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GENERATION Z AND AUTHENTICITY ON THE  
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM BEREAL

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain  
a Master's Degree in Communication Studies in Marketing  
& Advertisement

By

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Faculty of Human Sciences

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CATÓLICA  
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GENERATION Z AND AUTHENTICITY ON THE  
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DISSERTATION

Dissertation to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain  
a Master's Degree in (name of Master's degree and  
Specialization)

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## ABSTRACT

In an age in which social media dominate the landscape of personal interaction and self-expression, the concept of authenticity has become increasingly significant, especially among the younger generations. Born into a world of digital connectivity, Generation Z has a unique relationship with digital technologies, particularly social media platforms, which have profoundly influenced how they perceive and construct their identities. Therefore, the pursuit of authenticity, being true to oneself and presenting a "real" version of one's life, has emerged as a key value for the members of this generation. BeReal, a social media platform released in 2020, has been characterized for allowing its users to share that authentic self with the world in the simplest and most unfiltered way possible. However, the desire to be authentic while diving into a world of curated, filtered, posed, and edited images can still be a very difficult goal to achieve. Given that BeReal is a relatively new platform, there are very few studies that focus on its unique features and the impact it has had on its users. Therefore, this dissertation aims to fill in that gap of research by exploring how Generation Z produces and perceives online authenticity on the social media platform BeReal.

The study was conducted using an exploratory approach based on the qualitative method, that included 14 interviews with Gen Z participants, and a content analysis of their shared BeReals. The findings suggest that while BeReal's design encourages a more genuine portrayal of daily life, users still engage in selective self-presentation, subtly managing their online personas to align with social expectations and their personal identity goals. Although Generation Z values authenticity, their members are aware that most of content being produced and shared through social media can not exactly mirror real-life experiences. Consequently, this dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between digital technology, social media, and authenticity for Z Genners, offering insights into how this generation redefines authenticity in the digital age.

Keywords: Generation Z; Social Media; BeReal; Authenticity; Identity; Platforms; Digital

## RESUMO

Numa época em que as redes sociais dominam o panorama da interação pessoal e da auto-expressão, o conceito de autenticidade tornou-se cada vez mais significativo, especialmente entre as gerações mais jovens. Nascida num mundo de conectividade digital, a Geração Z tem uma relação única com as tecnologias digitais, em particular com as plataformas de redes sociais, que influenciaram profundamente a forma como percebem e constroem as suas identidades. Por conseguinte, a procura da autenticidade, ser verdadeiro consigo próprio e apresentar uma versão “real” da sua vida, surgiu como um valor fundamental para os membros desta geração. A BeReal, uma plataforma de redes sociais lançada em 2020, caracterizou-se por permitir que os seus utilizadores partilhem esse “eu” autêntico com o mundo da forma mais simples e sem filtros possível. No entanto, o desejo de ser autêntico ao mesmo tempo que se mergulha num mundo de imagens selecionadas, filtradas, posadas e editadas, pode ainda ser um objetivo muito difícil de alcançar. Dado que a BeReal é uma plataforma relativamente nova, existem muito poucos estudos que se centrem nas suas características únicas e no impacto que tem tido nos seus utilizadores. Por conseguinte, esta dissertação visa preencher essa lacuna de investigação, explorando a forma como a Geração Z produz e percebe a autenticidade online, na plataforma de redes sociais BeReal.

O estudo foi realizado através de uma abordagem exploratória baseada no método qualitativo, que incluiu 14 entrevistas com membros da Geração Z utilizadores da BeReal, e uma análise de conteúdo dos seus BeReals partilhados. Os resultados sugerem que, embora o design da BeReal encoraje uma representação mais genuína da vida quotidiana, os utilizadores ainda se envolvem numa auto-apresentação seletiva, gerindo subtilmente as suas personas online para se alinharem com as expectativas sociais e os seus objetivos de identidade pessoal. Embora a Geração Z valorize a autenticidade, os seus membros estão conscientes de que a maior parte do conteúdo produzido e partilhado através das redes sociais pode não espelhar exatamente as experiências da vida real. Consequentemente, esta dissertação contribui para uma compreensão mais profunda da complexa relação entre tecnologia digital, redes sociais e autenticidade para a Geração Z, oferecendo uma visão sobre como esta geração redefine a autenticidade na era digital.

Palavras-chave: Geração Z; Redes sociais; BeReal; Autenticidade; Identidade; Plataformas

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## INTRODUCTION

Social media's role in people's daily lives has significantly increased over the past decade. Consequently, the impact that these types of platforms have on their user's identity has grown exponentially. Social media effects can be especially observed in younger generations, such as Generation Z, which are dominated by digital communication (Balaban, 2022). Generation Z, also known as Gen Z or Z Genners, is a group of people born between 1995 and 2010. This generation makes up for around 32% of the world population and is the most recent generation to have entered the work cycle (Lev, 2021). Thus, understanding Generation Z is critical for businesses in order to gain competitive advantages and to guarantee their brand's long-term success.

Generation Z as a 'digital native' generation, has integrated technology into every aspect of their life and uses social media as an extension of themselves to be socially defined and shaped by their peers (McCrinkle, 2018). Generation Z has its own unique identity, with a set of values that embody their way of thinking and their decision-making. Among these values, authenticity stands out, however, it can be rather contradictory that this generation is now demanding authenticity, when they find themselves living in a world of virtual, filtered, and curated images (Balaban, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on Generation Z behavior, by addressing the gap between authenticity, which they believe to be one of their core values, and how they are truly behaving on social media.

Despite the existence of previous studies on authenticity and social media, its impact on new platforms like BeReal has not yet been profoundly investigated. As Geary et al. (2021) mention, "studies of authentic online self-presentation to date are typically non platform specific" (p. 3). BeReal is a mobile app that intends to embody authenticity by eliminating the possibility of adding filters and incentivizing users to post only one natural and spontaneous story per day, which will be available for 24 hours (Duffy & Gerrard, 2022). Particularly with Generation Z, this study is key since "social media platforms constitute the main used channels or preoccupations of the younger generation" (Mondreanu & Nicoleta, 2022, p. 264) and the research available on this topic is still very minimal. This makes studying Generation Z patterns and understanding their behavior on social media platforms like BeReal, extremely valuable from many marketing perspectives (Mason et al., 2022).

Authenticity has many definitions, and some of them rely on the idea that an individual may be subject to change according to the situation or role they might find themselves in at any given time. This means that this concept of authenticity may also be flexible within the same person's identity and a reflection of who a person is across different contexts and environments (Lim et al., 2015). Since social media provides a platform for users to create an online identity based on an offline one, it is crucial to understand if these two identities find themselves in congruence with each other (Balaban, 2022). Also, as described by Cranton and Carussetta (2004), authenticity may be defined as "the expression of genuine self in the community" (p.7), and for Z Genners, their community is composed of their online followers in their social media platforms as well as their friends and family outside of the digital realm. Wood et al. (2008) noted that since humans are social beings, they will try to meet other people's expectations by adapting their way of acting and communicating. Nevertheless, they believed that a truly authentic person would not let any type of social pressure affect their displayed behavior.

As it is a challenge to understand how a user will stay consistent with their authenticity when interacting with others online, research is necessary to further analyze this topic. That said, there aren't enough studies completed to understand the connection between specific social media platforms and Generation Z authentic behavior, and this might be due to the lack of a valid tool that allows to properly measure online authenticity (Lim et al., 2015). The goal for this study is to contribute to the existing literature by exploring a specific social media platform and the way it shapes Z Genner's behavior, values, and identity.

Consequently, the objective of this dissertation is to find the link between the use of the social media platform Be Real, according to the perceived authenticity of its users, specifically by those users who belong to the Generation Z cohort. Based on this purpose, the following question has been proposed:

**How is online authenticity produced and perceived by generation Z in the social media platform BeReal?**

In order to answer this question, this dissertation is composed of six chapters. Firstly, the introduction presents the research topic and justifies its relevance. Then, chapter one focuses on Generation Z, as they are the main actors of the study. However, to understand what makes this generation so unique, it is necessary to explore the concept of generation and all those generations that preceded the Z Genners. Therefore, the chapter first goes into the different definitions of the term and the limitations that have been identified around this area of study. Next, it presents the generations that have been labeled and studied prior to the Z Genners: The GI Generation, Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. Once this background has been established, the chapter explores the specific characteristics of Generation Z. This includes how they are labeled, what range of birth years makes up this cohort and what important events have defined them. Finally, there is a last subsection that is dedicated to analyzing their digital practices and how Generation Z interacts everyday with digital technologies.

The second chapter in this study revolves around social media. First, the chapter explores what this term means and how it has been defined. Then, it overviews research on the specific characteristics of several social media platforms, as well as going through a brief history of the evolution of these platforms. The idea here is to understand the changes that have happened throughout the years and how these have impacted the different generations while new digital technologies were being launched and implemented. Next, the chapter analyzes the current landscape and what is happening currently in terms of social media and platforms that are being used. Finally, the focus at the end of this chapter is on the connection between Z Genners and social media. This means exploring how they perceive it and incorporate it into their daily lives. Furthermore, the last subsection explores in depth the social media platform BeReal. It establishes what it is and what makes it different from other platforms that have been previously introduced in the market.

Chapter three's main focus is authenticity. To be able to tie all the previous chapters together, it was necessary to also study what does authenticity means and what does being authentic entails. The chapter starts by presenting how authenticity is defined by different authors and how it has been proposed that authenticity could be measured. Next, it expands on the connection of authenticity and Generation Z. The idea is to explore and understand why this

term is so deeply connected to Z Geners, what it is that makes it so relevant currently and how it has been intertwined with the online digital world of the social media platforms that they use. Finally, the chapter explores again BeReal, addressing specifically its relation to authenticity, hence, understanding how BeReal enables users to present themselves in a more authentic manner.

To develop a better understanding of the literature presented in the first three chapters and to achieve an answer for the established research question, the methodology chapter presents and explains the qualitative approach selected for this exploratory study. This study was conducted through in-depth interviews with a selected group of Z Geners that met the selection criteria, as well as a content analysis of their publications on BeReal. Thus, part two of this study is composed of methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion. The methodology presents the research purpose and objectives. Here, it is explained how the sampling was conducted, the interview script that was designed and how the information was gathered and analyzed. On the findings chapter, the results were exhibited, divided into two categories. First, what was retrieved from the interviews, and then the content analysis of the images that were shared by the participants. Finally, there is a discussion chapter that addresses what was found during this process, and connects the findings to the initial research question and the objectives of the study, as well as to the literature review. Limitations were included in regard to the methodology used. Lastly, the conclusion summarizes the main contributions of this study, that were reached through the literature review and the qualitative study, pointing to new research directions.

## **PART I: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **CHAPTER 1 – UNDERSTANDING GENERATION Z**

Understanding Generation Z is essential for grasping modern trends and behaviors. This chapter explores the unique traits of Z Genners, exploring not only their distinct characteristics but also contrasting them with previous generations to extract valuable insights of the evolving landscape of contemporary society.

#### **1.1 DEFINING A “GENERATION”**

Defining the term *generation* is the first step to understanding what makes Generation Z so relevant to this study. Although it has been defined in multiple ways, one of the most accepted definitions describes the word generation as “a group of people or cohorts who share birth years and experiences as they move through time together” (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 66). According to Schewe and Noble (2000), “not only should individuals in a given cohort recall similar impactful events, but they should be able to attach meaning and cite personal experiences as to why these events were important” (p. 131). Another definition for the term generation is “a group of people who share a time and space in history that lends them a collective persona” (Howe & Strauss, 2000, as cited by McCrindle, 2018, p. 2).

The idea of a “collective persona” illustrates how a link between people inside the same generational group is created even if they are in completely different locations of the world. In his book, *Understanding Global Generations* (2018), McCrindle explains that, now more than ever, due to the internet and globalization, people born and/or raised in different places can still be shaped by the same key events, even despite not belonging to the same cultural and socioeconomic groups. As he describes it, individuals will be “accessing the same websites, watching the same movies, downloading the same songs and being influenced by the same brands” (p. 2) and this will ultimately set the direction of each generation in terms of “values, attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs” (Schewe & Noble, 2000, p. 131). In other words,

“members of each generation are interconnected by the shared experiences of their adolescence, popular culture, economic situation, world events, natural disasters,

heroes, public enemies, politics, technology, so by all those experiences that make a cohort, an age group in the sociological sense” (Töröcsik, 2011, as cited by Csobanka, 2016, p. 65).

Additionally, generational researchers Strauss and Howe (1992) describe how the shared behaviors and personalities within a generation will be manifested not only throughout their own life cycle but also throughout the life cycle of the next generations. For example, “how children are raised affects how they later parent, how students are taught affects how they later teach” (p. 33) and so on. That is why it is important to observe the generation’s complete lifecycle trajectory, from childhood to adulthood, because the collective personality traits will be manifested differently in each phase and consequently have an effect in the upcoming generation, as there is a continuous synchronous movement of life cycles in history (Strauss & Howe, 1992).

Finally, it is also important to consider the flaws that the concept of “generations” might have. According to the Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim (1952), there isn’t a universal scientific approach being used in research to define this term. He thought most authors using this concept would start their studies from their own point of view while ignoring other historical research on the same subject, especially when that research came from authors abroad. For Mannheim, “although the members of a generation are undoubtedly bound together in certain ways, the ties between them have not resulted in a concrete group” (p. 166). Therefore, he believed that there were other important factors to take into consideration other than simple intervals of years and historical location, such as “extra-biological factors” (p. 191) and “whether a new generation style emerges every year, every thirty, every hundred years, or whether it emerges rhythmically at all, depends entirely on the trigger action of the social and cultural process” (p. 191).

According to Mannheim (1952), there are several challenges associated with the study of generations. Firstly, there is the problem of agreeing on a specific range of dates that would comprise a given cohort or generation. He argued that years of birth should not be the only determinant factor, but that instead, researchers should consider the important historical events that would have happened during those dates. The problem is that determining the level of importance of any given event is subjective and therefore difficult for all researchers

to agree on which are the most important ones. The second challenge he mentions is the problem that might occur if one assumes that all members of the same cohort are exactly homogeneous in their perspectives and personal experiences. This means that even within the same generation it is possible to find sub generations or subgroups that might have a completely different reaction to the same event. Therefore, generalizations might not be the best approach. Thirdly, Mannheim also explains that people are in fact ever changing and growing. This means that the generations itself might evolve over time and develop new characteristics different from the ones that were initially assigned to that particular group. This fluid nature of generations makes studying them even more problematic, especially as new cohorts appear and they interact with one another. Lastly, he identifies as a challenge the impact that other social factors have, and which makes it overly complex for researchers to classify a certain group of people as part of a unique cohort. For instance, ethnicity, gender, geographical location, social class, cultural and political circumstances, are also important characteristics that should be considered, but that are not always taken into account in those simplistic or reductionist views (Mannheim, 1952).

McCrimdle shares a similar vision, as he explains that usually generations tended to have a biological definition that placed an interval of 20-25 years as the “the average interval of time between the birth of parents and the birth of their offspring” (p. 2). However, he claims that this definition is no longer relevant because 20 years nowadays will represent a lot more changes in technology, careers, politics, social values, etc., than what 20 years did in the past. Not to mention that if studies take into consideration the interval of childbirths, then they would have to increase the generation span significantly. As he explains, this would be because childbirths are being pushed to an older age and the average age of a woman giving birth to their first child is at 31 years old. For McCrimdle (2018), “generational characteristics are not merely a factor of life stage, or a fad that they will outgrow” (p. 3). Of course, it might be argued that the age and phase of life in which a person is at a certain moment it time can and will affect their behavior. However, generational characteristics will impact a person deeply, especially during the formative years when they are building their personality and a sense of self (McCrimdle, 2018). Hence, it is crucial to recognize and understand intergenerational dynamics, the unique phases of life and the influence of social and cultural changes, as it will be essential for unraveling the factors that have shaped Generation Z.

### 1.1.1 PREVIOUS GENERATIONS

To completely understand what makes Generation Z unique, it is also necessary to know what we are comparing it to, as “each generation is a factor of its times and a reaction to the generation that went before it” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 5).

There have been five generations that are commonly accepted to have appeared before Z Geners. For the purpose of this study, the following year ranges and labels are a reference, as they indeed vary depending on the source and author (Fromm & Read, 2018, Seemiller & Grace, 2018):

- GI Generation / Federation Generation: 1901-1924
- Silent Generation / Builders: 1925-1945
- Boomers/ Baby Boomers: 1946-1964
- Generation X: 1965-1978
- Generation Y / Millennials: 1979-1995

The G.I. Generation is the “oldest living generation, and the first to be labelled and profiled” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 8). However, there is very little written about this cohort. Most men of those belonging to this generation had to fight during both World War I and World War II. They were alive when the iconic Titanic crashed and sank in 1912 (McCrindle, 2018) and, “by 1920, most were old enough to witness, and some even vote for, the passing of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 3).

The Silent Generation was born during the Great Depression, which means that they grew during difficult times that included poverty and unemployment. They were thought to be cautious and work according to the imposed system. “Many in the Silent Generation did not protest or question authority and typically trusted the government” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p.4). However, according to Seemiller and Grace (2018), they also lived the aftermath of World War II during their adulthood. This meant that they were entering the workforce when the economy was in demand for young employees, and this resulted in a generation that was able to reach financial stability early on. Consequently, their efforts and hard work

brought about the transition from a predominantly agricultural economy to the modern industrialized one that we have today (McCrindle, 2018).

The Boomers are the result of the GI Generation returning home after WWII ended in 1945 and wanting to have a settled life by marrying and having children. They are “the largest group of babies ever born in one time period in the US” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 4), hence their name. Baby Boomers grew alongside key moments in history like the Civil Rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech. This explains why this generation was known for actively supporting different social causes like the anti-war movement, women’s rights, and racial equality during their university years. Many of the Boomers went to war in Vietnam and were entering adulthood in an era marked by the Beatles and the hippie movement of the 60s and 70s (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). According to McCrindle (2018), Boomers had the best opportunities, “they were born into the post-war boom, enjoyed an idyllic childhood, entered the workforce without struggle, were able to afford a house, set money aside for savings and invested in property as young adults” (p. 64).

Generation X is a generation born between two unquestionably larger generational groups, the Baby Boomers and the Millennials. According to Seemiller and Grace (2018), Generation X “came of age with the highest divorce rates in American history, rising from 33 percent in 1970 to 52 percent in 1980” (p. 7). They also grew up in a world of changing politics and people distrusting the government during the Watergate scandal. The AIDS epidemic was having its peak during this time, nevertheless, a lot of significant cultural events were also occurring such as the start of the Star Wars Franchise, MTV, and the rise of the two probably most iconic pop stars, Michael Jackson and Madonna. “Generation X was the first generation to use personal computers and, to this day, the highest rate of desktop computer users” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 8). They were also “the first to grow up without a large adult presence, with both parents working” (McCrindle, 2018, p.66). When they entered adulthood there was a clear lack of financial stability after 9/11 and the Great Recession, however, Generation X has always valued having a work-life balance so that they could focus on being present for their families and building strong personal relationships (Seemiller & Grace, 2018).

