 yıl	11	45,8
I use ChatGPT every day.	Sometimes	15	62,5
	Often	9	37,5

4. Findings

The Perceived Benefits and Risks of ChatGPT

The perceived benefits and risks of ChatGPT's applications across various fields encompass many aspects, including user experience, social impacts, and ethical considerations.

Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT

Increased Access to Information: Users report that it has become easier to access answers and generate content, thereby reducing the time spent searching for information (Pavlik, 2023). ChatGPT's ability to converse in natural language enhances the user experience by making information requests more intuitive and interactive (Danry et al., 2022).

Innovation in Content Production: The ability to generate text quickly using specific commands enables content creators to prepare drafts faster and develop

creative ideas (Pavlik, 2023). This technology encourages collaboration between artificial intelligence and humans, paving the way for new content formats that can engage audiences in different ways (Nader et al., 2022).

Education and Learning Support: In the field of education, ChatGPT supports learning by providing instant explanations and resources and also helps educators prepare customized online materials according to specific needs (Budiman & Franky, 2021). Additionally, group work and discussions centered around content generated by ChatGPT can increase student participation and collaboration (Chen et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2023).

Perceived Risks of ChatGPT

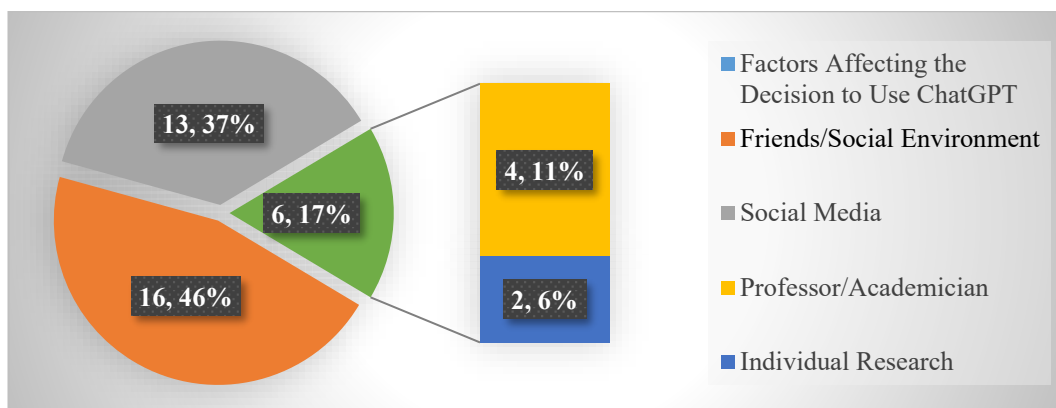
Risk of Generating Misleading Information: Despite the advantages offered by ChatGPT, it carries certain risks in terms of information accuracy. Since it generates text based on a large data set, it can sometimes provide misleading or incorrect information. This is particularly concerning in sensitive areas such as healthcare and law, where it could have serious consequences (Damanik et al., 2022).

Ethical and Prejudice Issues: ChatGPT may reflect biases present in the data it was trained on, which could reinforce prejudices or spread misinformation. In this context, developers and users must take responsibility when designing and using generative AI (Chen et al., 2024). Additionally, the potential for such tools to collect and store user data raises concerns about privacy and confidentiality (Basid & Atmaja, 2022; Chapman & Abraham, 2024).

Effects on Employment: While tools such as ChatGPT can increase productivity, there are concerns that automation may threaten certain jobs, particularly in creative industries. The fact that tasks traditionally performed by humans can now be performed by artificial intelligence may raise concerns about job security (Plakhotnik et al., 2024).

QR1. Who influenced your decision to use ChatGPT for the first time?

Attitudes are formed as information about the attitude object is acquired and can be used directly without the need to re-examine the information or beliefs on which they are based (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). Participants' views on the people who influenced their initial decision to use ChatGPT are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Factors Affecting the Decision to Use ChatGPT


The *social environment* was found to be the most decisive factor in the participants' decision to use ChatGPT for the first time. The vast majority of participants ($n=16$) stated that they tried this application based on the recommendation of their *friends* or their *social environment*. This situation shows that peer influence is a strong determinant in technology use among Generation Z individuals. Social media also emerged as an important influencer; 13 participants stated that they encountered ChatGPT on social media platforms and that posts on these platforms influenced their decision to try the application. In contrast, the influence of academic circles was more limited; only 4 participants stated that they started using ChatGPT based on the recommendation of a *professor/academician*. Additionally, only 2 participants mentioned discovering the application through individual research.

