

# EXPLORING MILLENNIALS' ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTUBE AND THEIR MEDIA USAGE AND NEEDS GRATIFICATIONS

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**ABSTRACT:** *Youths of today are constantly bombarded with a lot of media messages. They have been given a wide array of information and selecting prudently from these sources pose a concern for educators and academicians. Corollary to this, this study has examined the YouTube viewing patterns among the millennials. This is done to ascertain the significance of this technological innovation brought about by this media channel. For this purpose, a survey questionnaire was developed to collect the needed data. Salient results of the study included that millennials have been very much connected to YouTube for at least 10 hours and fifteen minutes on a weekly basis. Their exposure to this media outlet have been traced to the technology skills that they learned from social networking sites, followed by creativity and lastly being open to new or diverse views and the learned communication skills. The present study also found out that their main usage of YouTube is for downloading, video sharing and uploading. More so, it is the entertainment factor of the YouTube videos that offer much connectivity and even supplementary tool that these young generations avail for their educational use as well.*

**Keywords:** Millennials, YouTube, media access, media effects, and uses and gratifications

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's generation youths are constantly becoming the target of media and as such they are bombarded with a lot of media messages. Educators may pose a question on this matter as their exposure is very much high as compared to the previous years. Questions like do they still use this for their advantage or little significance could be attributed since much of their time is spent on social networking sites and their academics would be left behind. Similarly, an individual interaction [1] has been largely intertwined with the large system of networks that connects individuals to the other parts of the globe in the split of seconds.

As claimed by Stewart [2] that the ways individuals connect with one another and share ideas have been multiplied dramatically. More so, he said that the rise of camera-enabled phones combined with platforms such as YouTube and Instagram has meant that images and video are easily shared within minutes. Lastly, he testified that online self-presentation and participation in networked interactions has been forming part of the features of contemporary life.

As an upshot, Farlinger and Owens [3] claimed that the technology among the generation of young people, particularly the internet has a substantial stake in their social and educational lives. And as such, this study has centered on YouTube.

Relatively, these young members of the society or better known as millennials are now depending on YouTube for they can learn, acquire, and even explore new and considerably innovative ideas which are becoming significant in shaping their behavior and even so their personality.

YouTube has been a fascinating and serving as one of the fastest growing websites, and is one of the most accessed sites in the internet. O'Malley [4] reported that anyone can be a user of this website regardless of economic category or profession in life as long as they can have access to the internet superhighway. As a result, the viewers and users (as the term can be dual in nature), can actually share, upload, view or even download video content for numerous times.

Not only that they can not only share but the features also include that they can also comment to these videos whenever one posts or even shares most often than not in their social networking sites like Facebook and the like. All of these features have become accessible and thus making YouTube a user friendly site in the internet.

In fact, National Council of Teachers in English [5] has elucidated that students today are living in a world that is increasingly non-print-centric. As a matter of fact, new media such as the internet, MP3 files, and videos are transforming the common experiences of these young people outside of school. As a proof of this, these young people are composing in non-print media that can include any combination of visual art, motion (video and film), graphics, text and sound – all of which are frequently written and read in nonlinear fashion. This, computer-based nonlinear video production alone provides a grand new palette for both students and teachers.

As more teachers and students use the internet, online video, and social networking sites to obtain information, share ideas, and work collaboratively, students are spending more and more on the computer and online choosing videos and images for classroom research and multimedia projects [6]. However, despite the potential of YouTube as a learning tool in education, its use as a learning instrument for learner generated content is scarce. [7]

In addition, according to Burgess [8], YouTube has become the dominant platform for online video worldwide, and serves as an important location for some of the most significant trends and controversies in the contemporary new-media environment.

Numerous research have confirmed the importance of incorporating Web 2.0 to facilitate the teaching and learning process and so the creation of learner-generated content, that centers around enhancing students' performance and learning. One study is that of Lee and McLoughlin [9] as they presented examples of learner-generated content activities carried out in higher education, which include among others the use of audio podcasts, wikis, or even social networking sites, which all aiming at students' experience. On the other

hand, Gupta [10] developed a framework and proposed that the use of blogs, wikis, and also discussion boards can produce effective learning; this can be in terms of cognitive, affective and meta-cognitive responses, provided that there is a fit between the characteristics of technology and the involved pedagogical task. While, if there is a misfit, the use of technology may pose a negative effect on the specified learning outcomes. This may exist if the students were tasked to fulfill numerous discussion posts as they may be able to perceive this as a tiresome task.