Generation Y, more commonly known as Millennials, is the generation of the 90s. During their coming of age most started interacting with online platforms along with the user-generated content of Web 2.0. Millennials are also known for creating social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Spotify, Snapchat, and Tinder, which have been one of the “defining contributions of the Millennial generation and it has changed the way they, and other generations, communicate, connect and get information” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 10). With the Great Recession happening in 2008, Millennials entered adulthood in a time of economic uncertainty, high levels of unemployment and carrying large amounts of student debts. These factors might have contributed to the Millennials living at their parents’ house longer, getting married and having children later in life and renting instead of buying houses (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). Nevertheless, they are still labelled as optimistic, entrepreneurial, and innovative. Millennials are thought to spend more of their income on experiences and social events rather than material objects wanting to have meaningful relationships and unique memories. However, this also might have to do with why “they have been labelled the “Me Me Me” Generation, which has been amplified through their possible over-sharing and selfie posting on social media” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 11).

In Table 1, it is possible to observe a summary of the important events and characteristics that define the generations that were mentioned and that will be the predecessors of the focus of this study, Generation Z.

Table 1 – Overview of the Generations.

	G.I. Generation	Silent Generation	Baby Boomer Generation	Generation X	Millennial Generation
Birth Years	1901-1924	1925-1945	1946-1964	1964-1980	1981-1995
Societal Context & Historical Events During Childhood and Young Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressive Movement</li> <li>• World War I</li> <li>• Great Depression</li> <li>• World War II</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World War II</li> <li>• Prosperous job market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Rights Movement</li> <li>• Vietnam War</li> <li>• Space Race</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High divorce rates</li> <li>• Watergate scandal</li> <li>• AIDS epidemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High loan debt</li> <li>• Declining job market</li> <li>• Raised by helicopter parents</li> </ul>
Commonly Associated Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebuild mindset</li> <li>• Dedicated to society’s future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk-averse</li> <li>• Conforming</li> <li>• Financial stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualistic</li> <li>• Strong work ethic</li> <li>• Competitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cynical</li> <li>• Independent</li> <li>• Family Focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digitally Connected</li> <li>• Optimistic</li> <li>• Focused on self</li> </ul>

Source: Seemiller & Grace (2018, p. 11).

## 1.2 GENERATION Z

As seen in the definitions presented previously, although most have a similar general explanation for the term *generation*, when it comes to the details, authors will differ in key aspects like the age spans of each cohort. It is certainly difficult to find a consensus on the year range used to classify the individuals that are part of Generation Z, or any other generation for that matter. In most cases, a generation tends to have a span of 14 to 20 years and while some researchers define in their studies a specific generational birth range for each of them, there are many marketers and polling agencies that end up using other dates to identify them (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). According to McCrindle (2018), “marketers are tempted to begin a generation at a key year like, say, 2000, but there is no demographic or sociological justification for such date picking” (p. 12). Some studies suggest that Generation Z is composed of people born on the year 1995, while others use 1996 or 1997 until the years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 or even with no marked end date (Fromm & Read, 2018, McCrindle, 2018, Seemiller & Grace, 2018, Töröcsik et al., 2014). Due to this difference in the range of dates, it is completely normal that the eldest members of Generation Z might display certain characteristics and behaviors reminiscent of Millennials, while the youngest individuals within Generation Z could transmit some of their traits to the oldest members of the succeeding generation, known as Generation Alpha (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that many authors, like Fromm and Read (2018), believe that

“based on similarities in their defining moments and how these moments subsequently shaped their view of the world, Gen Z has more in common with the Silent Generation and Boomers (who grew up in the wake of World War II and the Great Depression) than with Millennials” (p. 2).

For that reason, exploring the important occurrences in history and their impact on Generation Z sheds light on the distinctive characteristics that define this generation.

### 1.2.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF Z GENNERS

Generation Z is currently the largest generational group to exist (Lev, 2021) accounting for 32% of the global population (Harari et al., 2022). This generation is demographically different from other generations since “they were born to older mothers, live in smaller

families and have fewest siblings of any era” (Desai & Lele, 2017, p. 806). It is also considered to be “the most racially diverse generation to date with high rates of non-heterosexual orientation and acceptance of gender fluid identification” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 30). According to Fromm and Read (2018),

“as the most ethnically diverse generation in history, they have grown up in a world where the barriers between races are increasingly blurred and they embrace the idea of seeing color and celebrating their differences rather than pretending that they don’t exist or, worse, allowing those differences to cause conflict” (p. 28).

As Francis and Hoefel (2018) explain, Z Geners aren’t trying to find one stereotype that will define them, but rather testing many so that they can shape their identity in different ways as they grow and evolve.

Many of the individuals who are part of Gen Z are already at the beginning of their professional careers, which means that they will start to have a significant impact on society in terms of gaining acquisitive power and being able to make important purchase decisions. This will, consequently, affect areas of life for the other generations in relationship to education, culture, economics, employment, housing, etc. (Lev, 2021). Not only that, but according to Alić and Sopić (2023), Z Geners “place a high value on convenience in their purchasing decisions saving time, ease of purchase, delivery methods, ease of use, and timely information about products” (p. 1533). This means that businesses might need to rethink their strategies in terms of what they are selling and how they are selling it if they want to target this specific generation. According to Seemiller & Grace (2018), their “openness and non-conforming identities” (p. 84) have impacted several industries. For example, the makeup industry is now creating makeup for men and the clothing industry is now also focusing on including more gender-neutral apparel collections.

Generation Z came of age in a world marked by persistent global tensions (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). Although they “watched in wonder and internalized a deep sense of progress and the battle cry for racial equality reached a climax when Barack Obama became the first black president of the United States” (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 15), the aftermath of 9/11 led to ongoing conflicts between the U.S. and the Middle East and has brought up Z Geners in an era marked by conflict, violence, racial injustice, political instability, and economic

downturn. “Whereas Millennials evidence a story of innocence lost, Gen Z has never known a world without war and the threat of domestic terrorism (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 16).

Not to mention the COVID-19 pandemic, which marks a major event in recent history that has impacted this generation significantly. According to Harari et al. (2022), individuals from Generation Z are currently in the phase of life in which their core values are still in the process of being molded and this might be why having spent less time in direct in-person contact during the lockdown has resulted in Z Genners reporting the highest ever generational level of depression. On top of that, Generation Z is also being faced with a continuous increase in the cost of living, salaries that show little to no growth and uncertainty surrounding the availability of social security during their retirement. According to Seemiller and Grace (2018), “Generation Z young adults, reported feeling shy, isolated from others, alone, that no one really knew them, and that there were people around them, but not really with them” (p. 120). This means that even though Z Genners are connected 24/7 they can still feel quite alone so they are realizing that technology can’t substitute for all the in-person interaction one might have outside of social media.

Generation Z started their schooling at an earlier age than any previous generation, which means that they are the most formally educated cohort in history, and it is also expected that they study for a longer period than any of its predecessors (Desai & Lele, 2017). However, this doesn’t necessarily mean studying to acquire traditional university degrees as “many young people perceive an academic degree as irrelevant for the workplace and a waste of time. The developing culture of short and concentrated courses providing specific tools has accelerated greatly” (Lev, 2021, p. 111). Z Genners value autonomy in their learning process and they are often considered individuals that know how to look for information and resources independently. Generation Z also demonstrates a preference for visual and interactive content and will prefer it to text based information and materials. As McCrindle (2018) describes, “in an era of information overload, messages have increasingly become image based and signs, logos and brands communicate across the language barriers with color and picture rather than words and phrases” (p. 16). However, since more people are now accessing pages like Wikipedia and YouTube for information, it might be the case that the information is not always as accurate as it used to be when retrieved from a printed

Encyclopedia or a printed book. According to McCrindle, this can be ironic, because Z Genners do in fact perceive any online resource as more reliable than printed ones due to the currency that it possesses and their ability to fact check online by comparing it to other sites or authors.

Another change worth noticing that this generation has brought is the informality of written communication. Correct spelling, grammar rules and punctuation are sometimes ignored to save time through online texting and social media platforms. Not to mention the use of abbreviated words, slang and even emojis to replace text altogether. It is fair to say that education has been evolving from the traditional note taking in a physical classroom with pen and pencil into “interactive whiteboards, online course and lecture notes, Moodle and other interactive e-learning platforms, blogs and forums, regular online tests and quizzes via WebCT, online feedback surveys and podcasts” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 137). It has been seen that this generation also prefers educational apps and platforms that often incorporate some type of gaming or competitive learning element. This is visible in apps such as Duolingo that are intended for the user to learn another language through completion of tasks and quizzes and making the learning process more fun and motivating than abstract concepts in a conventional one-on-one setting. Additionally, technology can also provide an immersive experience through simulations, augmented reality, 3D models and even making collaborative learning an everyday possibility through platforms like Google, Microsoft Teams, Slack, Reddit, Discord, and specialized educational forums that facilitate this social learning, peer reviews and general group discussions.

Regarding careers, “Generation Z has indicated that it does not want to be committed to any organization for a long time (at least at this stage) and expressed a desire to try a number of areas before choosing their life career” (Lev, 2021, p. 109). Ultimately, Z Genners are looking for a role that is meaningful and self-fulfilling, either inside a company or as entrepreneurs, as they will seek innovative environments before committing long-term to only one thing (Lev, 2021). According to McCrindle (2018), the key for employers is to understand what the right combination in the workplace is, that would make Z Genners comfortable. For instance, there is still a longing for meeting in person and to interact with coworkers, but more in a hybrid modality, so that it isn’t something that is required of

employees every day. We can see that the trend that was set by Generation Y of moving across different organizations instead of building a career in a single company, continues with Z Genners. However, “for them, it’s also about fun, social connection, training, personal development, greater fulfillment and even environmental sustainability, in addition to achieving task outcomes and receiving financial rewards” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 156). In reality, this generation is much more motivated by other benefits than only financial stability. For instance, work life balance is something that is desired by this generation, and it doesn’t necessarily translate to working less hours, but just having flexibility to work in the schedule and location that is more beneficial for each individual. Since Z Genners have easy access to information, it makes sense that they are constantly focused on developing new skills, completing various trainings, and re skilling to become more appealing in the job market. Finally, there is an undeniable entrepreneurial spirit in Z Genners and we can see that many of them want to start their own business or side hustle with the hope of becoming more independent and doing what truly fulfills them.

All these details differentiate Z Genners from other generations and result in some of their defining characteristics which include being labeled as pragmatics and realists (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Besides, “being able to consume information every minute of the day can make one hyper-aware of the world’s problems, which can be overwhelming and lead to the feeling that many in Generation Z have of worrying about larger societal issues” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 151). According to Fromm and Read (2018), “every generation has a defining cause that serves as the foundation for their behavior. For Boomers, it was anti-establishment. For Millennials, it was the environment. For them, it is human equality” (p. 27). Z Genners are aware that racism and sexism are issues that are still ongoing, but what makes them different from previous generations is that they are not expecting people just to tolerate those that are different, they expect individuals to really embrace those differences. Which means that Z Genners hope that, in the long term, their open-mindedness will create a more inclusive environment and reduce any type of oppression or social injustice (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). Another social cause that is very embedded in Z Genners DNA is the environment. Climate change and global warming is something that they think about constantly and will certainly try to advocate for a more sustainable planet. This includes being more aware of the environmental and ethical practices of companies, recycling,

demanding fewer toxic components and more sustainable choices in the things that they use every day like makeup, skincare, clothes, etc. Moreover, according to Seemiller and Grace (2018), although Z Genners “might not donate their own money” to charitable causes “many are excited and eager to raise money for causes they care about” (p. 94) and will do it through their social media and apps that gather donations like GoFundMe and Kickstarter. Overall, Generation Z seeks business stability, envisioning a future that is secure and reliable and they demonstrate a strong desire to stay informed about their surroundings and to maintain a sense of control over their lives (Alić & Sopić, 2023).

Finally, as there are various dates for the duration of each generation, there are also many names that reference each of these cohorts. Z Genners are identified with an array of different terms including Generation Connected, Dotcom Kids, iGen, Net Generation, Zoomers, Zappers, Post Millennials, Delta Generation, and Digital Natives (Csobanka, 2016, Seemiller & Grace, 2018, Törőcsik et al., 2014), which have a direct relationship with this generation’s most important characteristic. The ultimate key aspect to Generation Z, and essentially why most of the names mentioned previously are used to describe them, is because they are the first generation to be born in a world with fully developed digital technology, internet, wireless devices, and social media platforms. Technology and its extremely fast-paced evolution in recent years has impacted consumer behavior which could be attributed to the molding of Z Genners into what characterizes them as part of this group.

## **1.2.2 THE DIGITAL PRACTICES OF Z GENNERS**

Z Genners have used digital technology since their early years and they have integrated it in most, if not every area of their day-to-day lives (McCrindle, 2018). For this group of people “technology should be invisible” (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 32), which means that they value speed and a “seamless user experience” when connected through any of their digital devices and across every online platform. Z Genners dedicate considerably less time accessing the Internet on personal computers compared to the previous generations, as the majority of their online activity occurs on mobile devices (Bílková et al., 2023). According to Fromm and Read (2018), individuals from Generation Z can simultaneously use “five screens at once

(TV, phone, laptop, desktop, and either a tablet or handheld gaming device), while Millennials typically stick to maneuvering two screens simultaneously” (p. 19).

Not only that, but “even older forms of media, such as radio and television, have since evolved into streaming services where nearly any show or movie can be accessed 24 hours a day” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 40). The same way that platforms such as Spotify, Youtube, and Apple Music have transformed the way people engage with music. Instead of buying and/or downloading entire albums from an artist, streaming enables users to listen without the need to physically own a copy of the music. Wearable technology is also part of Z Genners' digital practices. These enable activities from tracking their daily steps, monitoring their sleep, sharing their current location, and even recording their workout activity, using small everyday accessories like smartwatches (Seemiller & Grace, 2018).

Communication has also changed profoundly for this generation. Z Genners are used to “walking down the street while chatting on the phone, texting while on a cardio machine at the gym, FaceTiming a friend from a store to get their opinion on an outfit before purchasing it, or sending Snapchat videos of a concert” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 59). And even though Gen Z is usually being flooded online with a huge amount of advertising, they will verify, compare, review, analyze and share every bit of information that is communicated through any type of media, but especially social platforms, where they spend most of their time. According to McCrindle (2018), Generation Y and Z are the most marketed to of all generations, however the author explains that, because of this, now businesses need to change their messages and techniques more rapidly than before to keep up with their shorter attention span. Z Genners will also need to be engaged on an emotional level rather than on a cognitive level. Which means that they are looking to have a complete experience when deciding on what to purchase and “because of the excessive supply of the media, they are very selective and they criticize, click and surf on the internet” (Törőcsik et al., 2014, p. 31). When it is time to make a purchase, it is likely that they will use one of their payment apps or buy online on one of their preferred sites. Z Genners are commonly using platforms like Amazon to purchase anything from books to technology to food and groceries (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). Not only limited to tangible objects, Generation Z also buys a lot of online intangibles like educational courses, online concerts and museums, and even medical

appointments. Medicine has been virtualized and Z Geners will prefer to avoid commuting and “overcrowded waiting rooms” to get access to their doctors and therapists “through online messaging and video chatting” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 44).

“This Internet-savvy, technologically literate generation has been shaped to multitask and they move quickly from one task to another” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 72). The majority of Z Geners prefer watching video summaries to reading articles meaning that communication has also shifted towards visuals and very few Z Geners would choose to write something on a piece of paper instead of typing on one of their devices (McCrindle, 2018, Seemiller & Grace, 2018). “It means that they handle short, up-to-date, real-time information with pictures” (Törőcsik et al., 2014, p. 30). According to Seemiller and Grace (2018), until the end of the 1990s, the term ‘tablet’ was still primarily associated with either a sort of medication or a paper booklet to take notes with. The main difference between a tablet and the smartphone or the computer is that its primary use is entertainment. This could include activities like gaming, watching a movie or series, reading, or even listening to music.

Generation Z is constantly being shaped by the people they follow, especially influencers that comment, make reviews, and give opinions about an array of different topics, and, therefore, “in their own way, this generation has provided a resurgence of the value of the word-of-mouth recommendation” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 115). However, McCrindle (2018) suggests that due to this dependency to follow influencers and content creators, Z Geners are not capable of knowing their own tastes and need to be guided by social media for most decisions they make. According to Csobanka (2016), “the opinion of peers is overrated and becomes the most important” and thanks to media, role models, celebrities and stars have a stronger impact on them” (p. 69) than in previous generations.

According to Dolot (2018), it is extremely important to understand that Z Geners can function equally well in both real and virtual worlds. “Whether it is a profile picture, avatar, Twitter handle, or Bitmoji, members of Generation Z are easily able to showcase their individual identities in a world of digital customization” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 31). In addition to that, they can also easily switch between the two because they truly see them as a natural extension of each other (Dolot, 2018). Thus, “their “real life” identity and online

identity can reflect two entirely different people, one for each setting and, some may even be managing several different identities online” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 31). Besides, many of the people who belong to Generation Z believe that those who are part of their virtual friends’ circle are as close as any friend with whom they usually interact “face to face” (Csobanka, 2016, p. 68).

Finally, Generation Z is considered the first global generation, since it is the one that is “internationally connected and engaged through global brands and global technologies” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 15). It is possible to understand how globalization has impacted this generation by their way of talking. Z Genners express themselves using specific words and slang that people that belong to other cohorts don’t use or don’t even understand (Töröcsik et al., 2014). This is a socially defined generation, meaning that “more than any other generation, today’s youth are extensively connected to and shaped by their peers” (McCrindle, 2018, p. 17). Individuals belonging to this generation are thought to be fearless and will communicate through social media platforms their personal lives, opinions, attitudes, and ideas without hesitation (McCrindle, 2018). Nevertheless, Generation Z has “learned from the mistakes of the previous generation and are much more careful about what and where they post online” (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 23). As Hardey (2011) explains, they not only use the digital content that was already on the internet, but they also create new content (multiple times per day) and control it, being especially concerned with portraying an idea of living their lives with true authenticity, as we will explore in the following chapters.

## **CHAPTER 2 – SOCIAL MEDIA**

It is extremely important to understand how the phenomenon of social media came to be what it is today, and how it will shape society in the future, especially if we want to understand the impact that it has on the different generations. This chapter considers the implications of social media use for the broader societal landscape, exploring how the rise of digital platforms has transformed social norms, cultural practices, and institutional structures, as well as its impact on the behaviors, attitudes, and experiences of Generation Z.