“I learned about it from posts I saw on social media and started using it after hearing about it from my friends and teachers at school.” (K6, Male)

“Thanks to related posts I saw on social media.” (K5, Female)

“I started researching it along with current news, and my professors in my field also encouraged me in this regard. That’s how I started using it.” (K5, Female)

“I saw it on social media and from my surroundings. Then I tried it once and couldn’t stop.” (K11, Female)

Attitude and Dimensions

The concept of attitude is etymologically derived from the Latin word *aptus*. It means suitable and ready for action (Güney, 2012, p. 120). Attitude refers to evaluations of attitude objects and operates at the personal, interpersonal, and intergroup levels (Arkonaç, 2016, p. 169). Attitude (...) consists of the integration and sum of thought-feeling-behavior tendencies (Kağıtçıbaşı & Cemalcılar, 2015, p. 131; Ertürk, 2017, p. 198). Attitudes are generally emotions that are influenced by our beliefs and prepare our responses to objects, people, and events (Myers &

Dewall, 2017, p.520). Examples of reactions that reflect attitudes include approving or disapproving of a policy, liking or disliking a person or group of people, and judging any concept in terms of pleasant-unpleasant, desirable-undesirable, good-bad, or nice-unpleasant dimensions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). Attitude is a cognitive structure and therefore cannot be directly observed; it exists before behavior and guides our actions (Arkonaç, 2016, p. 158). Attitude is not an observable, manifested behavior, but a predisposition that prepares behavior (Kağıtçıbaşı & Cemalcılar, 2015, p. 130). Attitudes serve the individual in four ways: informing, providing benefits, indicating values, and protecting the self (Ertürk, 2017, p. 201). The factors influencing the formation of attitudes are explained as follows.

- Mental and cognitive factors,
- Physiological factors,
- Family factor,
- Experiences with the attitude object,
- Peer factor,
- Individual characteristics factor,
- Mass media factor,
- Social class: Socio-economic factor,
- Group membership factor (Güney, 2012; Kağıtçıbaşı & Cemalcılar, 2015)

Demonstration of the dimensions of attitude in the context of research: Cognitive Dimension, your thoughts about ChatGPT; Emotional Dimension, the emotions ChatGPT evokes in you; Behavioral Dimension: the actions you take when you see and use the ChatGPT platform.

Cognitive Dimensions

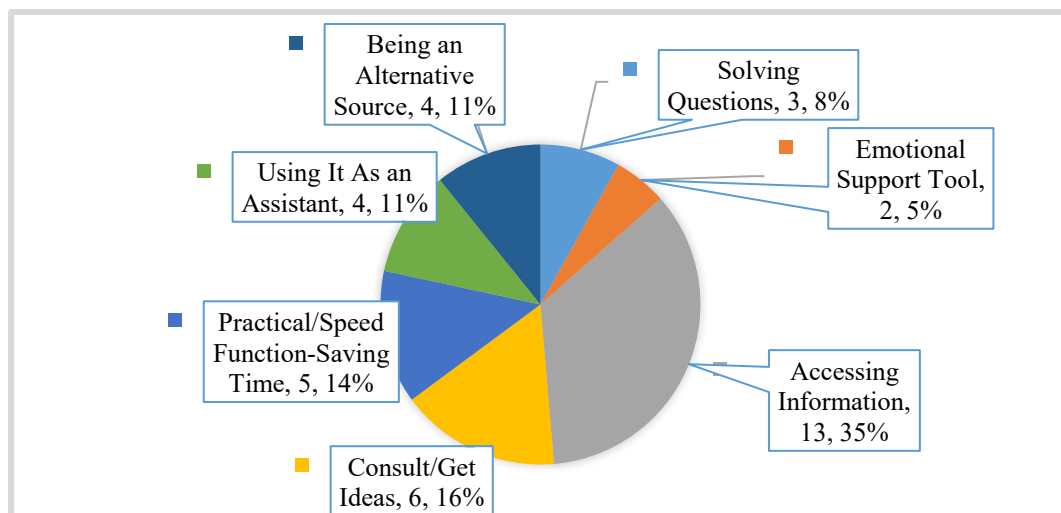
The cognitive component expresses beliefs and thoughts about subjects, objects, people, institutions, events, etc. It is related to a person's perception and knowledge of the subject, object, or person (Abun et al., 2019). People's experiences, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and beliefs (spiritual, moral, political, social, intellectual, economic, etc.) regarding the attitude object constitute the cognitive dimension. In short, it is the storage of information based on facts about the attitude object (Güney, 2012, p. 134; İnceoğlu, 2011, p. 35; Arkonaç, 2016, p. 159; Ertürk, 2017, p. 201; Aronson et al., 2012, p. 358). In the cognitive dimension, interest in the object, awareness of the object, knowledge of the object, and beliefs about the object come to the fore. Attitudes develop during the process of acquiring knowledge about the object and continue to evolve as existing beliefs change and new beliefs are formed (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

QR2. What factors influence the motivation to use ChatGPT?

Participants' views on their motivations for using ChatGPT are shown in Figure 2.

The motivations of Generation Z for regularly using ChatGPT are largely related to their desire for quick and easy access to information. A significant portion of participants (n=13) stated that they view ChatGPT as an effective and accessible tool for obtaining information. These users noted that they turn to this AI tool when they need to quickly acquire information on complex topics. Six participants stated that they viewed ChatGPT as a consultation or idea-gathering tool and that they used the application when making decisions or clarifying their thoughts. However, for five participants, the practical and time-saving nature of the application was another important factor that encouraged regular use. Some participants used ChatGPT as a digital assistant. Four participants stated that they effectively use this tool in academic and writing processes such as summarizing assignments, correcting spelling and punctuation, and organizing information. Again, four participants evaluate ChatGPT as an alternative to traditional information sources; they find the tool's potential to offer different perspectives valuable. Three participants stated that they use the application directly for problem-solving purposes. Another notable motivation for use is the search for emotional support. Two participants stated that they preferred ChatGPT with the expectation of receiving emotional support from someone who interprets dreams or thinks logically.

