Abstract
From classrooms to breakrooms, meetings between people have changed. Instant and unscheduled, social calls intrude virtually anywhere. In undergraduate settings, Generation Z appears to be the most impacted by the demands of a digital social life. From a self-report survey of modified trait scales (i.e., subjective happiness, grit, academic entitlement, fixed mindset, and narcissism) and distractions caused by social media, this study examined the effects and relationships between traits and social media use of 1,835 students, across generations. Significant relationships were found between social media distractions and all traits. Compared to Generation X, Generation Z scored the lowest levels of subjective happiness and grit, and the highest levels of narcissism, academic entitlement, and fixed mindset. Furthermore, as students become more distracted by social media, they lost academic success traits, and gained academic frustration traits. To best prepare undergraduates for success in academia, methods for navigating digital interactions should be introduced to incoming students. Additionally, mentoring programs could connect students from different generations, potentially restoring lost traits as students work together to model their strengths in an arrangement between equals.

Background
• Generational differences have been observed in an academic setting. 
• Extrinsic reasons for attending college since 1990s; extrinsic values inspire insecurity and social comparison. 
• Students turn to social networks to restore academic confidence, which is important for success.

Method
Participants: 1,835 undergraduate students
College Locations Represented in Data: Participants 28 345
Generation of Participants: Generation Z 1997 - 2000
Millennial 1981 - 1996
Generation X Earlier ~ 1982

Measures:
• Social media distractions
• Demanding attitudes, high grades expected for minimal effort
• Long habits
• Grit: Long-term motivation in pursuit of meaningful goals
• Narcissism: Inflatable ego; utilize self-deception and aggression in pursuit of self-promotion
• Subjective Happiness: General evaluation of one’s happiness

Figure 1. N = 1,835; p < .01; η² = .01

Results

H12: Different levels of fixed mindset occur between generations as study habits become more distracted by social media.

H22: Different levels of academic entitlement occur between generations as study habits become more distracted by social media.

H32: Different levels of grit occur between generations as study habits become more distracted by social media.

Discussion
• Social media: More = more fixed mindset, more entitlement & less grit
• Fixed Mindset: Higher levels in Millennials and Generation Z may be explained by the trend of increased externality in local loyalties. 
• Academic Entitlement: Linked to narcissism and parent/social pressure, which has been previously identified as factors for Millennials and Generation Z.
• Grit: The self-directed learning style of Generation X may account for higher grit, whereas Millennials and Generation Z were test oriented, which may create emphasis on short-term goals.

Future Directions
• Design questionnaire that holds to established scales and asks targeted questions that can provide more focused answers (e.g., Select social media platform(s) you have active accounts with; how many profiles do you have— including anonymous/fake profiles?)
• Measure physiological stress response, during social media use, in students

Limitations
• Scales were modified—lost accuracy as tools of trait measurement
• Questions poorly designed for age and social media
• Self-reports without supporting/physiological data should be taken lightly

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