### **2.1 DEFINING SOCIAL MEDIA**

To truly comprehend Z Genners' use of social media, we first need to understand what this term means and how it has evolved since its creation. According to Taprial and Kanwar (2012),

“social media encompasses all the services that facilitate creation, sharing and exchange of user-generated content and these include but are not restricted to Internet forums, groups, blogs, microblogs, networking sites, social bookmarking sites, wikis, podcasts, contend communities for articles, video/photo sharing sites, Q&A sites, review sites, etc.” (p. 6).

However, not all authors share this same view. It is indeed complicated to give an absolute definition to this term since what can be considered a social media platform for some might not be considered for others. For instance, when WhatsApp is used for one-on-one conversations between two individuals, Miller et al. (2016), argue that it functions more like an Instant Messaging or communication app rather than a social media platform. On the other hand, there are those who do consider it a social medium since WhatsApp has the option for group chats, which allow for interactions, sharing of content, and communication among multiple users. Miller et al. (2016), define social media as the “colonization of the space between traditional broadcast and private dyadic communication” (p. 9). This definition is intended to provide a scale that has in its parameters group size and degree of privacy that they have denominated as scalable sociality. Furthermore, platforms frequently alter their functionality by evolving and introducing new features. Firstly, according to Miller's definition, this means that they could always change their categorization within the sociality scale parameters. And second, that “none of these platforms can be properly

understood if considered in isolation because the meaning and use of each one is relative to the others” (p. 4).

It is interesting to analyze how different ways of defining social media will suit different perspectives and especially different areas of study. As Miller et al. (2016) imply, social media is more of a “colloquial term used by the general public, not a scientific label as it is a popular term always subject to the vagaries of public semantics” (p. 9). For the purpose of this study, social media will be considered the platforms that abide by the following criteria set by Boyd and Ellison (2007):

“a web-based service that allows individuals to “(1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 211).

### **2.1.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Each social media platform will have different technical features according to its target audience and main purpose; however, they will share characteristics in common that make them fit inside the chosen definition. Common characteristics include the creation of a user’s profile. Usually, the profile will be generated after a new user has completed their own profile page and customized it by adding a profile photo and/or “descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an ‘about me’ section” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 212). How visible a user’s profile is will depend on the structural variation of each platform and the preference of the user. For instance, some are visible to anyone who has an account, while others need the approval of the user in the form of a friend request. Another common characteristic, and maybe one of the most important elements of social media, is the public showcasing of connections amongst users, which also heightens both users' awareness and self-awareness regarding their relationships, as they are now visible to others. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), social media’s goal is not to allow its users to meet a stranger but rather to let them connect to their current circle of friends and their extended social network, meaning networking with the friends of their friends. This interaction occurs when users connect with each other by adding friends, following, or subscribing, depending on the specific label used by each platform. Most social media platforms allow users to also communicate with each

other either publicly in the form of comments, likes, posts, etc., or privately with direct messages to each other's accounts. Lastly, they will also most likely have a feature that allows users to share User Generated Content (UGC) within their network of "friends" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). UGC could entail any form of content, such as posts, photos, videos, memes, reviews, comments, etc., that are created, shared and "continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61), rather than being generated by the platform itself or by professional creators.

## **2.2 EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The evolution of social media can be traced back to the 1970s, with the creation of online 'bulletin board systems', which were meant as an online forum for users to communicate with each other through messages posted in the system. "These were used as a medium for social discussions on message boards, for community-contributed file downloads and also online games" (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012, p. 10). A decade later, in the 1980s, America Online (AOL) chat rooms and other internet forums appeared, but it wasn't until the late 1990s and early 2000s that various blogging platforms allowed users to share their thoughts and experiences online when the "World Wide Web became publicly available on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1991" (p. 13). In this period, the internet was finally recognized as a crucial tool that could help people easily communicate with other users worldwide and share their own personal opinions online. This was when the idea of Web 2.0 started to be introduced and would "entice audience members to join in the building and customizing of services and messages rather than to expect companies to present complete and fully formed experiences" (Jenkins et al., 2008, p. 49), which meant the transformation of the user into a source of content for other users. Consequently, during the following years, individuals started to define themselves by expressing their personal identities through online platforms, implying that online activities were having a direct impact on the behavior of its users (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

In the next couple of years, the internet continued to evolve, and "the social media sharing concept had begun in earnest as people were now sharing links, files, photos, etc. via different media platforms like email, forums, chatting or instant messenger" (Taprial &

Kanwar, 2012, p. 15). Also, people would have the convenience of easily uploading or downloading files to and from internet sites like Google, Bing and Yahoo. These sites, or search engines, became the number one tool used by users as information sources when making decisions. Nevertheless, this practice of using search engines didn't last for too long and, eventually, users preferred to base their decision-making criteria on the word of mouth (WOM) of other users through their social media platforms (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). In the mid-2000s, social media platforms such as MySpace appeared and made it very easy for people to connect with other users and share information inside their own personal networks. "Thus, the concept of social networking took shape in the form of several websites that offered such networking features" (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012, p. 18). MySpace gained popularity among musicians and bands as a platform to share their music, connect with fans, and promote their work. Facebook was then launched in 2004 and quickly became one of the biggest platforms worldwide. It was founded by the Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg and was initially meant to be only accessible to those that were part of the Harvard community, as it required the user to have an email with the university domain. It then expanded to include other Ivy League universities in the area and other colleges in the United States and Canada. However, within two years of its launch, the platform was opened to the general public, and anyone aged 13 or older with a valid email address could have access to a Facebook account (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012).

Other social media platforms appeared not long after. LinkedIn was founded in 2003, YouTube in 2005, and Twitter in 2006. These are three very different social media platforms, which is why a user might decide to have an account of all of them to meet different goals. LinkedIn is a professional networking platform where individuals can create profiles to showcase their professional experience, skills, and education. YouTube allows users to upload, watch, and share videos related to music, tutorials, vlogs, entertainment, educational content, etc., while Twitter allows users to post and interact with short messages, known as "tweets," which are limited to 280 characters, and it is widely used for sharing thoughts, opinions, and news on various topics in real-time. In the late 2000s, with the launch of WhatsApp in 2009, users started to take a more active position in their interactions online and this is when the internet's "role as a forum for online expression and a repository for

valuable peer-to-peer or socially sourced information about products, services, and brands expanded” (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016, p. 156).

Additionally, during this period, a lot of the top global brands, as well as small local ones started to use social media platforms to communicate their content, which set the way for the digital marketing trends that would soon follow. It started with the launch of the World Wide Web, when digital marketing included banner ads and emails and now it includes but it is not limited to “display ads, text ads, video ads, and sponsored content” (Bílková et al., 2023, p. 1). As Bílková et al. (2023) explain,

“digital marketing has become a crucial aspect of any marketing strategy and as a result, companies have changed their focus from traditional advertising methods to digital platforms, taking advantage of the power of social media, search engines, and other online channels to reach their target audiences” (p. 2).

Through online advertising, a business can increase their engagement and reach, enhance its brand awareness, and create a more personal connection with the customers. Additionally, it is highly effective in accurately conveying what users see, hear, and experience while connecting with them in real time to measure the success of their campaigns. Brands can create targeted messages for specific demographics that will be reaching their desired audience right away. However, there are challenges arising with digital marketing, including the expense and time needed to produce high-quality content and the necessity of constantly keeping up with the new trends and platforms. It’s crucial that the content created is useful, focused, clear, and engaging for the target audience to consider it meaningful (Bílková et al., 2023).

According to van Dijck (2013), after the year 2009, the identity of individuals online was mostly used as an object of marketing and self-promotion, which means that having a large network and many connections started to increase a person’s social value both online and offline. Visually based platforms started appearing in the early 2010s, with apps such as Instagram (2010), Pinterest (2010) and Snapchat (2011). These “contemporary platforms rather than competing with Facebook, extended their reach into other aspects of consumers’ online and offline lives” (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016, p. 159). Pinterest is popular among individuals seeking inspiration and ideas for various aspects of their lives, including cooking, decorating, fashion, and creative projects. Snapchat unique feature is that messages and

stories are temporary and disappear after they are viewed by the recipient. Not to mention the variety of creative tools and filters that users can use to send these “snaps”, which makes it particularly popular among younger demographics for its casual and fun approach to messaging and storytelling. Instagram is known for its emphasis on visual content and has become a popular platform for individuals, businesses, and influencers to showcase their creativity, share experiences, and connect with others. A few years later, in 2016, TikTok was launched by the Chinese company ByteDance. According to Jordan (2024), it was the “first consumer tech brand to originate in China and succeed worldwide” (p. 50) and it “was the fastest app to reach one billion users” (p. 41). However, their success didn’t happen overnight. It was during the 2020 pandemic when people were looking to have a distraction during the quarantine that TikTok acquired momentum, and its users started to multiply. TikTok is a video content platform that displays to the user one video at a time about a variety of different subjects. It started with short 15 to 60 second videos but currently it has reached a 10-minute maximum length. TikTok’s ‘For You’ page algorithm constantly shows the user more videos based on their previous engagement, and this is what ultimately makes the users so invested with the app (Jordan, 2024). According to Miller (2016), “today polymedia has expanded choices and separated out niches” (p. 27). This means that users do not need to pick only one platform. On the contrary, someone could simply “enjoy the public arguments of Twitter, contemplate and admire images on Instagram and organize fun nights out on WhatsApp,” (p. 27) and watch videos on TikTok all at the same time and using the same device.

### **2.2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA’S CURRENT LANDSCAPE**

In recent years, the use of social media has exponentially grown, with the average person spending 2 hours and 23 minutes every day on social media platforms, which is equal to more than one-third of the total amount of time that they spend online. There are also 5.04 billion active social media user identities, which represents 62.3% of the total population and an increase of 266 million more identities in 2024 than in the previous year (Kemp, 2024). Individuals are now accepting social media as a way of “meeting goals, constructing identities, socially interacting, seeking information, and learning about the world” (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016, p. 159). When the study of the internet started, there was often

discussion of two distinct realms: the virtual and the real. However, for Miller et al. (2017), it's now clear that this differentiation is unnecessary as the online world is just as real as the offline. Social media has been carefully merged into daily existence to the extent that viewing it as separate no longer seems logical.

Moreover, in Figure 1, it is possible to observe the top types of websites visited and apps used during the first month of 2024 and divided into different age groups. According to this graph and with categories such as social networks, chat & messaging, shopping, music, email news, maps, etc., it is easier to understand how intertwined the online world really is with the offline daily activities (Kemp, 2024).

16 TO 24 YEARS OLD		25 TO 34 YEARS OLD		35 TO 44 YEARS OLD		45 TO 54 YEARS OLD		55 TO 64 YEARS OLD	
SOCIAL NETWORKS	96.9%	CHAT & MESSAGING	95.8%	CHAT & MESSAGING	95.3%	CHAT & MESSAGING	93.4%	CHAT & MESSAGING	89.8%
CHAT & MESSAGING	96.4%	SOCIAL NETWORKS	95.7%	SOCIAL NETWORKS	94.9%	SOCIAL NETWORKS	91.8%	SOCIAL NETWORKS	87.9%
SEARCH ENGINES & PORTALS	82.6%	SEARCH ENGINES & PORTALS	80.9%	SEARCH ENGINES & PORTALS	80.3%	SEARCH ENGINES & PORTALS	79.8%	SEARCH ENGINES & PORTALS	78.1%
SHOPPING	72.9%	SHOPPING	75.6%	SHOPPING	76.3%	SHOPPING	74.0%	SHOPPING	70.8%
MUSIC	55.9%	MAPS, PARKING & LOCATION	54.7%	MAPS, PARKING & LOCATION	54.6%	MAPS, PARKING & LOCATION	54.4%	EMAIL	57.6%
MAPS, PARKING & LOCATION	54.5%	MUSIC	51.5%	EMAIL	48.9%	EMAIL	52.6%	MAPS, PARKING & LOCATION	53.1%
ENTERTAINMENT	47.7%	EMAIL	46.1%	MUSIC	46.8%	NEWS	48.9%	WEATHER	52.7%
EMAIL	47.5%	ENTERTAINMENT	44.2%	NEWS	43.7%	WEATHER	47.6%	NEWS	50.3%
GAMES	42.9%	WEATHER	38.9%	WEATHER	43.3%	MUSIC	42.4%	MUSIC	35.3%
WEATHER	36.0%	NEWS	37.0%	ENTERTAINMENT	40.4%	ENTERTAINMENT	35.1%	BANKING & FINANCE	32.5%

Figure 1: Percentage of internet users who have visited each type of digital platform - Kemp (2024, p. n/a).

Besides, with the rise of 5G, social media platforms are expected to have even more interactive and immersive features, along with the integration of virtual and augmented reality technology. Visual content has become a driving force in shaping user engagement across social media platforms. The prevalence of images and videos has led to the integration of features like ‘Reels’ and ‘Stories’, offering users ephemeral content that disappears after a short period. This is indicative of changing user preferences, fostering a sense of urgency and spontaneity in sharing and consuming content (Owens, 2019). It is also an indication that users nowadays prefer to leave less of a digital footprint. “The short information lifetime provided by these social sites where for example, people have to access posts in Snapchat

within a short period of time or the posts will be removed from the user's device" (Martin et al., 2018, p. 222).

Many perceive social media platforms primarily as digital instruments enabling various online activities. However, these activities obscure a system that goes beyond mere facilitation; rather, it influences our lifestyles and societal organization significantly. According to Van Dijck et al. 2018, "an online "platform" is a programmable digital architecture designed to organize interactions between users. It is geared toward the systematic collection, algorithmic processing, circulation, and monetization of user data" (p. 4). To understand the depth of data collection and its impact we need to be aware of how a digital platform is constructed. As Van Dijck et al. (2018) explain, "a platform is fueled by *data*, automated and organized through *algorithms* and *interfaces*, formalized through *ownership* relations driven by *business models*, and governed through *user agreements*" (p. 9). In other words, data serves as the driving force behind the expanding connectivity among platforms. Through application programming interfaces (APIs), platforms grant regulated access to their data to third parties, providing extensive insights into user behavior and metrics. This information can be utilized by these parties to develop other applications and/or new social media platforms. Algorithms represent another crucial technological element. They consist of automated instructions aimed at converting large amounts of input data into desired outcomes. Through this process, platforms can target and categorize individual users and user demographics enabling the delivery of real-time personalized content, services, and advertisements (Van Dijck et al., 2018).

A final component that needs to be taken into account, is the fact that, since the early 2000s, the digital environment is primarily dominated by a small number of major technology corporations known as "the Big Five". These 5 companies, Alphabet-Google, Apple, Facebook (currently Meta), Amazon, and Microsoft, are all located physically on the United States of America's (EUA) west coast and their infrastructural services play a central role in shaping the overall design of the ecosystem and controlling the flow of data. Therefore, "public and nonprofit platforms frequently have to rely on Facebook or Google for their login facilities and search-ranking visibility to gain access to valuable information and reach substantial groups of users" (Van Dijck et al., 2018, p.15). Which means that "platforms not

connected to the ecosystem's core can hardly profit from its inherent features: global connectivity, ubiquitous accessibility, and network effects" (Van Dijck et al., 2018, p.15).

Ever since Facebook bought Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014, they have led data traffic by controlling 80% of the social networking services market, with its reach extending to over two billion monthly users worldwide. Also, Facebook along with Google control 60% of all the advertisements done online. Furthermore, via its widely used family of mobile apps (Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp), Facebook has acquired significant authority over users' personal data. According to Van Dijck et al. (2015), in social media platforms, "every form of user interaction can be *captured* as data: rating, paying, enrolling, watching, dating, and searching but also friending, following, liking, posting, commenting, and retweeting" (p. 33). So, while the contemporary digital economy operates on data exchange for the collective benefit of stakeholders and society, concerns continue to arise regarding the potential misuse of data, including privacy breaches, tracking, discrimination, and manipulation (Alić & Sopić, 2023). As Martin et al. (2018) explain, users need to

"understand the concept of identity theft, data theft, online viruses, and online scams, where third party companies "steal" personal information such as passwords, credit card information, and social security numbers to commit crime or fraud online" so that they will know "where the boundaries are when sharing information about oneself and others online" (p. 215).

### **2.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND Z GENNERS**

In the contemporary landscape, Generation Z stands at an intersection of technology and identity. "It has been argued that the continuous data exchange through platforms enables a new kind of consciousness—an ambient virtual co-presence where users are aware of what others are doing, experiencing, and exchanging" (Van Dijck et al., 2018, p. 47). This is something that Z Genners might be going through multiple times per day as they "operate in a market guided by technological advancements and a social landscape spanning the physical and digital worlds" (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 19). As Seemiller and Grace (2018) describe it, "for this generation, sharing different parts of their evolution with different peer groups isn't just accepted; it's required" (p. 89). According to Bílková et al. (2023), Generation Z

emerges as a highly influential cohort, particularly evident on the social media platform TikTok, where they constitute 60% of users. Additionally, this generation is progressively engaging on the professional networking site LinkedIn, currently representing only 10% of active users but quickly becoming the fastest growing generation in it. Z Geners nowadays spend significantly less time using the Internet through personal computers compared to older age groups. Instead, most of their online activity is focused on mobile devices (Bílková et al., 2023).

Generation Z is no longer using Facebook as the main social media platform for sharing their lives with their friends since the current purpose of Facebook is to stay connected with their families. As Seemiller and Grace (2018) explain, “with parents and family members being heavily present, Facebook is simply no longer the ‘adult-free’ space it was at its inception” (p. 47). Additionally, “being able to customize and restrict the information they share aligns with Generation Z’s concerns for privacy” (p. 47) as they “like to monitor who they interact with and who sees particular content” (p. 32). Z Geners are aware that nowadays

“anything can be created, copied, pasted, and shared to thousands of people online almost instantly and that each online post, image, or message is permanent and stored as a “digital footprint” that can be retrieved years later by classmates, teachers, college admissions officers, future employers, or the general public” (Martin et al., 2018, p. 215).

Plus, due to the variety of social media platforms that are now available, numerous members of Generation Z have sought out digital communities on alternative platforms and moved away from those frequented by their parents and/or older relatives.

Consequently, new social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and BeReal have been launched to engage with younger audiences that seek new ways of portraying their identities. For Z Geners, “being photographed prompts them into having a more exciting time and the very act of taking pictures enhances the vitality” (Miller, 2016, p. 87) of any event in their lives. According to Seemiller and Grace (2018),

“those under the age of 24 have an average of 8.7 accounts on different social media platforms but they don’t use each of these accounts and platforms uniformly; each has a specific purpose that reflects the diverse ways in which they use social media” (p. 46).