Figure 2. Motivation for Decision to Use ChatGPT



“Curiosity and questions in my mind. When something comes to mind or I am curious about something, I first ask ChatGPT.” (K3, Male)

“Being able to access information instantly and easily drives me to use artificial intelligence.” (K9, Male)

“I use it to get ideas while doing my homework. I have it correct—my spelling mistakes, periods, and commas. I now use ChatGPT instead of Google.” (K8, Female)

“I use it more when I need emotional support. I need someone who thinks logically.” (K10, Female)

Table 2. Cognitive Descriptive Findings

Cognitive Explanations	n	No		Yes		\bar{x}	ss
		n	%	n	%		
Using ChatGPT has improved my creativity.	24	6	25,0	18	75,0	0,75	0,44
Using ChatGPT has improved my ability to express myself.	24	17	70,8	7	29,2	0,29	0,46
I can easily access information using ChatGPT.	24	2	8,3	22	91,7	0,92	0,28
I think I express myself better on social media using ChatGPT.	24	21	87,5	3	12,5	0,13	0,34
Using ChatGPT has strengthened my communication skills, persuasion, and influence.	24	18	75,0	6	25,0	0,25	0,44

n: Number, %: Rate, \bar{x} : Mean, ss: Standard Deviation

According to Table 2, participants gave significantly more affirmative responses to statements regarding cognitive explanations that ChatGPT enhances creativity and that information can be easily accessed using ChatGPT.

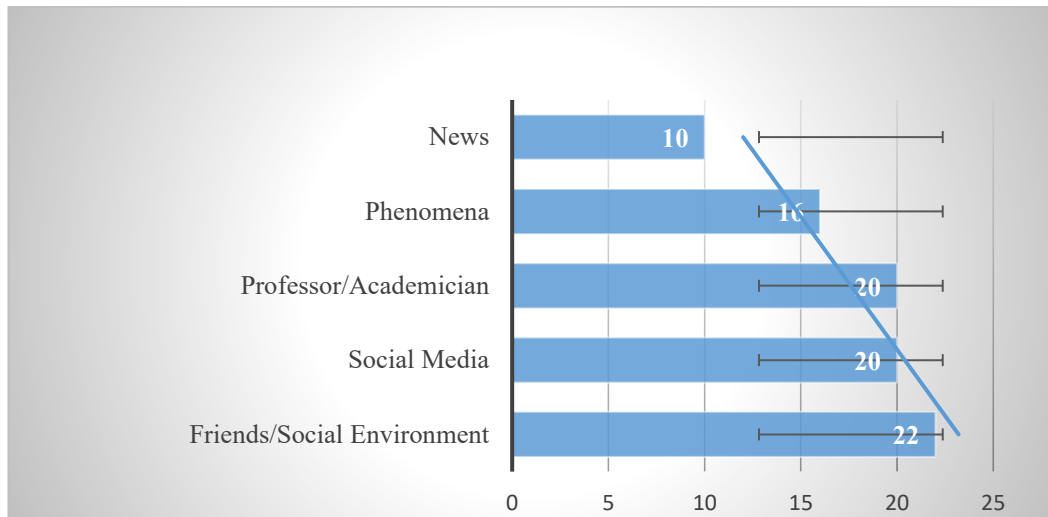
QR3. What are the sources of initial impressions about ChatGPT?

The information provided by participants regarding the source of their initial impressions of ChatGPT is presented in Figure 3.

It appears that Generation Z's initial impressions of ChatGPT are largely derived from their social circles and digital media. Almost all participants (n=22) stated that they first learned about the application from their friends or social circles. Similarly, the school environment and teaching staff are also important sources of information; 20 participants stated that they first learned about ChatGPT through school or their teachers. Social media is also one of the main channels through which first impressions are formed. Twenty participants stated that they first learned about ChatGPT through social media content. In addition, 16 participants stated that social media influencers' posts increased their awareness of the application. News sources, on the other hand, have a more limited impact; only 10 participants stated that they first learned about ChatGPT through news content. Overall, these findings show that Generation Z relies more on social relationships

and digital platforms than traditional sources in their cognitive information acquisition processes.