Furthermore, when using YouTube as a platform to post educational videos may be advantageous as this facilitates the searching of videos about any topic that fosters student – student and teacher – student collaboration and also aims at helping its users’ learning process [11]. In addition, as confirmed by other researchers [12], that through sharing content in real time and getting feedback from students on the entire channel or on a specific video is also facilitated. As YouTube posted on their site, it is becoming possible to gather information about the total number of views, and also the average display per view, and also to record the total amount of time in hours that the video has been displayed, and even the total number of comments gathered by a single post.

**2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In media studies, there can be various related media theories which can help broaden on the understanding of the YouTube usage among the millennials. And these are Uses and Gratifications, Media Equation and Media Dependency.

The first useful theory is Uses and Gratifications theory which was developed by Katz and Blumler. This states that media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Furthermore, a media user avails of a determined media source that would best fulfill his/her needs. In relation to the study, the identified users or viewers who then seek out information from different media sources in order to achieve certain results or gratifications that can best satisfy their personal needs.

On the other hand, Media Equation describes that people often use media and treats these as if they are real persons. As related to this present study, the millennials may refer to these media outlets as if they are real persons, in a way that they could talk or even be a means of easing their burdens in life.

Similarly, the third theory connected to this paper is Media Dependency Theory which proposes an integral relationship among the media audiences, the media itself and the larger social system. This theory even predicts that an individual depends on media information to meet certain needs and achieve goals. As to better associate in this study, this theory supports the idea that users and viewers of media are becoming dependent with the information from media in order to satisfy their needs. The presumption that media then becomes more important to an individual.

These theories have served as the backbone of this study which also provided enlightenment and broaden the understanding on the media effects among the millennials.

**3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The study aimed to investigate the engagement of the millennials with YouTube and the potential media effects that this this media source has on them. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of their age?
2. What is the extent of YouTube viewing pattern according to their:
  - 2.1 extent of viewing (number of hours) YouTube; and
  - 2.2 YouTube category preferences?

**4. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The prime interest of this study is on establishing the millennials’ YouTube engagement and the potential media effects that these will have on them. The gathered data was limited to the use of the questionnaires, which was answered by the respondents who utilize YouTube.

The study was conducted so that awareness could be given to the respondents. And as such, this aimed at making them aware about viewing YouTube. Furthermore, this study does not offer any psychological explanation of why the respondents are being hooked in YouTube. Lastly, this study does not involve in giving psychological advice to the respondents nor would explain their manifested behavior in viewing and availing YouTube.

**5. METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive method of research was utilized in this study. This research process does not only require the collection and tabulation of data, but also it entails describing the data as presented in this paper.

Moreover, the research was conducted in Cagayan de Oro City. The respondents of the study were categorized into three, namely high school students, college students and young professionals.

To analyze and interpret the gathered data, statistical methods were also used. Percentage was used to describe the profile of the respondents and their YouTube viewing patterns. While rank sum was also employed to identify the primary use of YouTube and so with the different YouTube categories.

**6. RESULTS AND DICUSSION**

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data as relating to the topic of the study, collected and scored.

**Figure 1. Percent Distribution of Respondents by Age Group**

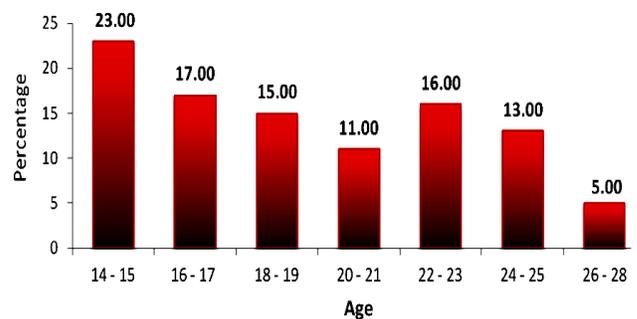
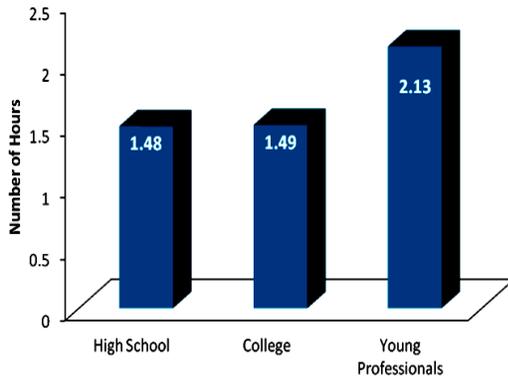


Figure 1 shows the percent distribution of respondents by age group. It has been found out that majority of the respondents are 14 to 15 years old (high school students) with 23 percent, followed by age group 16 to 17 (college students) with 17 percent, and 22 to 23 age group (young professionals) with 16 percent. The total number of respondents is 100.