Similarly, as stated by Miller (2016), “the notion of polymedia extends beyond simple media interaction; it suggests that the selection of media platforms has become integral to social engagement itself and a person’s decision about which media to use would be judged by others” (p. 27). Therefore, Z Genners use these platforms as a way of increasing their sense of belonging through the manifestation of user-generated media (Omar & Dequan, 2020). In the same way, Lev Manovich (2017) in his book, *Instagram and the Contemporary Image*, explores the world of vernacular or casual photography and its conventions. He believes that “the conventions of vernacular photography dictate both *what and how*, they filter the visible world and the flows of human lives to select the moments and occasions worth documenting” making casual photography anything but casual” (p. 53). As van Dijck (2013) explains, promoting and branding the self has become a normalized, accepted phenomenon and people will continue to do this to shape their online identities, gain popularity and reach recognition. This could imply that social media is being used as an instrument to carefully craft a person’s public profile and that the younger generations that spend more time on these platforms are constantly navigating the fine line between displaying a self that is considered ‘authentic’ versus one that may be a portrayal of a created ‘idealized’ (or inauthentic) self (van Dijck, 2013).

The behavior of young individuals has also been affected because of the pressure related to social media. According to Seemiller and Grace (2018), studies have shown how intertwined social media are with this generation’s sense of self-esteem, which might be why young people were reporting that spending time on social media was stressing them out (Owens, 2019). Given their “high concern for privacy online, it is understandable that many in Generation Z gravitate toward platforms where they can share their opinion or expertise in an anonymous way” (Seemiller and Grace, 2018, p. 48). Some Z Genners will have blogs or accounts under nicknames so that they can post their opinions or ask questions without feeling like they are being judged or that it will have a negative effect on their offline identities (Seemiller and Grace, 2018). Therefore, it also makes sense “that more than half of Generation Z teens have chosen to not post something online or on social media for fear of the impact doing so would have on their reputations” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 47). It carries a lot of expectations the need to post only once a day and at a specific time to reach the maximum number of likes per picture, editing each post and making sure it is original

enough, asking your best friends for approval, including a witty caption, and the list goes on. Hence, Fromm and Read (2018) indicate that within Generation Z, there is a transition in social media usage from the Millennial tendency to overshare to a present focus on selectively broadcasting stories to specific individuals on specific platforms. Z Genners even came up with a solution: Finstagram. “The Finsta account is a much more private account, shared with a small group of friends, where users may post silly content, memes, and screenshots” (Seemiller & Grace, 2018, p. 47). “Freed from having to maintain a singular, authentic, official identity, it turns out young people feel they can be a lot more real on their fake accounts” (Owens, 2019, p. 95). As a result, it becomes evident why social media platforms like BeReal have emerged, aiming to aid Z Genners navigate the complexities of online identity and expression.

### **2.3.1 THE RISE OF BEREAL**

BeReal is a French App that was launched in 2020 but only became popular at the beginning of 2022. It was founded in France in 2019, by Alexis Barreyat and Kevin Perreau, former GoPro employees (Kakoulli & Voutsas, 2023) and according to their official page it has reached over 20 million active users per day from all over the world (BeReal. Your Friends for Real., 2023). The idea of this social media is to allow the users to share content in a more genuine and less curated way. BeReal works by sending its users a daily notification at a random time during the day with the caption: ‘Time to BeReal’, which means the user has two minutes to capture and post a picture. Additionally, when the picture is taken through BeReal, the app accesses at the same time both cameras of the phone (front and back), with the objective of capturing both the person and their surroundings in that specific moment of the day.

Important features to consider are that the app has no filters, so everyone must post the picture as originally taken. Also, posting the picture outside of the two-minute window means that the user’s friends will know that the person posted late. They will also know how many times that person had to retake the picture before posting it, encouraging the user to post as soon as possible and with a natural, unstaged and unplanned concept. According to Boffone (2022), “these pictures are funny, silly, and baked in self-deprecating humor. It’s a

stress-free social media alternative” (p. 4). In this platform, the only way that someone can see and react to the other users’ posts is by posting something of their own first, which means “the app does not allow users to be passive observers” (Kakoulli & Voutsas, 2023, p. 60). According to Maddox (2023), this feature transforms BeReal into a form of surveillance where users can monitor their friends and know what they are up to, but only if they first are willing to post something themselves. It could also in a way increase a feeling of ‘FOMO’ or ‘fear of missing out’ since a person could feel “anxiety that one has been excluded from an event and realizing this when images show up on social media” (Maddox, 2023, p. 1193). Also, “the BeReal app does not allow users to ‘like’, but they can interact with other users’ BeReal photos through ‘RealMojis’ which are selfies of users representing emojis” (Kakoulli & Voutsas, 2023, p. 60). There is a limit of one post per day and this picture will only be available until the next ‘Time to BeReal’ notification pops up (Duffy & Gerrard, 2022). This idea of the content not being there forever is used also by Instagram and Snapchat stories. As Kreling et al. (2022) describe, “ephemerality may make people comfortable in sharing mundane content” (p. 4) since it will not be stored as a permanent digital footprint. Therefore, a platform where people share an “in-the-moment picture” can seem like the ideal digital space for a real display of authenticity.

According to Kakoulli and Voutsas (2023), “this app is considered to be an anti-Instagram app, as on Instagram and other social media users share the best moments of themselves and their daily lives” (p. 60). On the contrary, “BeReal features leave little room for curated social media performances, which are hallmarks of the contemporary internet” (Maddox, 2023, p. 1184). It is easier to understand BeReal's uniqueness when compared to other social media platforms. For instance, as Miller (2016) describes, “the vast majority of selfies posted on Facebook are actually ‘groupies’ that is, expressions of friendship and groups within which multiple people appear. By contrast those on Instagram are usually individuals” (p. 83) or images that “have been posted entirely for aesthetic purposes, designed to show how stylish the photographer can be” (p. 81), which means that while the ideas of other platforms like Facebook were to share numerous party snapshots, the strong link to alcohol consumption, or to appear silly and unattractive, these characteristics are notably absent on Instagram where the idea is to have a more curated and polished content (Miller, 2016). Z Geners have admitted to realizing that “they look at landscapes, food and objects differently

and in a more focused manner, simply because they now have Instagram in mind” (Miller, 2016, p. 88). Even the word ‘instagrameable’ is used a “metaphor for how users understand creating and performing visual content online, foregrounding the app’s culture of seemingly perfect lives, vacations, meals, etc. and that shows a someone’s polished life as performance” (Maddox, 2023, p. 1186). In other words, this type of social media exerts pressure on individuals to showcase the most appealing version of themselves, commonly referred to as the ‘Instagram effect’, which usually involves taking multiple photos to select and post the best one (Fromm & Read, 2018).

However, according to Fromm and Read (2018), “Gen Z wants real. Gen Z wants transparency. And Gen Z wants originality” (p. 45). They describe Z Genners as a cohort that is “realistic and expects authentic stories shared by real people, content more in line with their day-to-day life since they no longer want content designed for the unattainable ideal” (p. 25). Besides, while both Instagram and BeReal offer privacy settings, BeReal places a stronger emphasis on privacy by limiting interactions to a smaller, more trusted circle of connections. This supports Z Genners’ preference for a “selective broadcasting rather than broadly sharing the minutiae of their lives” (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 23) and creates a safer space for users to share personal, real, and authentic moments without the fear of judgment from a wider audience. The next chapter explores this concept of authenticity and how all these features used in BeReal and social media would seem to facilitate a presentation of a more authentic self for the members of Generation Z.

## CHAPTER 3 – AUTHENTICITY

### 3.1 DEFINING AUTHENTICITY

In today's technologically driven society, and especially with the high amounts of information being shared online, it is crucial to understand why there is an ongoing demand for being authentic, living authentically and portraying authenticity. The lack of a single definition of authenticity has created some confusion around this concept (Wood et al., 2018) and authors such as Hopwood et al. (2021) view authenticity "as a complicated, multi-component, temporal, and highly contextualized process" (p. 3). For Gerosa (2024), "authenticity cannot be reduced to a concise, satisfactory definition because it is a multi-faceted umbrella term that assembles a multiplicity of interconnected meanings at the center of the everyday contemporary lived experiences of individuals" (p. 20). According to Harter (2002), the origin of the concept of authenticity can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy, as evident in quotes such as "Know thyself" and "To thine own self be true". Harter explains that in the past authenticity or an authentic personality was addressed in literature and research through its negative component, which would end up being a lack of authenticity or a behavior that is false and deceitful. This is why she believes that even in the vocabulary there are more words to address the idea of someone that is inauthentic such as "phony, artificial, two-faced, manipulative, calculating, pretentious, crafty, conniving, duplicitous, dishonest, hypocrite, charlatan, chameleon, impostor, phony, fake, and fraud" (p. 382). However, contemporary perspectives now view authenticity as being linked to individuals' personal experiences and it is "related to the thoughts, emotions, needs, desires, preferences, and beliefs about themselves, which results in actions consistent with these experiences" (De Carvalho Chinelato et al., 2015, p. 110). Furthermore, some believe that "given that authenticity is a context-related and ideology-driven concept, it cannot be defined objectively" (Balaban & Szabolics, 2022, p. 237).

De Carvalho Chinelato et al. (2015) define authenticity as a dynamic multidimensional "person-centered tripartite construction" (p.110). This definition requires consistency "among three levels: 1) people's psychological status in terms of emotions, beliefs and opinions; 2) awareness of their own psychological conditions; 3) and emotional expression

of their own behavior” (p. 110). The first level represents the discrepancy between an individual's actual existence and their self-awareness, which can be a result of insufficient self-knowledge and a disconnection from their true self. The second level represents a congruency between self-awareness and a person’s behavior, which would indicate if they were acting authentically. In other words, their capacity to remain true to themselves across various circumstances and behave and express themselves consistently with how they feel and think. Finally, the third level of authenticity relates to the acknowledgment of external influences which includes the opinions of others as well as their expectations (De Carvalho Chinellato et al., 2015). In Figure 2, it is possible to observe a graphic representation of the 3 levels mentioned in the person-centered conceptualization of authenticity.

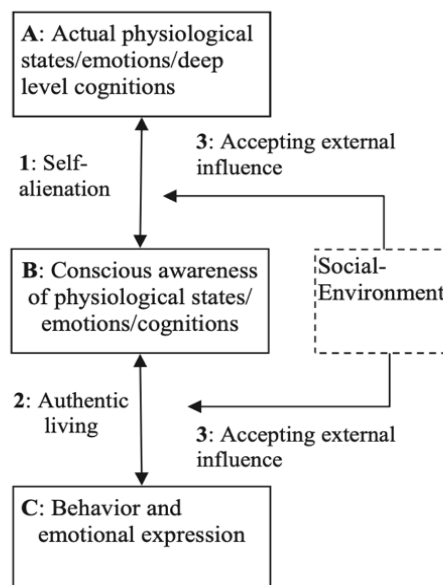


Figure 2: Person Centered Tripartite Construction Model – Wood et al. (2008, p. 386).

According to Schmid (2005), an individual demonstrates authenticity by maintaining a balance between solidarity and self-realization. Since it is human nature to want to live in a social environment, living authentically will be affected by the surroundings. Meaning that someone will be pursuing their own values and needs and embracing what makes them unique, while also engaging harmoniously with others and the world around them. Therefore, someone who is entirely true to themselves is inherently connected to society and society is connected to them, making self-realization and solidarity naturally intertwined. Hence, authenticity is represented by fully functional individuals rather than inauthentic

people who are alienated from their true identity and consequently from the others around them.

In the book titled ‘The Hipster Economy: Taste and authenticity in late modern capitalism’, Gerosa (2024), defines authenticity through a 3-dimensional model. He argues that even though authenticity can’t be easily defined, he has tried to come up with a general approach that can interpret the concept in a way that it is not limited to a specific discipline or sector. However, due to this more generalist approach, the model has its flaws and could be perceived as rather abstract. Gerosa decided to present his definition of authenticity in contrast to the term ‘alienation’. Just like Schmid (2005) expresses that “inauthentic persons are alienated from themselves and others” (p. 78), Gerosa (2024) explains that alienation is a concept that appeared in parallel to authenticity and gave it meaning by representing the negative externalities that a person will associate authenticity with. The 3 dimensions of authenticity are:

“(1) freedom to autonomous self-determination, from conformity and the massification of the self; (2) freedom to creative self-expression, from the commercialization and commodification of social life; and (3) freedom to distinctiveness in life experiences, from the standardization and triviality of everyday life” (p. 36).

Knoll et al. (2015), view authenticity as a construct with two dimensions: authentic self-awareness and authentic self-expression. The authors refer to someone having authentic self-awareness as those individuals who are conscious of their inner self and work on knowing more about their internal feelings, desires and identity. Authentic self-expression refers to the idea that individuals constantly embody their true identity through their everyday actions such as the way they behave, how they dress, what they study, their hobbies, etc. Therefore, “authentic individuals might also contribute to healthy social environments which rely on individuals who have acquired self-understanding and act in consistence with what they value instead of complying with situational and social pressures” (Knoll et al., 2015, p. 1). Along with this idea, Lipovetsky (2021), argues that it will depend on the common sense of people and on the situation, if it is in their best interest and the interest of their relationships, to actually communicate all the truth in order to be authentic. He suggests that some truths should and must be kept from others for either legal, ethical or strategic reasons. Hence, a certain degree of hypocrisy is needed to maintain order in society, and to avoid chaos and

unnecessary misunderstandings. He refers to this concept as responsible authenticity, which opposes the view of the authentic self with total transparency and rather favors a more “intelligent, non-systematic transparency, a transparency that admits limits and restrictions, a transparency that evaluates what should be said, to whom, at what time and in what way” (p. 385).

Moreover, authenticity has been linked to a person’s positive psychological factors like the quality of emotional connections, self-confidence, and emotional well-being (Chinelato et al., 2015). Authenticity also faces constant threats from external influences, which should be considered when creating a definition, such as financial incentives, or public recognition. These factors that appear from the outside may seem harmless or even beneficial, but according to Hopwood et al. (2021), have the potential to diminish the inner drive for a person’s authentic living. Lastly, Harter (2002) addresses the idea of authenticity surviving the creation of multiple selves or multiplicity. This idea suggests that some people may find it comforting and easier to deal with different interpersonal relationships if they have the possibility to change, evolve and adapt depending on the circumstance. The multiple selves

“emerge from the confusion of contemporary life, in which we feel buffeted about by unmanageable historical, economic, political, and social uncertainties” and this “may force the self to evolve in numerous directions, creating opportunities for personal expansion and growth” (p. 390).

Multiplicity can empower individuals to pursue a connection with others instead of maintaining rigid isolation, fostering flexible boundaries between their various selves without feeling that they are compromising their sense of authenticity. As Lim et al. (2015) explain, “being authentic does not demand that one be rigid or inflexible, rather, one’s enactment of authenticity is a reflection and manifestation of who we are, of who we are with, and across the contexts in which we find ourselves” (p. 133).

Overall, even if all the authors have different views about what are the specific components that should be included when dealing with the concept of authenticity, it is still possible to see a common trend among all their definitions. In one way or another, all of them “emphasize the connection between inner and outer states” (Hopwood et al., 2021, p. 3). This means that even if the models disagree about which are the internal and external characteristics and how important they are within the construct of authenticity, they still

imply that the link among them is key and will lead to a way in which authenticity can be studied and measured (Hopwood et al., 2021).

### **3.2 MEASURING AUTHENTICITY**

The lack of a single definition for authenticity can also be explained by the difficulty that authors have faced in measuring it. Therefore, it is complex to put in simple terms everything that comprises this construct and what are its exact boundaries. According to Wood et al. (2018), there haven't been any established and scientifically sound measures specifically designed to assess authenticity. Besides, many of the studies on this topic rely on self-reports and self-knowledge, which are not the most reliable sources nor provide the most adequate measures (Knoll et al., 2015). As Lenton et al. (2014) explain, “researchers have viewed authenticity through a situational or ‘state’ lens” (p. 1), which means that a person should self-report and feel that she or he is in fact being authentic and this was what would be included in the results of the different studies in this subject. However, this idea imposes some limitations as it will be subjective to the cultural values and background of the individual. This will make the subject experience authenticity completely different from someone with distinct characteristics.

According to Hopwood et al. (2021), the way in which authenticity has been measured can be classified into two different types: “those that measure a general disposition to be authentic and those that measure the tendency to be authentic in particular roles or relationships” (p. 4). If these measures were to include several dimensions, then their scales would most likely make a distinction between inner and outer factors, as these components are interconnected with each other. Therefore,

“although models differ with regard to specifics, the general idea is that the person becomes aware of some inner goal, sense, or experience, then acts upon that awareness in a manner that is more or less true to the inner goal, sense or experience” (p. 4).

Furthermore, most of the studies focus on authenticity in particular moments, rather than over time, and this also loses the dynamism of the authenticity construct. As a consequence, measuring authenticity will always have its limitations, as it is extremely difficult to measure a dynamic concept through stable attributes (Hopwood et al., 2021).

### 3.3 AUTHENTICITY, Z GENNERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Authenticity is usually mentioned in relation to words like realness, trustworthiness, accuracy, originality, and spontaneity (Balaban & Szabolics, 2022), words that are also especially used when discussing Generation Z. Being authentic and true to their own self may be considered one of the most important pillars for a person that is part of the Generation Z cohort. Thus, they are constantly being defined by their search for the truth and their pursuit to demonstrate their individuality (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Furthermore, authenticity is increasingly seen as a societal necessity. According to Lenton et al. (2014), “whether it comes from parents, politicians, celebrities, web gurus, or college admissions advisers, the advice is similar: ‘just be yourself’” (p. 1). This is reflected in the abundance of websites offering advice on ‘how to be yourself’ and the rising number of self-help books and articles focused on achieving ‘authenticity’. According to Lipovetzky (2021), this is rather ironic, since now that authenticity has become accepted consensually by the masses, the term inevitably has lost its former theoretical superiority and its power has been diminished, especially among the existential and theoretical universe. Supporting this idea, Gerosa (2024) describes that “as often happens, the more the usage spreads and the more a univocal meaning is diluted, to the point of it being perceived as little more than a buzzword” (p. 20).

According to Kumar and Priyadarsini (2021), “Gen Z category are more attracted to order, use and promote personalized content and products than to buy brands that fit, even if this means having ‘to pay a premium for products that highlight their individuality’” (Francis & Hoefel, 2018, p. 8). Plus, “the more ‘authentic’ they feel about the brand and the content, the more likely they are to be attached to it” (Kumar & Priyadarsini, 2021, p. 3531). This means that Generation Z prioritizes following brands, celebrities and influencers that feel original and genuine. According to Fromm and Read (2018), Generation Z is tired of being manipulated by unrealistic advertising, fake news and curated images and they are now looking for real, unmodified, and non-curated social media content and apps.