Figure 3. Sources of First Impressions About ChatGPT



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“What influenced me the most was seeing a friend of mine using it. The second thing that influenced me was seeing it on social media.” (K2, Male)

“I saw it on social media. Then I downloaded it and took a look. My friends and I started discussing philosophy. It became part of my school life. I started getting a lot of support with my homework. Later, I started using it to learn terms I didn't know because of my grandfather's cancer.” (K9, Male)

“News, social media, school and teachers, environment, phenomena” (K6, Female)

“Social media, news, environment, school, phenomena” (K12, Female)

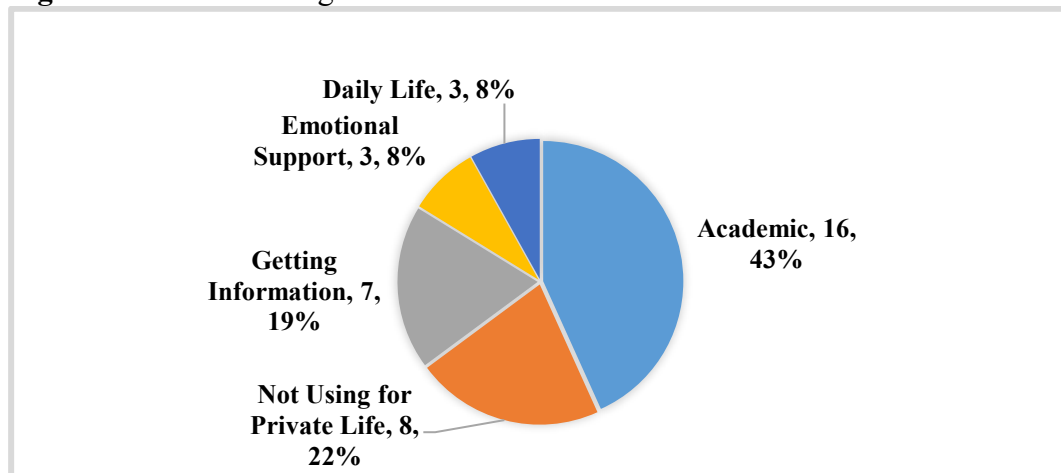
Behavior Dimensions

The Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action were developed by Fishbein and Ajzen to understand the relationship between attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (1975). The behavioral dimension refers to the tendency to act by one's knowledge and feelings about an object, which is the sum of the emotional dimension and the cognitive dimension (Güney, 2012, p. 136). The behavioral dimension is based on the individual's past behavior and behavioral intentions toward the attitude object (Arkonaç, 2016, p. 159). These behavioral tendencies can be observed in words or other actions (İnceoğlu, 2011, p. 36).

QR4. Under what headings can the purposes of using ChatGPT be explained?

Participants' views on their purposes for using ChatGPT are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. ChatGPT Usage Behaviors



Most participants (n=16) stated that they used ChatGPT for support in classes, assignments, or academic writing. Eight participants explicitly stated that they did not use ChatGPT in their personal lives. These participants stated that they preferred to use the application only in functional or necessary situations, such as for schoolwork. Seven participants stated that they regularly used ChatGPT to gain general knowledge, while a smaller group preferred to use the application for daily or emotional needs. Three participants stated that they used ChatGPT for personal experiences related to daily life, such as dream interpretation, obtaining information about astrology, or sharing secrets. Similarly, three participants stated that they used the application for emotional support. These findings show that although ChatGPT's primary area of use is in an academic context, for some individuals, it can also become a part of their daily lives and emotional processes.

"I had no intention of writing about artificial intelligence outside of my homework. I don't think it's right to share my personal information." (K3, Male)

“Although it wasn’t about topics such as fortune telling or astrology, I had my dream interpreted according to Freud.” (K4, Male)

“Software is not a living being, so I ask rational questions. I don’t ask anything about my private life. I don’t think it will give me the right ideas or guide me in the right direction.” (K10, Male)

“For school and daily life, things like fortune-telling and astrology.” (K2, Female)

“I prefer it for following the news, etc., and doing homework in daily life.” (K6, Female)

“I use it for homework, school, and later in my personal life to gain knowledge and as a confidant.” (K11, Female)

According to Table 3, participants perceived ChatGPT as contributing to image enhancement through behavioral explanations, and they used ChatGPT as a tool for content creation and manipulation.

Table 3. Descriptive Findings of Behavioral Explanations

Behavioral Explanations (Image Enhancement and Content Generation)	n	No		Yes		\bar{x}	ss
		n	%	n	%		
Using ChatGPT helps me improve my image.	24	13	54,2	11	45,8	0,46	0,51
Using ChatGPT helps me become more powerful.	24	11	45,8	13	54,2	0,54	0,51
It's important for me to get positive likes and create a positive impression on social media using ChatGPT.	24	18	75,0	6	25,0	0,25	0,44
I use ChatGPT to create content.	24	11	45,8	13	54,2	0,54	0,51
I use ChatGPT to create photo (visual) manipulations.	24	14	58,3	10	41,7	0,42	0,50

Emotional Dimensions

Thurstone and Chave (1929) proposed that attitudes consist of evaluative or emotional responses toward the attitude object (Chiu, 2002). The emotional component of attitude is an emotional response toward the subject, object, or person (Abun et al., 2019). People's positive and negative feelings and evaluations regarding the attitude object constitute the content of the emotional dimension