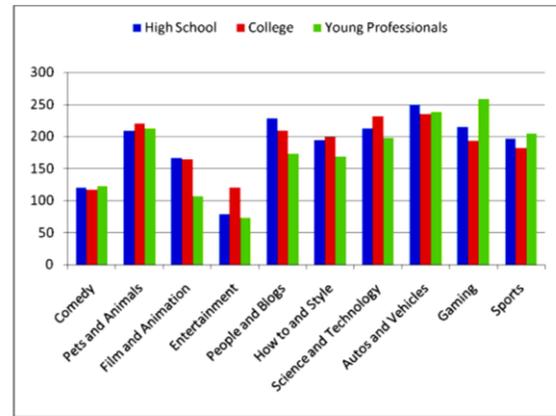
**Figure 2. Average Number of Hours Spent in a Day in YouTube Viewing**



It can be seen in Figure 2 that high school and college students have almost the same number of hours spent in a day for YouTube viewing, at one hour and forty-eight minutes and one hour and forty-nine minutes, respectively. The minimum number of hours spent of YouTube viewing by these students is twenty-five minutes and a maximum number of six hours in a day. On the other hand, young professionals spent on the average of two hours and thirteen minutes of YouTube viewing in a day. The minimum number of hours spent by a young professional in YouTube is 30 minutes and a maximum of ten hours in a day.

This result was supported by Sonsona [13] in his study that majority of his respondents who are also college students are using the Internet for one - three hours. His claim has corroborated the American survey in 2006 that people spends 85 minutes or nearly two hours in this medium. This result has also affirmed the survey of Reuters in 2003 that young people spent approximately 17 hours online each week. Evidently, Lloyd and Suellentrop [14] asserted that there was an increase in the total amount of media use (i.e., person hours) among teens between 2004 and 2009; the usage increased from 6.5hours/day in 2004 to 7.5 hours/day in 2009. During the same period, media exposure time increased by over two hours (from 7.5 hours to 10 hours and 45 minutes) due to the practice of using more than one medium at a time. These results imply that millennial-respondents are very much connected to the internet and specifically to the YouTube. This has collaborated previous studies that young people of today are not only using internet for social networking but even for their studies like research and other academic needs for their leaner- generated content.

Figure 3 exhibits that the top preferred YouTube categories of the high school students, college students and young professionals are entertainment, comedy, and film and animation. On the other hand, they least preferred gaming followed by autos and vehicles.



Blue: High school students, Red: College students, Green: Young Professionals

**Figure 3. YouTube Category Preferences of the millennial respondents**

Petrova [15] described that for most teens and young adults, YouTube is the Google of entertaining videos which include music videos, movie trailers, television shows, full movies, and clips. It gives a sense of what the current generation discovered appealing or entertaining. Moreover, it would tell how the viewers spend their time when they are bored, and what sparks their attention, what stimulates their minds. Similarly, she revealed that video games are the second most popular category on YouTube because video games give the brain a real workout. Thus, while playing, skills are required to win which involves abstract and high level thinking. This implies that the top preferred YouTube video categories not to discount whether students or young professionals are classified into comedy, entertainment, and film and animation. Thus, the respondents choose to watch specific video categories in YouTube to fulfill their needs. And these needs are categorized more into entertainment as compared to their school or academic requirements, which pertains to the student – respondents. On the other hand, the college and young professional respondents have been viewing this entertainment content of YouTube as an outlet for their leisure time and pastime as well.

**7. CONCLUSION**

The results from the study showed that the millennial-respondents watched YouTube videos for entertainment purposes. Certainly, they neglected the fact that YouTube website offers not only entertainment but also educational such as documentary film, science and technology, tutorials, and the like. Their exposure to this media outlet have been traced to the technology skills that they learned from social networking sites, followed by creativity and lastly being open to new or diverse views and the learned communication skills. The present study also found out that their main usage of YouTube is for downloading, video sharing and uploading. Thus, understanding the viewing patterns of YouTube and similar characteristics is essential to deepen the user generated content characteristics and to their sustainable development. To this end, there was a high involvement among the respondents and it was found out that

entertainment was the reason why they are hooked up with this popular video sharing website. Hence, the Internet and in particular, YouTube can prove to be tremendously effective to spread news and information particularly entertainment value on the web and beyond.

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