According to Harter (2022), it is not until early adolescence that individuals begin to consciously differentiate between genuine and false behavior, becoming concerned with

acting in a certain way. However, she believes that the groundwork for authenticity is established in early childhood. Since Z Genners grew up with the internet and social media, it makes sense that authenticity and transparency are something they are concerned with. Social media can also be seen as the perfect platform for Z Genners to display their self-expression through content creation and interaction with other users (Omar & Dequan, 2020). Nevertheless, since social media makes all friendships and connections visible to other users 24/7, it also creates an invisible pressure for users to be more self-conscious (Miller et al., 2016), and “teenagers, being young and adaptable, have modified their social media behaviors to fit this new landscape accordingly” (Owens, 2019, p. 93). Since their lives are more public than those of the previous generations, they are also a generation that is concerned with both their online and offline appearance by being constantly aware of how they communicate their own personal identity. And, Z Genners have the added advantage of having the capacity to regulate their digital preferences as a means of influencing how they present their online identities to others (Fromm & Read, 2018).

However, as research on online authenticity can still be labeled as being in a “rudimentary stage” and it is “hampered, in part, by the lack of a valid and parsimonious tool used to measure a validated construct” (Lim et al., 2015, p. 132), the way someone can present themselves online may lead to inauthenticity. This means that individuals can withhold or idealize information to create a different identity (Geary et al., 2021). Additionally, according to Reinecke and Trepte (2014), on social media, self-disclosure predominantly consists of positive experiences, while a minority of users express negative emotions like feelings of depression or failure. According to these authors, “negative messages were experienced as more intimate and less appropriate and were associated with lower social attractiveness ratings” (p. 97). Therefore, Z Genners might not always want to disclose their true self, which can, in turn, affect their authenticity and transparency online.

### **3.3.2 AUTHENTICITY AND BEREAL**

The idea of BeReal, a platform where people share an ‘in-the-moment picture’ can seem like a real display of authenticity. All its features would seem to facilitate a presentation of a more authentic self online. According to Maddox (2023), “social media platforms always

code values into their platforms” (p. 1184), because technologies are never created in isolation and every component will incorporate these ideals for its users, designers, marketers, and investors. Therefore, For BeReal, ‘authenticity’ represents its fundamental value, and it was used as their unique selling proposition as the app emerged in a time when online authenticity was ultimately being questioned, especially around the younger users. Additionally, BeReal's attraction not only stems from its claim of being a platform for authentic social media content, but also by indirectly suggesting that the other social media platforms are ‘inauthentic’ (Maddox, 2023). Although spontaneity is not prominently reflected in psychological conceptualizations of authenticity, it is a key factor in constructivist perspectives, such as “mediated authenticity” (Kreling et al., 2022, p. 5) and a great indicator of why Generation Z might have a preference for spontaneous content that BeReal can provide, and that other social media platforms cannot (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022). Z Genners also seem to “prefer not to leave a permanent record with ephemeral social media platforms” (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 24), where the images posted disappear within 24 hours, just like it does on BeReal. According to Kreling et al. (2022), its temporary nature might encourage people to feel more at ease sharing everyday content “and may prevent users from self-censoring and fearing others’ judgment through negative feedback” (p. 4). Besides, the idea of “broadcasting only specific stories to specific people on specific channels” (Fromm & Read, 2018, p. 23) also aligns with Z Genners' mentality of not oversharing in social media, like previous generations have done (Owens, 2019).

However, it is normal that Generation Z individuals still want to share their life events with their social circles on specific platforms, which is why BeReal had such a good reception among this cohort. BeReal has accomplished what Fromm and Read (2018) indicate as a best practice for brands that want to target this generation which is “to find the appropriate balance of authenticity, frequency, humor, and brand messaging” (p. 51). As Owens (2019) cleverly summarizes, “youth culture today, in two words: Sensibleness, and Memes. Seriousness, and taking nothing seriously” (p. 97). Lipovetsky (2021) suggests something similar as he describes that now authenticity has taken a more relaxed hedonistic meaning as it can be seen through selfies, fun photos on the Internet, and random posts with spontaneous, ephemeral and insignificant content. Even BeReal’s official communication

indicates that “using BeReal won’t make you famous, but it is a daily dose of real life” (*BeReal. Your Friends for Real.*, 2023).

Nevertheless, we still need to consider the possibility of people planning the content ahead and staging their captured moments for BeReal, which as Kreling et al. (2022) point out, “users typically show the authentically positive sides of their lives, but not the authentically negative ones” (p. 10). It is not uncommon for Z Genners to look for external validation and to feel accepted by their peers, which is why they might feel the need to create an identity that will achieve this sense of belonging (Fromm & Read, 2018). In other words, Z Genners, “driven by a need for social recognition”, can use BeReal to “seek out opportunities to be seen doing fun and exciting activities, like attending concerts and sporting events, going out to eat, traveling, or just hanging out in trendy places with their friends” (p. 36), instead of posting authentic imagery. Meaning that the stories they share might not be as authentic as they intend them to be or as they are perceived by Generation Z users. As Owens (2019) describes,

“authenticity became a performance, as we started to speak to audiences of hundreds and thousands beyond our ‘real’ pools of friends and family, and ‘likes’ and follower counts trained us to create the kinds of content that would be the most popular, over the realistic depictions of our day-to-day” (p. 90).

Nonetheless, for Kreling et al. (2022), even though users might selectively share their most positive experiences online, it is still a realistic portrayal of themselves. This aligns with the notion that they extend their real personalities onto social media platforms, rather than creating entirely idealized versions of themselves and suggests that while users may curate their online presence, they still remain authentic to some extent, reflecting elements of their genuine selves. This blend of selectivity and authenticity adds depth to the understanding and measuring of how people navigate their identities in social media. As Maddox (2023) describes, in BeReal “this authenticity-as-realness is still a performance, but a more raw, differently curated presentation than authenticity-as-performance” (p. 1186). Plus, using both cameras (front and back) forces a greater level of realness and intimacy, “and because there is no staging the content, the intimacy comes from the in-the-moment snapshot, revealing parts of one’s life they may not otherwise ever share” (p. 1194).

Miller (2016) highlights how individuals use social media as a platform to showcase not only themselves but also their style, photographic skills and personalities. This is why Z Genners are actively engaging with the world around them through photography and what they decide to share on their social media accounts. Thus, BeReal could promote a sense of significance, by combating the potential monotony of a world saturated with attempts at curated ‘uniqueness’ and ‘authenticity’ with their unique 2-minute window of time to post. As Maddox (2023) explains, “given limitations in the pre-post stage, BeReal challenges this performative authenticity and binds it to a user’s personal networks and brief temporal window, encouraging spontaneity among a closely defined following” (p. 1187).

The exploration of authenticity, with its very complex and context-dependent nature, sets the stage for the empirical study that was carried out in the next chapters of this dissertation. As Gerosa (2024) describes, “the quest for authenticity has become the holy grail of artistic, cultural and goods producers, the common denominator in all consumption experiences and (especially middle- class) consumers’ lifestyles of the most disparate habits and tastes” (p. 17). Understanding how Generation Z, the newest emerging cohort of consumers, navigate authenticity nowadays, could provide valuable insights into this generation’s sense of self and identity, especially in the online world that is now part of their everyday lives. And through social media platforms like BeReal, that was launched at a crucial moment in the social media landscape, it is possible to observe this and understand how “perceptions of authenticity shift over time” (Maddox, 2023, p. 1195). In other words, by examining how BeReal's features and concept either enable or constrain authentic self-expression in this cohort, the goal is to shed light on the intricate ways digital environments ultimately shape personal authenticity.

## **PART II: EMPIRICAL STUDY**

### **CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 RESEARCH SUMMARY**

Authenticity, or the lack of it, is reflected in content creation as seen on social media platforms, and it relies on visibility, a consistent communication style and spontaneity (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022). In research by Kreling et al. (2022), we can also see how the different platform features that are available were identified as relevant factors that can contribute to creating authentic messages. Consequently, this may lead to different outcomes regarding perceived authenticity, depending on the platform that is being used, and it is why it makes it reasonable to expect that BeReal, through the concept of capturing spontaneous moments without filters, will manifest more authentic personas.

However, on the other hand, it might also occur that the constant everyday use of social media could result in a staged or simulated content. As Kreling et al. (2022) describe, it “appears plausible that being spontaneous and acting in an immediate manner may foster subjective authenticity in the social media context and that spontaneity might be sacrificed for staged self-presentation and constant performance” (p. 5). Additionally, it should be also considered that “much in line with Goffman’s theory of self-performance, users have various socio-discursive needs – expressive, communicative or promotional – reflecting the need for different personas and necessitating different addressees” (van Dijck, 2013, p. 211) across platforms. Hence, this triggers a new awareness of how the user wants their life story to be told, “to whom, and for what purpose” (p. 205).

##### **4.1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES**

In this sense, the main purpose of this study is to answer the following question:

**How is online authenticity produced and perceived by generation Z in the social media platform BeReal?**

In this question, we have two main aspects to consider, which are key to being able to approach the most accurate conclusions. First, we are trying to identify how online authenticity is being created, and second, how it is being interpreted by Z Genners. Therefore, to reach a better understanding of the topic, there will be three research questions that this study will be addressing:

1. How are the identities of Z Genners shaped through different social media platforms?
2. How do features in BeReal enable and constrain the sculpting of their authentic self?
3. How do Z Genners define and perceive authenticity?

#### **4.2 PURPOSE AND TYPE OF STUDY**

To collect data that will help answer the research questions, exploratory research was conducted using an interpretivist approach. Interpretivism, as defined by sociology Professor Russel Schutt (2012), is “the belief that reality is socially constructed and that the goal of social scientists is to understand what meanings people give to that reality, not to determine how reality works apart from these interpretations” (p. 86). This philosophy is different to the positivist approach in the sense that interpretivists believe that it is not possible to reach an objective reality using scientific methods. Interpretivists prefer to support the idea that individuals, whether a scientist or not, create their own perception of reality which is influenced by many factors like their personal preferences, biases, and social interactions. Therefore, an interpretivist approach combined with exploratory research made a perfect combination to shine some clarity on the social phenomenon that was selected for this study.

Additionally, since the topic of authenticity can be considered intricate, the idea was to gain a general understanding of how Generation Z relates to the social media platform BeReal through a qualitative method. According to Corbin and Strauss (2017), “qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables” (p. 13). Corbin and Strauss (2017) also mention that, usually, this qualitative approach enables a more dynamic format than its rigid and structured quantitative counterpart. This aspect is key, since the idea of this study was to interview young individuals who will be speaking in their

own voice and who need to be interviewed with a certain sense of flexibility that only qualitative research can provide.

Furthermore, in-depth interviews have been chosen as the most appropriate instrument to collect the necessary data in this research. Interviews “are designed to capture social life as participants experience it rather than in categories predetermined by the researcher” (Schutt, 2012, p. 17). Also, according to Mishler (1986), “questioning and answering are ways of speaking that are grounded in and depend on culturally shared and often tacit assumptions about how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings, and intentions” (p. 7). Thus, this is exactly what was expected to obtain after approaching the selected sample of Z Genners. The goal was to gather personal and genuine insights on how their generation perceive authenticity and how they choose to communicate authentically on their online platforms. Consequently, the data collection was made through two sequential stages. The first being composed of all the information gathered from the interviews and the second one through content analysis. The content analysis was made based on images submitted by the same participants that were being interviewed, and as Creswell and Creswell (2018) mention, “this provides an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality” (p. 303). The data that is gathered from qualitative studies and the conclusions that are made are genuine because the researcher has heard what the individuals had to say in their own words and with their own personal interpretation. Therefore, a positive aspect to qualitative data is that it tends to be enriched with a greater level of details but for that same reason they tend to be very limited generalizability and we can’t assume that all researchers would reach the same conclusions or that they would even conduct the research in a similar way (Schutt, 2012).

Furthermore, through the selected questions in the interview, it was possible to gather information that is not necessarily explicitly stated but based on a more interpretative approach. This tends to be composed of non-verbal cues such as the way people talk emphasizing certain words or when they make a pause, facial expressions and other body movements that might add further detail to their answers (Corbin & Strauss, 2017). And according to Schutt (2012), “in qualitative research, open-ended questions are often used to explore the meaning respondents give to abstract concepts” (p. 110) which is what we were

looking for in this study. Also, encloses the interpretive epistemological vision selected. All of it aligned with the idea that Generation Z is made of complex individuals who share similar lived experiences and therefore, the objective was to analyze their personal interpretation and recollection of those experiences in social media (Saunders et al., 2015).

### **4.3 SAMPLING**

The sample considered for this study was composed by 14 individuals chosen non-randomly as part of a selective or purposive sampling. In order to avoid gender bias, the participants were of diverse gender identities, but they needed to meet specific criteria. First, the participants needed to belong to the Generation Z cohort, which for the purpose of this study we determined that it would be people ranging from 18 to 27 years of age. Second, they had to be users of the social media platform BeReal, either currently or in the past. This type of non-probability sampling is meant to ensure that the interviews contain significant information related to the topic of interest and as Schutt (2012) explains, it “targets individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about the issues under investigation” (p. 157). BeReal gained momentum in 2022, which could mean that there are many relatively new users. Therefore, a final criterion added to the selection of the participants was to assess whether they were in fact experienced users. To ensure this, the participants were asked if they had used the platform continuously for a duration of at least 3 months prior to the date of the interview. This timeframe of 3 months was intended to make sure that the participants have used the platform long enough to understand its specific features and to perceive how this platform is different from other social media platforms. As Lim et al. (2015) explain, controlling the amount of time that the participants have been a user of this platform is an important aspect because if “the service recently experienced a rapid increase and influx of users, the sample might be skewed by relatively new users” (p. 136). Thus, we considered that the amount of time that they have used their BeReal account is a key factor as users can “not only change their public and private information as they become more accustomed to the platform, but they also change their self-presentation strategies as their perceptions of imagined and salient audiences change” (p. 136).

Furthermore, the final number of participants ended up being 14 because saturation was reached at this point, and it no longer made sense to continue the interviews. According to Creswell and Báez (2020), “in qualitative research, the idea is to explore a topic in depth so if data begins to repeat and you are not hearing new information, your sample size is likely adequate” (p. 235). Therefore, saturation during the interviews happens when the researcher keeps observing similar themes and insights across various participants instead of gathering new information.

Table 2 – Profile of the participants.

Participant	Gender	Age	Country of Birth	Country of Residence
1	Female	24	France	Portugal
2	Female	23	Italy	Portugal
3	Female	25	Germany	Portugal
4	Female	21	Romania	Spain
5	Male	26	Portugal	Portugal
6	Male	24	Ecuador	Spain
7	Female	27	Ecuador	Poland
8	Female	26	Ecuador	England
9	Female	27	Spain	Spain
10	Female	27	Ecuador	Portugal
11	Female	24	Spain	Spain
12	Female	26	Ecuador	Portugal
13	Female	27	Ecuador	United States of America
14	Female	27	Ecuador	Portugal

#### 4.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

To collect the data during the interview, a script of 15 questions was developed and the full interview script can be found on Appendix A of this dissertation. The end result was an interview script meant to be flexible in order to allow the interviewer to “follow the logic of participants, respond to ideas brought up by participants, and probe for more information and clarification” (Chen et al., 2021, p. 132). Thus, in this more semi-structured type of in-depth interviews, more questions can be added along the way, if needed, to obtain answers to the most fundamental questions of the study (Schutt, 2012).

In Table 3, it is possible to observe a summary of the concepts presented in Part I of this study, as well as the script questions that have been assigned in order to find the answers to our 3 main research questions.

Table 3 – Script Summary.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THEORETICAL GROUNDING	SCRIPT QUESTIONS
How are the identities of Z Genners shaped through different social media platforms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Z Genners':               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Characteristics and digital practices: Seemiller &amp; Grace (2018)</li> <li>- Social media and self-expression: Fromm &amp; Read (2018)</li> <li>- Platformed sociality: Van Dijck et al. (2018)</li> <li>- Digital identity: Owens (2019)</li> <li>- Identity construction: Martin et al. (2018)</li> <li>- Digital integration: McCrindle (2018)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think of when hearing the term social media?</li> <li>• Which platforms do you use?</li> <li>• What are your experiences with these platforms? How much time do you spend on them?</li> <li>• How does social media influence your life and in what ways?</li> <li>• Have you been influenced by any social media practices and what are your feelings about the experiences? Do you have any concerns related to these practices?</li> </ul>
How do features in BeReal enable and constrain the sculpting of their authentic self?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BeReal features as an enabler of authenticity: Maddox (2023)</li> <li>• Social media and authenticity: Kreling et al. (2022)</li> <li>• Social media and identity construction: Miller (2016)</li> <li>• Digital identity: Bílková et al. (2023)</li> <li>• Digital media and youth culture: Boffone (2022)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think about BeReal?</li> <li>• Do you share a picture daily? And do you do it right after you receive the notification that it is time to post?</li> <li>• How do you think that authentic and inauthentic social media /Be Real content impacts you? How does it make you feel?</li> <li>• Will you continue to use BeReal?</li> </ul>
How do Z Genners define and perceive authenticity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authenticity and digital communication: Wood et al. (2018)</li> <li>• Psychological perspectives on authenticity: Hopwood et al. (2021)</li> <li>• Cultural interpretations of authenticity: Balaban &amp; Szambolics (2022)</li> <li>• Evolving authenticity: Gerosa (2024)</li> <li>• Individualism and authenticity: Lipovetsky (2021)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you define the term authenticity?</li> <li>• Is authenticity important for you on these platforms?</li> <li>• Do you think you are authentic on social media platforms? On BeReal?</li> <li>• Do you think the people in your network, and the people you follow, are authentic? On BeReal?</li> <li>• Do you think those images show what your life is really like?</li> </ul>

It is important to mention that the social media platform BeReal was also used during the interview to facilitate interactions with the participants and gather unique insights of how they approached it. The aim was to ask the participants to look at their BeReal archive of shared pictures to facilitate accurate responses concerning their outlook on the moments they have captured when using this platform (Kreling et al., 2022). Additionally, as maintained by the purpose of the present study, and based on Chen et al.'s (2021) research methodology,

the script was designed to contain two different sections. The first focuses on participants' experiences with social media platforms, especially with BeReal, while the second part concentrates on participants' perception of authenticity in these platforms, again especially focusing on the social media platform BeReal. Through these two sections, the idea was to cover the list of planned topics, typically starting with basic questions to gather background details and establish rapport. Subsequently, progressing to broader, open-ended questions that were designed to induce extensive narratives that will enable the interviewer to learn "about people in depth and on their own terms, and in the context of their situation" (Schutt, 2012, p. 303).

Finally, as part of the interview process, participants were asked to share two photos that were posted in BeReal by accessing the memory feature in their account where all their past photos shared have been archived. This step was intended to complement the study through the use of content analysis. According to Shutt (2012), content analysis is defined as the structured, unbiased, and quantitative evaluation of message features and it is particularly well-suited for examining popular culture and other topics related to human communication. In other words, it is "the use of text or pictures as the source of data about the social world" (p. xvii), and for this particular study it was used as an extension of the in-depth interviews. The participants were asked to submit via WhatsApp two of their past BeReal photos. These two photos had to be considered by their own creators during the interview as either authentic or unauthentic. The objective was to first understand from a Z Genner's point of view, how they ended up making the selection and classifying them into those two categories. And then, to "develop inferences" (Schutt, 2012, p. 430) and see if we could identify some type of pattern among those images that were classified as authentic and the ones considered unauthentic.