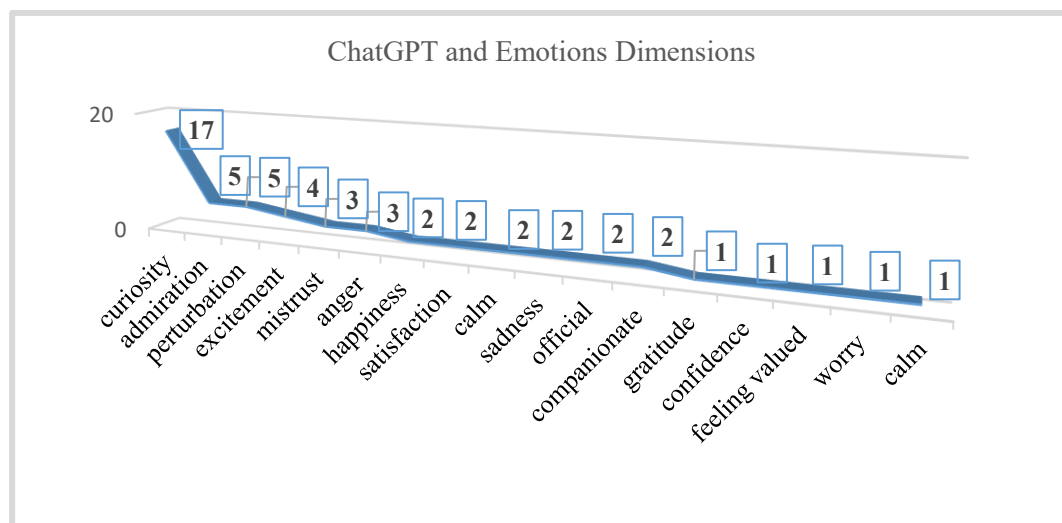
(Güney, 2012, p. 135). The emotional dimension is based on the person's feelings, emotions, and emotional responses and evaluations toward the attitude object (Arkonaç, 2016, p. 159; Aronson et al., 2012, p. 358). In the emotional dimension, desire for the object, preference for the object, love for the object, and liking and enjoyment of the object come to the fore. The emotional dimension is also closely related to the individual's value system (İnceoğlu, 2011, p. 31). When information carries an emotional impact, it is more frequently remembered by people (Omrod, 2021, p. 449).

QR5. What are the prominent emotions in the use of ChatGPT?

The dominant emotional experience in Generation Z's interactions with ChatGPT is curiosity. The vast majority of participants (n=17) reported feeling intense curiosity when they first encountered or interacted with the application. In addition, five participants expressed admiration for the application, while another five reported feeling perturbation during the interaction. Four participants emphasized excitement, while three participants expressed more complex emotions, such as mistrust and anger, about their ChatGPT experiences. The feeling of mistrust typically stemmed from questioning the accuracy of the information provided, while anger arose when the system's responses failed to meet expectations. A smaller number of participants experienced more individual and varied emotions such as happiness, satisfaction, calm, and sadness. In addition, some participants described their communication with ChatGPT as official or companionate, demonstrating that relationships established with technological tools involve not only cognitive but also social dimensions. Emotions such as gratitude, confidence, and feeling valued, when expressed individually, suggest that ChatGPT's impact on users may be meaningful at the individual level.

The emotions shared by participants during ChatGPT use are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. ChatGPT and Emotions Dimensions



“When interacting with ChatGPT, my general approach is to give commands. This means that I try not to get emotionally involved as much as possible, realizing that it is an inanimate, emotionless entity that is my assistant, and I eagerly question its answers. And I try to remain anonymous out of fear.” (K6, Male)

“The biggest factor is the question of curiosity in my mind. First, I ask ChatGPT the questions in my mind. Second, I look at it with suspicion. I wonder if it will answer correctly.” (K8, Male)

“I am generally curious. I research what comes to mind within the framework of logic and science. Sometimes I am amazed by the answers.” (K10, Male)

“I use it for curiosity, because there are many things in daily life that I don’t know and am curious about.” (K7, Female)

“I act like a boss and enjoy it. I write about the things I’m curious about regarding zodiac signs.” (K10, Female)

“Trust, gratitude, and rarely anger.” (K13, Female)

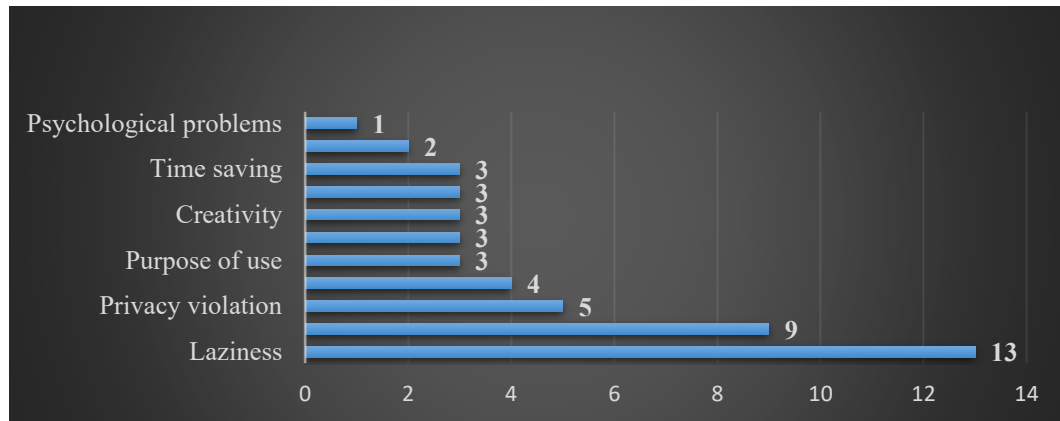
QR6. What are the views of Generation Z participants regarding the cognitive and emotional implications of using ChatGPT?