The fourteen selected Z Genners were interviewed individually through a video call in Zoom, so that the interview could be easily recorded and then transcribed. The interviews were conducted between May 16<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and the average duration of all 14 interviews was 32 minutes. The transcriptions were done using an AI- powered transcription service and. They can all be found in Appendix B of this dissertation. The interviews were conducted either in English or in Spanish, depending on the preference of the interviewee.

To analyze the data and to present the results, the interviews that had been transcribed were anonymized. This was done by assigning each participant a number from 1 to 14. Additionally, people's faces on the pictures that they submitted for content analysis were also blurred to ensure that the privacy of the participants was being preserved. Finally, in order to guarantee that the research maintained ethical guidelines, an informed consent, included in Appendix C, was provided to the participants prior to the start of the interview. This consent made the interviewees fully aware of the implications of participation and would confirm that they have decided without coercion to be a part of the study, to be recorded, and to possibly be quoted anonymously on the results and findings.

#### **4.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis in this dissertation was divided into two different sections: 1. the analysis of the interviews and 2. the content analysis of the photos sent by each of the participants.

To analyze the interviews, the five steps of the data analysis process described by Creswell and Creswell (2018) were followed. The first step was to organize the data and prepare it for analysis. This meant transcribing the interviews and anonymizing the participants. The second step involved reading all the data and reflecting on its meaning. The third step was to code the data and to segment the similar ideas into categories. The fourth step consisted in generating a description and a theme, which were the major findings that were gathered through this study and represent the headings in the findings section. The last step was to clarify the descriptions by explaining through textual evidence from the participants and interconnecting the themes.

For the second part, which is the content analysis, the phenomenological method was chosen to analyze the photos that were sent by the participant during the interviews. This method fits the research needs, and according to Sanders (1982), "phenomenology seeks to make explicit the implicit structure and meaning of human experiences". As he further explains, "it is the search for 'essences' that cannot be revealed by ordinary observation" (p. 354). In order to analyze the pictures through phenomenology, there are four important levels or steps that need to be carried out after recording the interviews and transcribing all the responses.

The first step is to describe the narratives that are occurring in the interviewees' responses and photos in order to “identify the qualities of human experience and consciousness that give the person being studied his or her unique identity and outlook” (p. 357). The second step is to look for themes, ideas or words that are recurring within and between all the interviews and photos. This step will already be an initial assessment to understand whether the research has reached saturation by looking at the data of overall consensus in recurring themes across the 14 interviews and photos. Thirdly, it is necessary to develop ‘noetic correlates’ which are the “subjective reflections of the emergent themes” (p. 357). Lastly, it is crucial to use intuition and reflection to extract the “universal pure essence” (p. 357) from the individual’s perception. It is key to interpret the recurring themes and the subjective reflections correctly to be able to identify the true essence of the experience being studied.

To summarize, what this process aimed to achieve is the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’, or as Sanders describes, “an analysis of the way in which things or experiences show themselves” (p. 354). Before starting the phenomenological investigation, Sanders argues that it is necessary to determine ‘what’ and ‘who’ is going to be studied. In this particular research, the ‘what’ is the production and perception of authenticity and the ‘who’ are our 14 Z Geners that were previously selected. These participants needed to be people who “possess the characteristics under observation or those who can give reliable information on the phenomena being researched” (p. 356). Then, the goal was to inquire about the experiences that the participants have had when using BeReal and other social media platforms using the interview script as a guide. According to Sanders, phenomenology “does not present a new view of observable data. Rather, it presents a "new way" of viewing what is genuinely discoverable and potentially there but often is not seen” (p. 357). However, in order to successfully complete the phenomenological process, the researcher needs to temporarily put all of his or her “existing personal biases, beliefs, preconceptions and assumptions aside” (p. 355), which is a step known as bracketing. This ensures that the analysis is approached from a neutral perspective and that it focuses on the phenomenon as experienced by the users themselves.

## **CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTERVIEWS**

In organizing the findings of this study, the author followed the structure outlined in the interview script to guarantee a comprehensive analysis. First, the various definitions and perceptions of the term social media were examined. Next, the platforms most often used by the participants, as well as the time spent on each of them, were analyzed. Then, the participants' perceptions of social media and how it has influenced their everyday lives was studied. This was followed by a review of their responses regarding BeReal, its concept, its features, and their general behavior on the platform. Finally, their perception of what authenticity is and the importance that they have placed on being authentic online were analyzed. Overall, this systematic approach ensured that the findings and its themes aligned with the core research objectives.

#### **5.1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA = CONNECTING PEOPLE**

Participants' perception of social media and how they try to describe it, is grounded on the idea of 'connection'. Thus, 11 participants out of the 14 used this word in some way and emphasized on the concept of 'connecting people' by saying that social media is "communication" (Participant 10), "being sociable with others" (Participant 1), being "interconnected" (Participant 9), being "connected with the world" (Participant 9), "sharing life with friends" (Participant 12), and to "connect people" (Participant 7). Consequently, 'information', 'content' and 'entertainment' were also words that were repeatedly seen in relation to social media. For instance, Participant 2 said that when she thinks about social media she thinks about "exchange of information". Participant 9 said that "social media are platforms where people generate content that at the same time works as source of entertainment and of information". However, Participant 10, mentioned that while social media keeps you informed it can sometimes also misinform with fake news or unverified sources. Participant 3 said that "social media allows you to see people's photos and videos". For Participant 14 "social media nowadays is a little bit of everything, you can connect with friends, share photos, learn new things through videos. Finally, Participant 9 mentioned that

all social media has its positive and negative aspects and at the end of the day everything depends on how each person decides to use it and for what purpose.

### **5.1.2 INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK AS TOP OF MIND**

When asked about the social media that they currently use, all 14 participants mentioned Instagram, and they said this is the platform that they use the most. TikTok was a close second with only Participant 5 explaining that he currently doesn't have an account, but that he used to have it. Other platforms mentioned were Twitter, by four of the participants, LinkedIn by two, Snapchat also by two and Facebook by five. However, Facebook was usually accompanied by a comment such as "I no longer use it, I used to have it installed but not anymore" (Participant 11), "I barely go on Facebook anymore" (Participant 3) and "I don't really use Facebook anymore" (Participant 1). Although, all the participants in this study have a BeReal account it wasn't on their top of mind when asked about the social media platforms that they use the most and not all the participants mentioned it in response to this question.

### **5.1.3 TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

In terms of average time spent on social media, the participants said that it varied, especially since five of them use social media as part of their jobs and therefore the answer to that question changed significantly from person to person. However, when asked about the time they spent on BeReal specifically, they agreed that it was minimum in comparison to the other platforms. The participants said things like "it doesn't take a lot of my time, so I don't waste time on it" (Participant 2). Participant 1 said "basically I just take my BeReal and I go see what my friends are doing. But that's it" and Participant 5 said "that's one big thing that goes in favor of BeReal, which is I just go there. It takes me, like, two to three minutes maximum, and then it's done. I know that there's no addiction". Participant 1 also made a comment in relation to addiction and said: "I think it's fun and it's like, it's quick. I think I like it because I think it's difficult to become addicted to BeReal. So, I feel like it's a really safe habit". Finally, BeReal was also described as being "immediate" by Participant 7, and she mentioned an example of how Instagram has a whole process and many steps behind

sharing a post such as thinking what concept, what picture, which caption, what filters, etc. which clearly makes it more time consuming than the process behind sharing a BeReal.

#### **5.1.4 THE TWO SIDES OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Participants, when asked about social media influencing their lives, were generally speaking about positive aspects rather than any negative ones. For instance, Participant 3 said that she uses social media for inspiration and Participant 2 said she uses social media “to get information, to relax and to decompress”. Other interviewees like Participant 7, Participant 9 and Participant 13 also mentioned that they find useful content and information and therefore find their experiences rather beneficial. Participants 6 and 9 said social media heavily influences their decision making, for instance on what to buy, where to go, what to do, depending on what is currently trending on social media platforms. Participants 10 and 12 were also positively impacted and commented that it was a tool for them to be connected to their friends and family, especially since they are living abroad. So, in this sense they feel that social media brings them closer to people and keeps them up to date with what is going on with their lives.

However, on the negative side, there were those like Participant 8 that mentioned that “social media platforms are super addictive”. The same participant explained that being exposed to content where everything seems perfect all the time creates a sense of insecurity and could increase anxiety especially in younger people. Participant 12 commented something similar and said, “social media misrepresents reality because everybody wants to show a perfect life”. Participant 9 said that the amount of information that we receive makes our mind feel bombarded and some of that information, according to Participant 14, might not even be correct. Participant 7 said, “it makes it more difficult to disconnect from my phone and do any type of activity that doesn’t require a phone” because of this addictive element. Not only addiction, but also time consumption was a negative aspect that was added by Participant 7. She said that sometimes she finds one useful video but then ends up watching many more videos on the same topic that have been suggested to her through the algorithm and it becomes a never-ending cycle that she can’t seem to get out of.

### 5.1.5 BEREAL IS ALL ABOUT SIMPLICITY

In general, BeReal is seen as a way to keep up with what your friends are doing, however, the participants did seem to notice some unique characteristics of the platform and its concept. In order to describe what makes BeReal unique, some participants would compare it to another platform like Instagram due to its contrasting characteristics. For instance, Participant 2 perceives BeReal as “very different from other social media” and Participant 9 thinks of it as “innovative idea”. Participant 1 commented that “the main purpose of this app was to be real...while mainly on Instagram, I would say people tend to take an aesthetic story”. Participant 3 described BeReal as “fun” and “cute” and said, “it is nice that they don't have something like advertisement on that app”. Participant 7 perceives BeReal as “less toxic and more real because you don't have that much time to decide what to do” and Participant 8 said that for her, BeReal, is “more natural” than other social media. Additionally, Participant 12 said BeReal is a platform that is intended to avoid the social problem of people wanting to be perfect all the time. Finally, Participant 5 said he doesn't waste time on BeReal, while on Instagram he feels like he loses too much time checking on people that he doesn't really care about.

There were also other features of the platform BeReal that were mentioned by participants. For instance, according to Participant 12, the dual camera function is a nice addition that gives people a sense that their friends are really sharing what they are experiencing at that exact moment. Participant 14, touched upon the lack of filters in BeReal and how she likes that this ‘forces’ people to show their true self without any effects or edited faces. Lastly, another characteristic of this platform that was mentioned often during the interviews was the ‘memories’ feature. Participant 8 said that this was her favorite aspect of the platform because it enables her to see at the end of the year a recap of everything that she has done. Likewise, Participant 9 said that she felt like she had a type of personal daily photo album of the time she lived abroad. Finally, Participant 6 commented that the “memories” was a big plus for him because now has one memory of each day and it will be as a personal archive of what he did during that period of time.

### 5.1.6 TIME TO BEREAL

There were some general complaints as well among participants about BeReal. One of them was in terms of ‘time commitment’ to yet another social media platform. For example, Participant 5 said, “I like the concept, although I have to say I think I would have enjoyed it more when I was in university, when I had less strict schedules”. Participant 13 said that she felt bad because she didn’t have something to post everyday and it ended up feeling like an “extra chore”. According to Participant 12, it felt a little “hypocrite” to have the option to retake a picture and she felt that nobody would take the photo at the exact time of the notification. Therefore, even though the idea of BeReal might have been good, according to Participant 13, people can still choose what to show and what they want others to see. Participant 4 said that on BeReal her friends were “more authentic than in Instagram but still they were waiting for the time of the day when they were doing something cool to show off”. This was a repeated thought among participants, such as Participant 6, Participant 3 and Participant 10, who agreed that BeReal could be improved if the ‘rules’ of when to post was required to be followed more strictly during a specific time frame and if the platform didn’t allow people to retake a photo multiple times.

Due to the lack of an obligation to post when the notification shows up, all of the 14 participants mentioned that their use of the platform is not daily and even though when they first downloaded BeReal they tried to be more persistent with posting right when the notification appeared, after a while this urgency wore off. As Participant 4 said, “I couldn’t remember to post daily, my life got really busy, and it became more like a chore to post on BeReal”. Participant 1 said, “I’m not taking my BeReal when I have the notification because I’m busy and I don’t want to be, like, the girl always on her phone. I have the notification. I need to do it. No, like, you have a life, so do it when you have time”. Additionally, Participant 3 and Participant 8 said that they usually have the phone on a not disturb or silent mode during the day, so even if they wanted to post right away, given their busy schedule, it isn’t a possibility because they don’t see the notification. Similarly, Participant 2 said, “I’m not super attached to the notification. Sometimes I just don’t notice it. Like, I didn’t see it, so I post it late just because I didn’t see it and sometimes it depends on my mood”. Lastly, Participant 6 said that sometimes BeReal would even be disturbing as it would interrupt a

special moment, because when he would be gathered with his friends and notification would come up, everybody would stop what they were doing and disrupt their conversations to check their phones and post their BeReal.

### **5.1.7 AUTHENTICITY AND THE TRUE SELF**

According to the participants, authenticity is defined in many different ways, and it will depend on the context. Participant 11 and Participant 12 said authenticity is “being yourself” and “showing who you really are”, while Participant 1 defined it as “being true to yourself and the respect of your own values”. Participant 5 and Participant 8 both explained authenticity as “to be yourself without filters”, and Participant 3 mentioned that a person that is authentic is someone that “shows their true self and that is not telling lies”. Participants 6, 10 and 13, similarly to Participant 1, also included in their definition the idea of values. For example, Participant 13 said that authenticity is presenting yourself to others based on your own beliefs and making sure that your actions are aligned with how you think and what your values are. Participant 6 mentioned that he considers himself authentic in the way he expresses himself because he is real with others about where he is from, his culture and the values he acquired while growing up. Participant 10 said that “being real is to show who you are without fear of being judged. Making yourself vulnerable to people, fighting for what you want and for what you believe, to base your actions on your principles and values and not being afraid of expressing yourself”. Likewise, Participant 7 said that authenticity is “expressing yourself through your own experiences, saying what you think and what you like without the fear of others judging you or rejecting you for it”. According to Participant 4, authenticity means “being the first to do something like the first coming up with an idea instead of following someone else’s trend or idea”. However, she also mentions that she doesn’t think “you are less authentic if you get inspired by something you saw and try to do it in your own way” and said, “I always recreate styles that inspire me, but I do it in my own version.”. Participant 6 said that you can be authentic “by adding that personal touch to the things that you do so that you are not an exact copy of everybody else”. Similarly, Participant 14 explains that for her being authentic is “showing that extra thing that makes you unique and that differentiates you from the rest, that thing that makes other people remember you by”.

Regarding social media, Participant 9 said that for her something authentic is when it shows the reality of each moment, however it is. Participant 5 also goes on to say that if you are being authentic “you just show whatever you are going through at that moment”. Finally, Participant 1 said that “on social media, it's a bit complex because for me, the opposite of, like, authentic is lying. But you're not really lying if you're just taking pictures of the good moments. But I mean, usually it's not only taking pictures of the good moments, it is like using FaceApp to like, to erase a pimple you have or anything, just pretending, you know”. Furthermore, Participants 2, 3, and 5 said that authenticity in BeReal is to ‘post on time’. Participant 3 said “someone who's, like, pretending to be someone else on social media and is a whole different person in real life is not authentic to me. Obviously, authenticity would be to post in time rather than to post, like two or 3 hours later when you actually do something cool, you have makeup on, you have your cool outfit on”. Finally, Participant 5 said that on BeReal authenticity is “to not think twice about what you're going to post. It's just to post at a specific spot at a specific point in time”.

#### **5.1.8 DOES AUTHENTICITY EVEN MATTER?**

The simple answer for the majority of the participants was that it depends. Ten out of the 14 participants commented that they are aware that most of what they see on social media is not real, therefore they are not concerned about using only platforms that are 100% authentic. Participant 1 said, “for me, on BeReal, I don't think it's really important because I follow, like, I don't know, 20 people. It's more my friends. So, if they want to be fake and be like, pretend, it's okay. I don't care”. Participant 2 mentioned that authenticity wasn't her top priority, and she said “I know that social media are not, like, real in the sense that people show what they want to show. And even if they seem to have the perfect life on social media, I know that that's not real. So I just know that they can't be authentic”. Participant 8 said that all social media platforms imply only showing one part of your life and therefore no one is showing all of it. According to Participant 4, “nobody is completely authentic. I mean everyone follows some type of trend. Even on BeReal”. Participant 9 argues that at the end of the day everybody has a right to their privacy and to decide what to say and share so in all platforms you end up showing whatever it is that you decide to share, making authenticity very subjective. Participant 10 believes that to be real you don't need to post at a certain

time, in your worse outfits or in your most painful moments. She thinks that that is completely unnecessary, and it exposes you to people that don't need to know that much detail about your life. Participant 13 and Participant 7 even mentioned that there are times when authenticity is not as important, and they said that sometimes they prefer to see posts that they know have been edited but that are more aesthetically pleasing for the audience. For instance, Participant 13 said that when she is on Instagram looking at pictures from places that she wants to travel to, she prefers to see a nice and prettier picture from that location that might not be 'as real'. In parallel, Participant 4 said "I try to be myself but I also want to post pictures that I look good so I will try to post the best one. The best version of myself".

However, given that BeReal is more dedicated to a close group of friends, Participant 4 argues that she can be more authentic and not take the platform "as seriously". Similarly, Participants 10 and 11 said that they perceived this platform as being 'more private' than others and Participant 2 mentioned that she "really liked the fact that it's just really really close friends". Participant 8 explained that she only follows people that she trusts on BeReal, this way she can upload photos in her pajamas and without makeup and she doesn't really care if she doesn't look good. Participant 11 mentions that BeReal, as any other social media platform, is a way to show only one part of your life and always showcasing it better than it really is. She mentioned that in social media there are things that need to be exaggerated and things that need to be hidden. Nevertheless, she still believes that what her friends were showing on BeReal was in a way more real than what they were showing on other platforms. She said "on BeReal my friends would show that they were working or studying all afternoon, while on Instagram they would share a picture of a nice coffee shop or a trip that they have previously been to": Participant 2 perceives BeReal as a "safe space" where she mentions that she can make "silly faces and stuff like that and it's more acceptable". Participant 1 said that "even if some people, they're, like, trying to fake it and stuff, it's never, like, a huge thing. And I've never seen people being, like, pretending to be in that spot, in that place, just going somewhere to take a BeReal. I think, like, it's too much effort just for a picture that's lasting one day". Finally, as Participant 5 explained, "if there's an Instagram post of a picture on the beach, I know that probably on BeReal, there's like the making of that photo and it's like people stumbling or just trying to mess with their hair or something

like this”. Therefore, the consensus does seem to be that BeReal takes some pressure off from what one is expected to post and that is what makes it appealing at the end of the day.

## 5.2 CONTENT ANALYSIS

The intention of the content analysis in this study was to find patterns or trends in the BeReals (Figure 3 and 4) that the 14 participants picked and that they had classified as either authentic or unauthentic. According to Manovich (2017), image cultures that emerge around technological media are shaped not just by the technologies themselves, but also by cultural languages, conventions, and techniques that determine aspects like subject matter, storytelling, editing, composition, lighting, sequencing, and other features of images. Therefore, drawing inspiration from Manovich’s work, the way in which the participant’s photos were analyzed was through the use of three separate categories: content, context, and photographic aesthetics. As Manovich explains, “people use particular visual aesthetics and styles to define their membership in subcultures, to signal their ‘identities’, and to identify with particular lifestyles” (p. 40). Consequently, the aim was to examine and interpret the visual data by addressing different aspects of how the images were created, perceived and classified. This with the goal of understanding how they contribute to the perception of authenticity or unauthenticity.

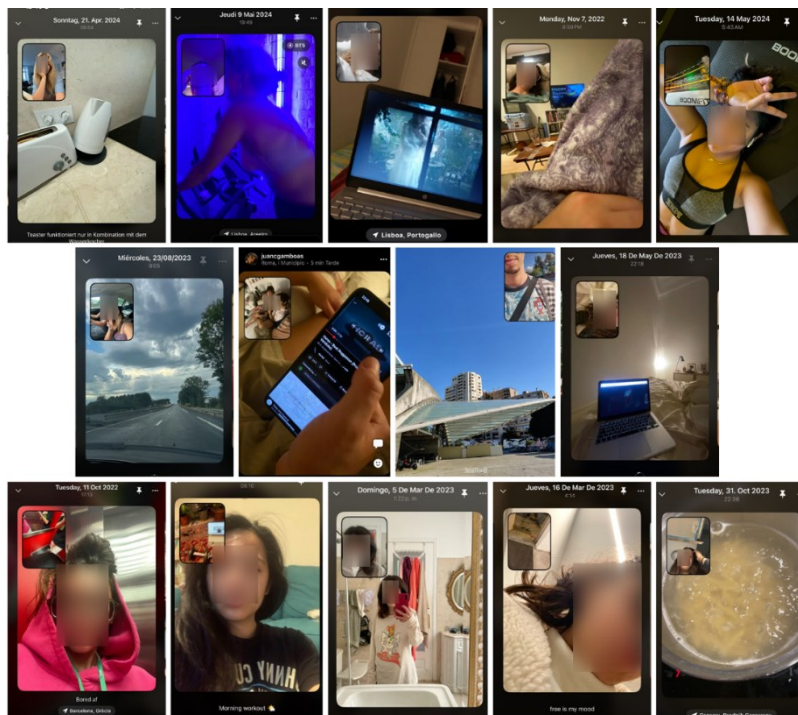


Figure 3: Participant’s authentic BeReals.

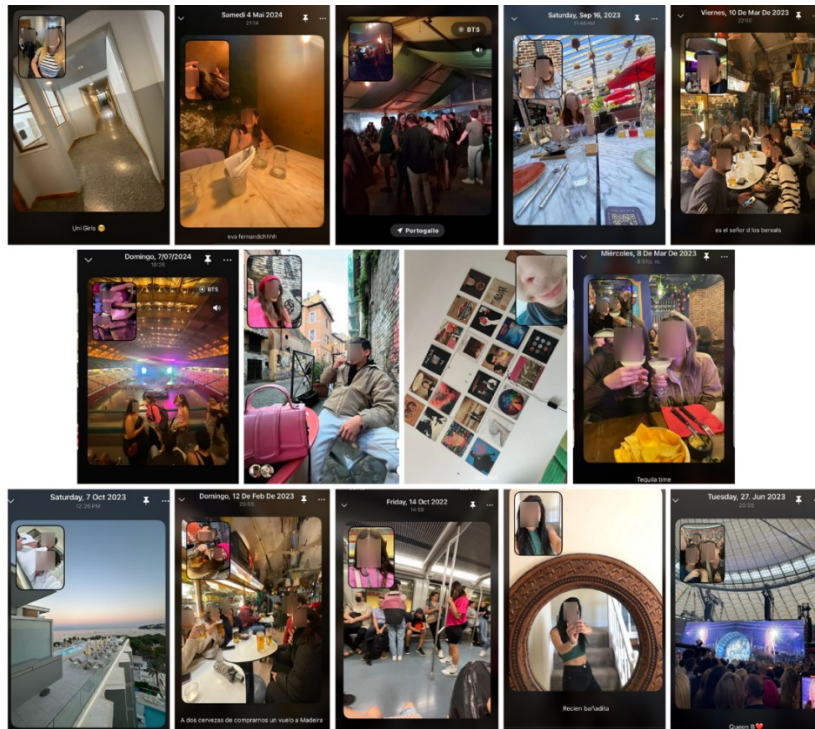


Figure 4: Participant's unauthentic BeReals.

Lastly, using phenomenology, the objective was to analyze the photos' essences, but considering also the interpretation of participants and the meanings that they had attributed to them. For this step, the hermeneutic circle in phenomenology suggests that one can't fully understand a part without considering the whole, nor one can fully understand the whole without considering the parts. In other words, to interpret each photo, it was necessary to understand how it fitted into a broader context, and vice versa, and to consider the platform norms surrounding authenticity. This makes interpretation a continuous process in which the goal was to look for recurring patterns or themes in how authenticity, and unauthenticity, is being experienced and represented by the 14 participants.

### 5.2.1 CONTENT

For this category, the purpose was to analyze the type of content that the participants were deciding to include in their photos. According to Manovich (2017), content refers to the subject or object present in the image, which means that the focus is on 'what' is being depicted. In order to have a better understanding, the analysis was separated between

front/selfie camera and the back camera. On Figure 5, it is possible to observe that the most repeated content in the authentic photos was a selfie with a full face from the author, followed by a selfie with a cropped face. There were zero photos that don't show a face and that were considered authentic by its authors. On the other hand, the most common content for front cameras in photos classified as unauthentic, was a selfie with other people where you can see the full face of the author and a full face of those people that appeared next to them. The second most common content was also a selfie showing the author's full face, but in this case, without a companion.

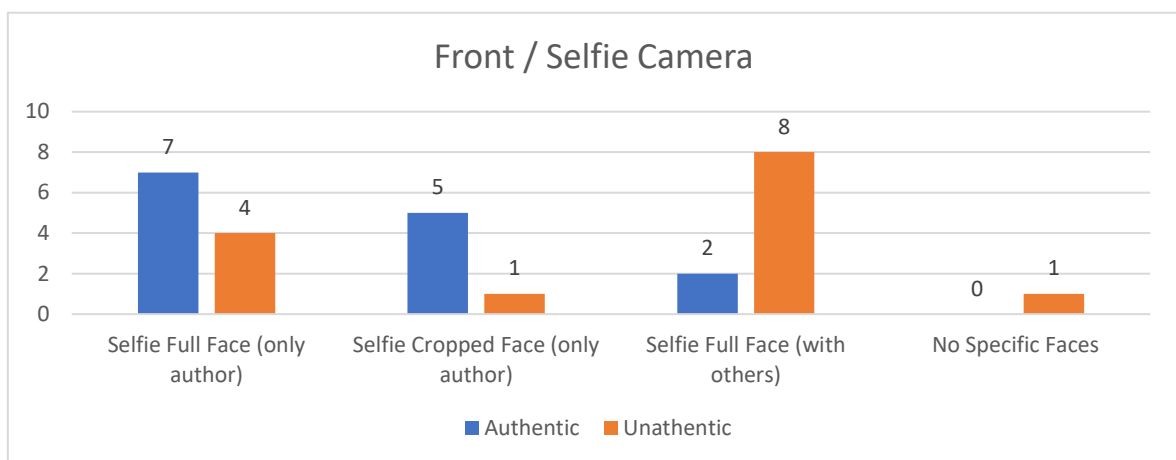


Figure 5: Content in Front / Selfie Camera.

On Figure 6, it can be observed that the most common content for the back cameras on authentic photos were no people, just a snapshot of their surrounding environment. There were also a few mirror photos and photos of other people. However, in the unauthentic photos, it was common to see other people appearing in the back cameras. The people that appeared in these photos were mostly friends of the participants, but there were also some photos with random people that were appearing as part of the content.

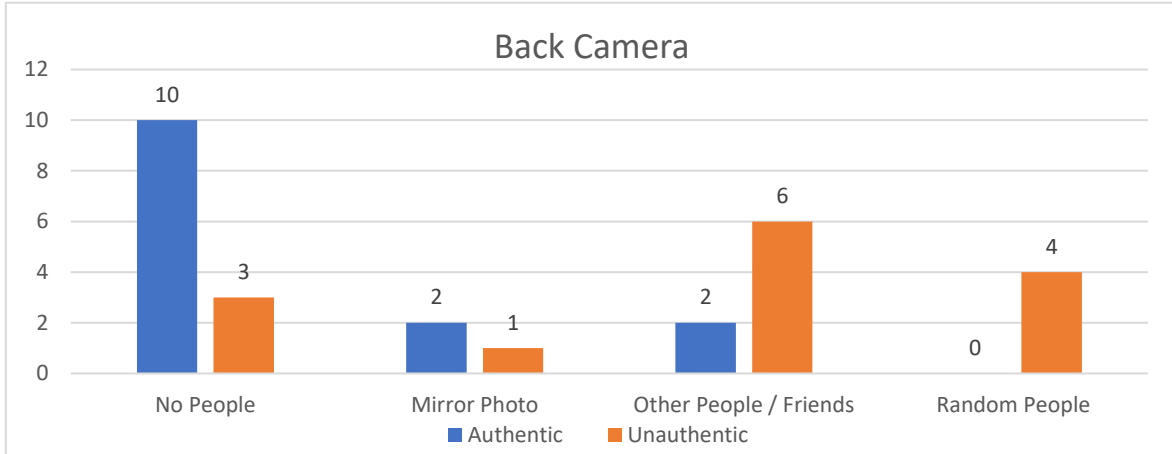


Figure 6: Content in Back Camera.

### 5.2.2 CONTEXT

For the context category, the focus was to analyze what was the environment being captured by the authors of the photos. As Manovich (2017) explains, context refers to the situational and cultural circumstances surrounding the image, including the location and social setting. In this analysis front and back camera were analyzed together since it made more sense to just look at both pictures as one composition taken in a single environment. In Figure 7, it is possible to observe how there are these two very noticeable patterns between the authentic and unauthentic photos. For the authentic photos, the place that appears the most is the ‘home’, while on the unauthentic photos it is an ‘out with friends’ setting.

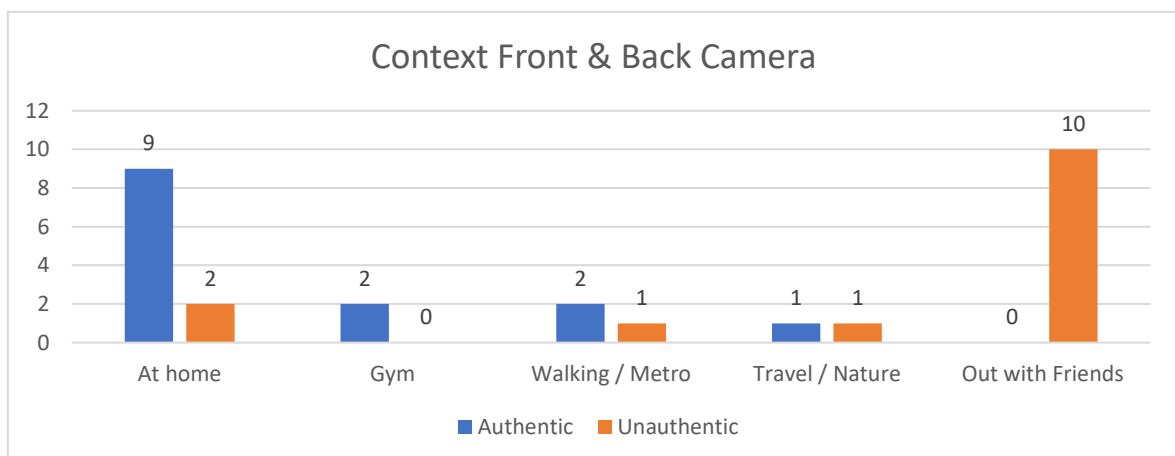


Figure 7: Context in Front and Back Camera.

In order to have a better understanding of the ‘at home’ and the ‘out with friends’ context, the graph has been divided into subcategories, as seen in Figure 8 and 9.

In the authentic ‘at home’ photos, it can be seen that what is mostly captured is another screen such as a computer with a show or movie streaming in the background. There are also some photos that had been taken while the author was cooking, taking a mirror selfie and even doing an at home workout. It is interesting to note here, that only one out of the nine authentic ‘at home’ pictures have more than one person appearing in the shot. On the other hand, for the unauthentic ‘out with friends’ category, the most popular setting was at a restaurant or a bar with food and drinks on the table. As Participant 13 commented during her interview, “we waited for the mimosas to arrive to take the BeReal”. Additionally, there were also some photos that had been taken at concerts, parties, and coffee shops.

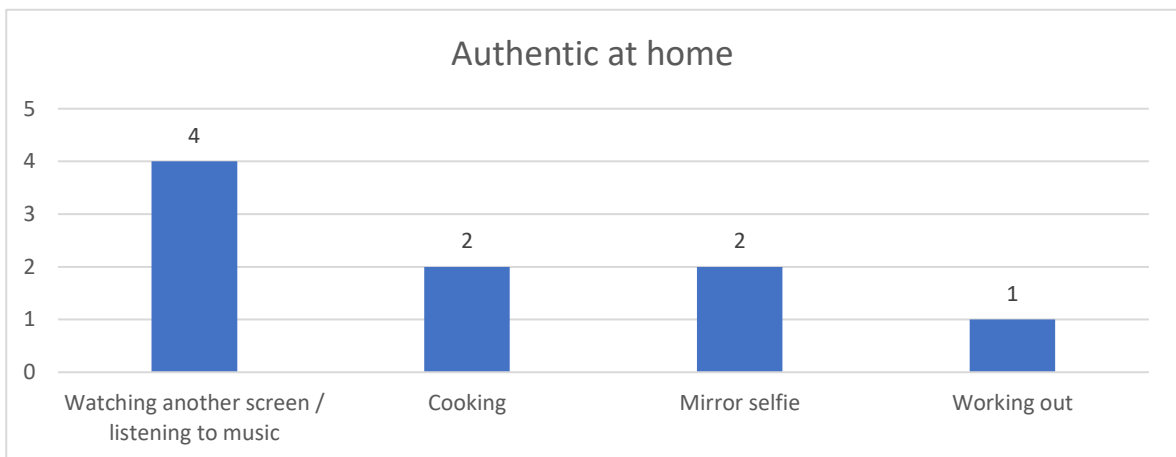


Figure 8: Context in Authentic photos at home.

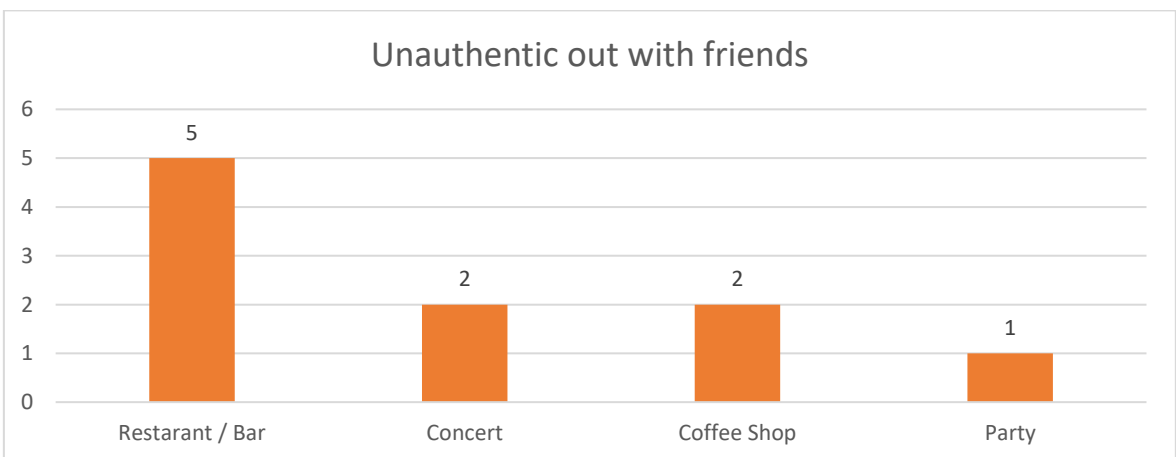


Figure 9: Context in Unauthentic photos out with friends.

### 5.2.3 PHOTOGRAPHIC AESTHETICS

For the last category, the type of effect added by the author of the photo was analyzed as part of the photographic aesthetic. According to Manovich (2017), this category refers to the visual and technical aspects of the photograph, such as the composition, lighting, color, filters, and overall artistic style. Since there are no filters that can be added on BeReal, it might occur that the person taking the photo uses the phone itself to produce some type of movement in the shot, either by making it blurry or by placing the subject unframed. As can be seen on Figure 10, from the authentic photos that were received during the interview, 7 used some type of external effect in the front /Selfie Camera, while only 3 of the unauthentic photos used any type of blurred or unframed effect. Additionally, as seen on Figure 11 (on the back camera), 10 of the authentic photos did not use an effect, while 12 of the unauthentic photos were, similarly, taken without any blurred or unframed effect.

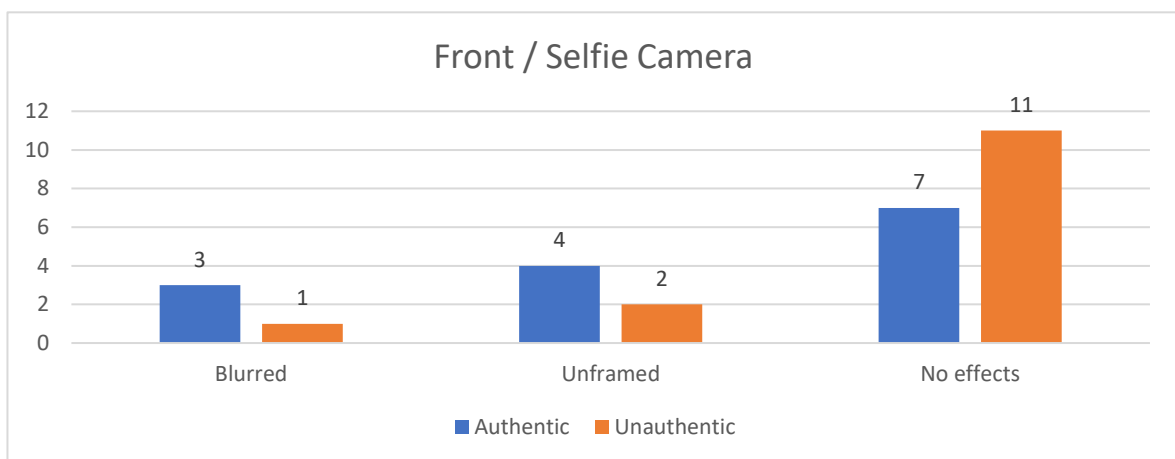


Figure 10: Photographic aesthetics in front / selfie camera.