Participants' views on how ChatGPT affects cognition and emotions are shown in Figure 6.

When examining the cognitive and emotional effects of ChatGPT on Generation Z, it is evident that this technology has both supportive and controversial aspects for young individuals. A significant portion of the participants (n=13) stated that ChatGPT creates a feeling of *“cognitive laziness”* in tasks that require mental effort. These individuals stated that, particularly in production processes such as homework or writing, they had neglected their thinking skills due to the easy accessibility of the application. Similarly, nine participants drew attention to the appeal of the *“convenience”* offered by ChatGPT and stated that this ease sometimes reduced their mental effort. However, it was also stated that the application supports certain cognitive skills. Four participants stated that ChatGPT encourages them to think in a multifaceted way and contributes to their seeing different perspectives. Three participants stated that they see the application as a tool that supports their *creativity*. Some participants emphasized that these effects vary depending on the individual's purpose of use (n=3); that is, whether ChatGPT leads to *laziness* is seen as being directly related to how and for what purpose it is used. At the ethical and emotional level, some important concerns stand out. Five participants pointed to the risk of privacy violations and expressed their doubts about the protection of *personal data*. Three participants stated that ChatGPT could pose a threat in the future, that it could influence individuals' ways of thinking and affect their choices. An equal number of participants emphasized that the application could be addictive. Additionally, two participants argued that intensive use of ChatGPT could lead to antisocial behavior, while one participant expressed

concern that the application could cause *psychological problems* in individuals in the long term.

Figure 6. Reflection of ChatGPT Use on Cognition and Emotion



"It makes our lives easier. It can quickly take care of a long-term task for us and save us time. On the downside, it makes us lazy. I think it weakens our imagination and thinking. It also makes it easy to access and sell our personal information. This is dangerous." (K2, Male)

"I think ChatGPT is an opportunity in that it develops a person's multiple thinking perception, saves time in terms of finding resources, and provides opportunities such as business development. In terms of threats, we can say that the processing of our data, the processing of our information by brands, and the predictability of our characteristics and purchasing behavior in big data are the biggest threats that ChatGPT poses to us." (K4, Male)

"As an opportunity, it provides various information, different perspectives, suggestions, recommendations, and alternative solutions to problems. As a threat, it poses risks such as data falling into the wrong hands, the misuse of processed data or artificial intelligence, and deepfakes or various manipulations. At the same time, people becoming overly dependent on it, exaggerating it, and leading to antisocial behavior, various problems, and psychological disorders is a big enough thing." (K6, Male)

"I think it contributes to creativity in terms of generating ideas. Maybe it can create a little laziness." (K9, Female)

"I think it provides practicality. However, depending on how the person uses it, it can also lead to laziness." (K12, Female)

"I think it creates laziness and dependency. I think it will hinder our cognitive abilities." (K13, Female)

Table 4. Descriptive Findings of Emotional Descriptions

Emotional Statements	n	No		Yes		\bar{x}	ss
		n	%	n	%		
Using ChatGPT reduces my anxiety.	24	11	45,8	13	54,2	0,54	0,51
Using ChatGPT saves me from loneliness.	24	20	83,3	4	16,7	0,17	0,38
ChatGPT is my confidant.	24	19	79,2	5	20,8	0,21	0,42
I consult ChatGPT for information about emotional issues.	24	14	58,3	10	41,7	0,42	0,50
General Emotional Disclosures	24	-	-	-	-	0,33	0,28

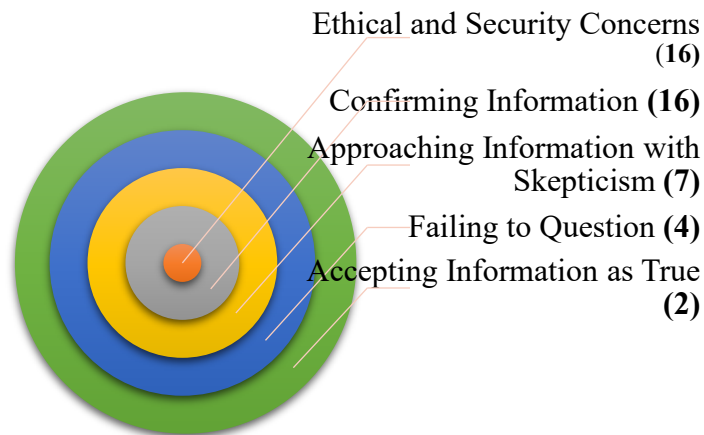
According to Table 4, it is understood that participants' use of ChatGPT reduced their anxiety, provided them with emotional support, and that they viewed ChatGPT as a confidant and even as an object of social interaction, communication, and engagement.

QR7. What are the main ethical and security concerns associated with the use of ChatGPT?

Participants' views on ethics and security in the use of ChatGPT are shown in Figure 7.

It has been observed that Generation Z individuals have certain ethical and security concerns regarding the use of ChatGPT, and they have developed a cautious attitude toward the accuracy of the information provided by the application. Half of the participants (n=16) stated that they felt the need to verify the information they obtained from ChatGPT with other sources. This verification process is mostly carried out through additional searches on Google or by consulting their social circles. The same number of participants (n=16) expressed that they believe ChatGPT may pose certain ethical and security risks. These concerns are particularly related to personal data security, the possibility of misdirection, and the social impacts that may arise from placing excessive trust in artificial intelligence. Seven participants explicitly stated that they generally found the information provided by ChatGPT to be suspicious and did not fully trust its accuracy. In contrast, four participants stated that they did not question the information provided by ChatGPT and accepted the responses as they were. Two participants stated that they generally found the information provided by ChatGPT to be accurate.

Figure 7. ChatGPT, Ethics and Security



“First of all, I have ethical concerns and security concerns. As a result, I use my ChatGPT account anonymously. When it comes to the information provided by GPT, I try to confirm the information it provides with other sources as much as possible, based on my previous experiences.” (K6, Male)

“I don't trust ChatGPT. I think it can cause a lot of problems, especially in terms of personal information breaches. It can also be satisfying in terms of information accuracy. The information is not completely reliable. There is a margin of error. It is necessary to verify it.” (K7)

“It can lead to various perversions in terms of security concerns. I am afraid of this. I ask my family and Google to verify the accuracy of the information.” (K10, Female)

“I don't think it provides very accurate information. I think privacy is a major threat. I don't trust it.” (K12, Female)

“I generally accept its accuracy without questioning it.” (K13, Female)

5. Results and Discussions

The findings and results of the qualitative and quantitative research are outlined below. There is a significant correlation between the findings and results of the research and the results of research in the field.

- The most important factors influencing the decision to use ChatGPT are friends/social circle and social media.
- The variables that stand out in the sources of first impressions about ChatGPT are friends/social circle, social media, academics, and influencers.
- The most prominent variable in the motivation to use ChatGPT is access to information.
- The dimensions that stand out in ChatGPT usage behavior are academic life, homework, and information acquisition.

- The most prominent variable in the emotional dimension of attitudes toward ChatGPT is curiosity. This variable is followed by admiration, anxiety, excitement, and suspicion.
- In negative evaluations of ChatGPT, ethical and security concerns and distrust of the information obtained are prominent.

The findings and results of the study on Generation Z's positive evaluations of ChatGPT are consistent with other studies in the field. For example, it shows that participants generally have positive perceptions of ChatGPT in the educational environment (Yilmaz et al., 2023). It shows that ChatGPT technology is considered an effective tool by students for completing academic tasks and increasing learning efficiency (Abdulhajar et al., 2024; Dassouli et al., 2025). A positive attitude toward ChatGPT stems from the popularity and superior capabilities of technology (Xia et al., 2025). It shows that Generation Z is more likely to adopt AI-powered chatbots (Biloš & Budimir, 2024). The findings indicate that most students view ChatGPT as a useful learning tool, particularly when considering its practical advantages and ease of use (Damanik, 2024; Kim & Moon, 2025).

The findings and conclusions of this study regarding Generation Z's negative perceptions of ChatGPT are consistent with other studies in the field. For example, the results of this study indicate that our students need more information and a more positive attitude toward ChatGPT (Naureen et al., 2024). ChatGPT's strengths come with weaknesses such as privacy concerns, limitations in critical thinking skills, and ethical dilemmas (Vindaca et al., 2024).

The findings and conclusions of the study on Generation Z's assessments of ChatGPT are consistent with other studies in the field. For example, higher education institutions should prioritize educating students on the responsible and ethical use of ChatGPT and other generative AI tools (Rasul et al., 2023). Various challenges persist, including a lack of deep understanding of academic ethics, the risk of plagiarism, and students' tendency to over-rely on this technology without conducting independent analysis (Abdulhajar et al., 2024).

On the other hand, ethical and security concerns and distrust of the information obtained are prominent in Generation Z's negative evaluations of ChatGPT. Perceived ethics refers to students' beliefs about the moral and ethical consequences of using ChatGPT for academic purposes (Acosta-Enriquez et al., 2024). It is important to investigate how attitudes of optimism, skepticism, or indifference toward artificial intelligence develop and how these attitudes influence the intention to use technologies such as ChatGPT (Acosta-Enriquez et al., 2024). Another study suggests that deeper theoretical models are needed that take into account disciplinary variables and previous experiences with artificial intelligence (Acosta-Enriquez et al., 2024). Therefore, there is a need for new models that explore what Generation Z thinks and feels about the ChatGPT artificial intelligence application, how it is reflected in their practical lives, and how it shapes their experiences and even becomes a part of their lives.

While proponents of the dominant approach view technology and technological tools positively (citing their transformative power, their role in simplifying life, and the fact that technology is a product of the Enlightenment, among other reasons), critical thinkers and theorists criticize technology and its connection to power relations, arguing that it both alienates the individual and serves as a tool of domination and exploitation. In the context of this study, the views of critical thinkers and theorists such as Ellul, Fuchs, Foucault, and Byung-Chul Han are discussed.

For example, in his works, Ellul explains that capitalism and science have used technology to create machines; while these machines initially made human life easier, they eventually came to surround humans and even turned them into slaves (2003; 2015). According to Ellul, the technical movement possesses the power to impose itself and dismantle the obstacles in its path, and it has taken over the entirety of civilization (2003, p. 129). According to Christian Fuchs, a key representative of contemporary critical thought and theory, in today's digital, new, and social media ecosystem, there is a need for K. Marx and his concepts, theories, and perspectives to understand domination, exploitation, digital labor, reification, commodification, and dispossession—phenomena that can be linked to power relations. (2015; 2016).

Foucault defines the concept of biopower as power and technology that governs population, birth, death, life-prolonging technologies, and techniques of intervention in or control over life (2015a; 2015b; 2018). Therefore, power must be able to see or make visible the behavior of all people. Foucault explained the mechanism that makes people visible through the concept of panopticon. The panopticon is a prison constructed radially so that a guard at its center can see all the prisoners. The panopticon is the dichotomy of seeing and being seen. Biopower both accesses people's data and targets their bodies, thereby directing, shaping, and transforming individuals' emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.

Byung-Chul Han, however, explains that in today's digitalization process, psychopolitics has replaced biopower. According to him, the new technique of domination and selfhood emerging within the information regime is psychopolitics. The information regime does not rely on any form of biopolitics. Nor does the new regime concern itself with the body. The information regime seizes control of the psychic apparatus through psychopolitics. We are currently in the age of digital psychopolitics (Han, 2022a; 2022b). According to Han, the most significant driving force behind the replacement of biopower by psych power is big data. Digital psychopolitics also takes control of the social behaviors of the masses by accessing the logic of the unconscious (Han, 2023a; 2024d). Artificial intelligence applications also make a tremendous contribution to big data. Therefore, within the framework of Ellul, Fuchs, Foucault, and Han, Generation Z must be aware—when using artificial intelligence applications—of both the relationship between these tools and power dynamics, their own potential to become attached to, dependent on, or even enslaved by these tools, and the fact that the data obtained can be used as both a biopower and a psych political technique of domination.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study reveal that Generation Z's attitudes toward generative artificial intelligence applications such as ChatGPT are multidimensional and contextual. Participants most frequently use these tools for academic support and quick access to information, evaluating them as “digital assistants” for tasks such as homework preparation, summarization, writing and punctuation, and information organization. Additionally, post-test data showed high participation in responses such as “I use it for homework” and “like an assistant.” Verification behavior is also common, particularly for confirming information provided in news and lectures. To a more limited extent, emotional expectations such as dream interpretation or seeking support from a “reasonable person” are observed. In summary, the findings of the study indicate that the prominent applications are access to information and academic use, verification, and limited emotional support.

When assessing the dimensions of attitude, ease of access to information (91.7%) and perception of increased creativity (75%) stand out in the cognitive dimension. The fact that the motivations for initial use are mostly social environment and digital media-driven indicates that cognitive schemas are shaped by peer experiences. In the emotional dimension, feelings of curiosity, excitement, and admiration are intertwined with skepticism; some participants describe ChatGPT as a “confidant,” “friend,” “advisor,” or “assistant.” In the behavioral dimension, the strongest patterns are use for homework/learning purposes and information verification. This triadic structure shows that the perception of cognitive benefits (easy access, speed) and emotional curiosity/excitement increase the intention to use, which then translates into academic-focused usage behavior.

Participants are aware of several risks associated with the use of AI: The risk of cognitive sluggishness and atrophy of thinking skills (high agreement with the statement "It can hinder my thinking ability and creativity") reduces deep processing in the short term and threatens to degrade critical thinking and writing productivity in the long term. The risk of replacing human interaction poses a threat to social skills and emotional regulation. Ethical issues and data security concerns increase participants' need for fact-checking behavior, but they also pose risks of privacy and misleading information. Furthermore, the risk of addiction can lead to serious problems with time management and academic integrity.

The results reveal that Generation Z has developed a critical awareness of AI, simultaneously evaluating its benefits and risks. This points to a strong need for responsible and conscious use of AI in individual, social, and academic life.

The recommendations developed within this framework demonstrate the need to support this awareness at the institutional level. First, digital literacy and artificial intelligence awareness training should be expanded in higher education

institutions. Interdisciplinary teaching content should be created to ensure that students see not only the practical benefits but also the critical and ethical dimensions. Clear principles and institutional guidelines regarding the use of ChatGPT in academic contexts should be developed to prevent plagiarism, cognitive laziness, and ethical violations.

These recommendations will support the conscious use of AI's benefits while also contributing to reducing cognitive laziness, dependency, and ethical risks. The overall research findings demonstrate that a balanced approach that considers both the opportunities and risks of AI will be a critical necessity in the future.

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