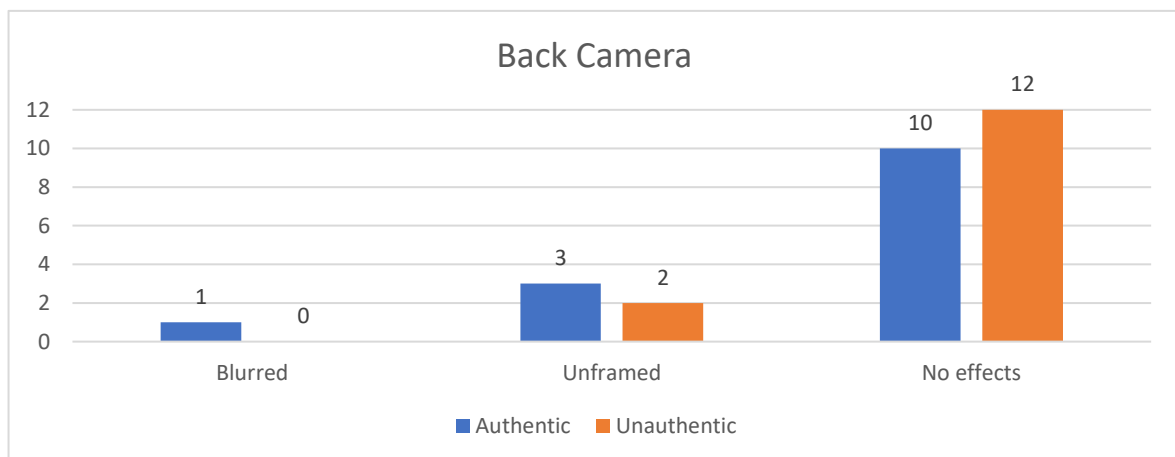


Figure 11: Photographic aesthetics in back camera.

#### 5.2.4 PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The phenomenon that is being identified and studied in this analysis is the authenticity and unauthenticity as experienced and expressed through BeReal photos. However, as a researcher, the author needed to set aside her own preconceptions, biases, or judgments about what “authenticity” is and what it meant for her. Therefore, the focus relied entirely on the users’ experiences of authenticity and the meanings they assigned to their photos. In general, participants would describe their authentic photos as the ones where they were at home, usually with no makeup and that had not been previously planned as Participant 2 explained. Participant 3 said, “ok this picture is authentic because I was just going to the class and I was in the elevator and my hair was undone and I didn’t retake, I just shot the photo and shared it”. Participant 7 said she has a lot of authentic pictures wearing her pajamas and just cooking at home. Participants 8 and 14 said that they were working out, and they just took the BeReal while looking sweaty and tired. Participants 9 and 13 said that they were not doing something interesting just watching a series at home by themselves, they didn’t really think about it when taking the photo.

On the other hand, participants would generally choose the unauthentic photos based on the ones that had been planned, retaken or at a special outing with friends. Participant 2 said, “I saw the notification and I didn't post...I decided to post when I was out of the house”. Participant 5 said, “the one, I would say is not authentic, like, I thought about where to take it because I'm very proud of my collection wall in my home in Viseu and I wanted my friends to see it”. Similarly, Participant 7 said she waited to be at a concert to post and Participant 13 said she waited to be at a restaurant with drinks to take the BeReal.

When taking a look at the photos that were sent, these descriptions made by the participants seemed to be completely aligned with the content and context that were analyzed. All of the authentic photos show the participants in a relaxed environment, wearing informal clothing and little to no makeup, while the unauthentic pictures show a more glamorous atmosphere and transmit a vibe of “Instagram worthy” shots of groups of friends at cool events. Therefore, it was possible to identify three themes between the authentic and unauthentic pictures. These three themes were: “spontaneity versus curation”, “natural looking versus

polished/aesthetic” and “mundane moments versus planned events”. Participants feel that showing their everyday life helps them appear more authentic. However, they do participate in the act of ‘curated aesthetics’ to intentionally share with their friends when they are doing something fun or when they are at a nice location. This results into a new type of user performance in which a person shares the ‘imperfect’ in the moment picture in order to balance their desire to appear authentic with the subtle pressures of self-representation imposed by both their personal values and the social media platform norms.

## CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION

To reiterate, the objectives of this dissertation were to understand how online authenticity is produced and perceived by Generation Z in the social media platform BeReal. In order to answer this, an analysis of the findings was made along with the previously defined research questions.

The first question was how the identities of Z Genners are shaped through the different social media platforms. It was possible to answer this question through the interviews, specifically when the participants were asked about what they thought when hearing the term social media, which platforms they used and what were their experiences with them. All 14 of the participants said that they used multiple social media platforms, primarily Instagram and TikTok, which already indicates that their identities are built on more than one single platform. In parallel with what Van Dijck et al. (2018) explain in their book, *The Platform Society*, social interactions are now happening daily in the digital world. Therefore, the social media platforms not only facilitate this ‘connection’, that all of the participants mentioned, but also shape the way in which the users present themselves to others and, thus, how they construct their identities. In the case of Z Genners, each of these platforms is a component in the construction of their self and the participants themselves explain how they use each of them for something completely different. For instance, Participant 5 said that he uses Instagram to check on his friends that live abroad, Twitter for reading the football news and BeReal to share random things about his life with his close friends.

It can be inferred from these types of comments that the identities of Z Genners are intertwined with each platform’s purpose and, since these platforms are constantly changing, so are their identities simultaneously being redefined. Participant 2 said “I remember when I was younger, I also, I was influenced in the way that I wanted to post maybe, like, stories on like maybe Friday night, Saturday night, to show that I was doing something as well, like, to showcase. Now I don't have that anymore. Like, I've grown up, so I don't care that much”. Consequently, Generation Z continues to evolve, however, it does seem to exist a constant factor, which is their dependency on social validation, and it keeps being reinforced by the immediate feedback that they receive from their peers in the forms of likes, comments and shares (Miller, 2016).

Additionally, Fromm and Read (2018) discuss how Generation Z is characterized by how much they value individuality and self-expression, and how they are using social media as a tool to achieve this personal and social goal. Participants, during the interviews, emphasized how their use of the platforms is aligned with this objective. For instance, Instagram is being used to post images of their vacations, as Participant 1 mentioned, Tik Tok to learn new recipes or just relax with humorous videos as Participant 2 and Participant 13 explained, Twitter to view other people's opinions and read news like Participant 5 discussed and Pinterest for inspiration, as Participant 4 commented. Nevertheless, this common practice among members of Generation Z could lead to a fragmentation of the self, as Owens (2019) explains in his research. Since Z Genners are continuously changing the way they present themselves, depending on the platform and the audience, some might feel overwhelmed and as a few of the participants pointed out, it even starts feeling like a 'chore' to them the fact that they need to maintain all these different self-presentations. Consequently, it could also lead to an addiction to social media, which was also a concern that was raised by six of the participants in this study.

The second question was how do features in BeReal enable and constrain the sculpting of their authentic self. For this question, we used both the participants' interview responses and the content analysis. Regarding the interviews, we had questions that asked participants about their thoughts on BeReal, their usage behavior and how did they perceive themselves and their friends to act on this platform in comparison to other platforms. During the interviews, participants seemed to be pleased by how BeReal has eliminated the user's possibility to manipulate the image and therefore forced its users to post and present themselves unfiltered and unedited. According to Participant 14, this allows her and her friends to share their lives in a more realistic and authentic manner. Nevertheless, Maddox (2023) emphasizes that even though BeReal's design prompts those who use it to capture real life moments, the very act of knowing that you need to share something daily might lead users to perform in a certain way. This performance might be less over the top than on other platforms, but it is still a way of acting in a specific manner to be perceived positively by others. For instance, when Participant 1 explained an image that she had posted on BeReal that she considered unauthentic, she said, "I didn't take it before because that's the day I didn't do anything. I was horrible, hadn't done my hair, and I was cleaning and stuff. And I

was like, oh, I'm going to take my BeReal tonight because I will be with Eva, my friend. And then we went to like a rooftop”: In the same way, all of the participants mentioned that at least once they had decided to wait to post their BeReal after the notification arrived because they knew that they were going to be doing something later that they wanted to showcase on their post. According to Kreling et al. (2022), if there is a presence of any audience, users will tend to bring a performative aspect in their way of self-presentation, even if in the case of BeReal, the platform tries to minimize it. However, Participant 5 argues that not posting on time does not necessarily make you less authentic. According to him, he just waits so that he can show something other than his face and a computer since most of the notifications he receives arrive while he is at work, and he simply wants to post outside of his office. He said, “for instance, if I know that I'm going to a game, then I receive the notification in the morning. I'll wait until the end of the day. So that's. I can show that I was there. I mean, I would be there anyway”. Nonetheless, just like Owens (2019) mentions, knowing that there is going to be an audience, has an impact on the identity, as users will selectively choose what they consider to be their most ‘authentic’ moments or those moments that they prefer to share.

Additionally, the fact that BeReal uses ephemerality and that the picture that will be posted only lasts 24 hours, does seem to reduce the pressure that the users feel in other social media platforms to curate the content (Van Dijck et al., 2018). This characteristic of BeReal could be seen as an enabler for an authentic self-presentation since it creates a more casual and spontaneous environment. Nevertheless, despite the temporality of content, users still find subtle forms of evading the possibility to be completely genuine. For instance, Participant 2 discussed how sometimes she posts a black photo because she wants to see what others are doing without having to post a picture of herself. She also mentioned that sometimes she will post a BeReal without showing her face in any of the cameras and just show the surroundings. Participant 14 said that she sometimes will try a few retakes before posting or that she will take a picture of the ceiling just to post something random and have access to her friends’ content. Furthermore, Participant 6 said that some of his friends would erase their BeReal’s ‘cache memory’, which is the where the app stores information, so that the retake number that was displayed in their post would be reset to 0 when they had taken tried several times to take the photo. Also, as it was seen on the content analysis of the pictures

that participants sent, when participants took their ‘authentic’ photos there was a higher number of photos that were blurred and unframed (than the ‘unauthentic ones’), which might support the idea that even though Z Genners like the concept of an unfiltered platform, they will still find ways to make their content less revealing and subtly control the way that they are presenting themselves to their others (Fromm & Read, 2018).

The third question was how Z Genners define and perceive authenticity. This question was also answered by a combination of the responses from the participants that were interviewed and the content analysis of the photos that they sent. Through the phenomenological analysis, we were able to observe that on BeReal, authenticity is produced with an emphasis of sharing spontaneous images. Therefore, in most of the pictures that we analyzed, the participant was seen alone at his or her home performing some kind of mundane activity such as streaming a show, working, exercising, etc. As Gerosa (2024) discusses, authenticity in younger generations reflects a desire for content that captures real life and unpolished images rather than an idealized and perfect version of it. On the other hand, the images that were considered unauthentic by the participants had in common a posed or performed element. The images did share a common pattern, in which 12 out of the 14 had more than one person and had been taken outside of the participant’s home in a place that they considered ‘cool’ such as concert venues, restaurants, parties, beaches, etc. In parallel with Bílková et al. (2023) research, Generation Z perceive authenticity as a social arrangement where they are constantly balancing being authentic with themselves with the influences of their peer groups and therefore, we can observe in their BeReals a combination of both.

Script questions that asked the participants how they defined authenticity and how important they thought authenticity to be in social media platforms, were crucial. Along with what Lipovetzky (2021) discusses in his book, authenticity nowadays has even adopted this ironic paradoxical meaning. Lipovetsky highlights the contradiction in the pursuit of authenticity and explained that the more people strive to be authentic, the more they may conform to new social norms of what authenticity looks like. This is particularly evident in the behavior of Generation Z on social media, where the pressure to be ‘real’ can lead to a different kind of curation. Participant 4 commented on this idea and said that “even on BeReal I think people were using the same pose. Like this very cringey but they were all posting the photo like

with 0.5 camera from above and sort of sticking their tongues out. They were more authentic than in Instagram, but still they were waiting for the time of the day where they were doing something cool to show off'. Moreover, the evolution of BeReal highlights the adaptability of Generation Z in their pursuit of authenticity within digital spaces. While the platform initially aimed to capture unplanned, real-time moments, the ways in which the participants said that they engage with it now, reveal more of a balance between spontaneity and control.

Additionally, it was possible to conclude from their answers that participants view authenticity as 'being true to oneself' and that they valued interacting online with their peers in a way that felt genuine and transparent. Nevertheless, they were all aware that authenticity can only be achieved to a certain degree as they acknowledged that there is always a side of yourself that you don't want to share with the public. For them it is understandable that a person will need to keep parts of their lives hidden, especially in digital spaces where there is a blurred line between what should be shared and what shouldn't. According to Knoll et al. (2015), for Z Genners, authenticity on social media means minimizing the distance between one's true self and the self-presented online. This idea was supported by Participant 5's comment when he said that "sometimes it's also good to know that if you're having a harder day at work or something, others also going through the same, so it kind of helps you make it feel better".

Consequently, the participants would argue that it is not about disclosing every part of their life online, but rather about maintaining a certain level of coherence between their real-world identity and their online persona. As Hopwood et al. (2021) explain, authenticity could be defined and explored through the congruence that exists between one person's values and his or her actions. This is very similar to what Lipovetsky (2021) explains about how a certain amount of hypocrisy is needed to maintain healthy social interactions. According to him, it is important to be true to oneself, but is more important to act smart and choose when and how to be transparent with others and when to keep things unrevealed. Many of the participants agreed that they weren't sharing the totality of their lives online since they believe that privacy is crucial and that there are some personal aspects of their identity that they wanted to keep to themselves. Furthermore, Lim et al. (2015), argues, that "the consequences of a lack of online authenticity are also yet to be explored" (p. 142). For

example, it has not been researched “if a social media user could increase, or reduce, their number of online friends and followers by being authentic” (p.142), which should be a major question to ask in a future study in order to understand the real effects of acting authentically.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This study does face several limitations that are primarily connected to the scope and methodology of the research. The first is the sample size, which relies only on 14 interviews and that inevitably limits the possibility to generalize the results obtained. However, generalization is not the goal of qualitative work, which in this case was adequate for an exploratory approach to a new topic. Although data collection stopped when data saturation was reached, since the participants all come from a similar socioeconomic background and are in their majority female, our results might not capture all the diverse perspectives that could be found among Generation Z participants that belong to other cultures, backgrounds, and genders.

A second limitation can be found regarding the content analysis. Since it was focused on only a specific set of photos classified by participants as either authentic or unauthentic, these images might not embrace the full range of behaviors and self-presentation strategies used by BeReal’s users. Therefore, it might be useful in a future study to analyze a wider range of images that had been captured for a determined period of time, for instance during an entire week or month. It could be also interesting to include an analysis in a future study of the captions used on each one of those photos to add another dimension to the analysis based on text.

Another limitation in this study is that the central point was specifically narrowed to one social media platform. Since the focus was only BeReal, it might not be possible for the findings to be translated to other platforms that are also being used by Z Genners. For that reason, future research could include more than one social media platform, with similar characteristics to BeReal, such as the ‘story’ feature on Instagram, to allow the researchers to compare them and hopefully gather more insights.

Finally, the last limitation has to do with self-reported data, which can never be one hundred percent reliable. As Lenton et al. (2014) explain, findings may be limited by the retrospective nature of our methods, as reconstructive memory is generally subject to distortion (p. 7). In other words, participants' reflections on their own behaviors and perceptions of authenticity may be subject to bias, as they might portray themselves in a more favorable light or struggle to fully articulate their motivations and feelings. There could also be a social desirability bias and an agreement bias. This means that it could happen that the participants over-report behaviors or attitudes that they believe are socially acceptable or desirable, while under-reporting behaviors they perceive as socially undesirable. Or that they say something just because they think that this is what the interviewer wants to hear. It could also happen that they respond in a certain way just because of the way that a question is being phrased. As a result, responses may not reflect the person's true thoughts or behaviors, but rather what they think is expected or will be viewed positively by others (Schutt, 2012).

However, despite these limitations, the dissertation provides valuable insights into how Generation Z navigates the concept of authenticity on social media, offering a foundation for further research in this area.

## CONCLUSION

There is no denying that authenticity is an extraordinarily complex concept, not only for its lack of a single definition, but also for how difficult it is to actually measure it. This complexity is further intensified by the fact that what is perceived as authentic can vary greatly depending on context, culture, and individual perception. Consequently, since the current social media landscape is dominated by platforms where social identity is mostly made of carefully curated personas and edited self-presentation, the younger generations are seeking out platforms that promise more genuine interactions. Thus, BeReal stands as a testament to this growing desire for authenticity in the digital age that we now live in. As the platform continues to evolve, it has the potential to redefine the way we connect, influence, and perceive the world around us. BeReal's impact extends beyond its digital domain, inspiring a cultural shift towards embracing the beauty of imperfection and fostering meaningful connections in an increasingly interconnected world.

In conclusion, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how authenticity is constructed and experienced by Generation Z in the context of social media. It emphasizes the need to consider the multifaceted nature of digital identity, where authenticity is not only about being "real," but also about negotiating the complexities of self-presentation in a digital realm. As social media changes, so too will the ways in which Z Genners and future generations define, produce and perceive authenticity. However, the findings of this dissertation suggest that while platforms like BeReal can challenge the norms of curated digital personas, the quest for authenticity will remain a dynamic process, which is never completely achieved. As we have seen from the results, even with all the features of BeReal that promote the presentation of an authentic self, users still find ways to control what is being shared and how it is being shared. This means that what started as a platform intended for people to share an unplanned picture at an exact time that the notification was received, has gradually progressed in a more flexible space for Z Genners to share their daily lives but with the possibility to retake photos, selectively frame shots, or even delay posting until a more favorable moment.

In other words, the behaviors observed on BeReal and what the participants commented on during the interview, also suggest that Generation Z's approach to authenticity is inherently strategic. Despite the platform's design to promote spontaneity, there is still a strong parallel awareness of the social implications of their digital presence. In this sense, BeReal illustrates the ongoing compromise between the authentic self and the socially constructed identity, where even the most unfiltered platforms cannot completely escape the influence of self-presentation.

The findings of this study offer a significant contribution to expanding scientific understanding of a relatively underexplored area. They hold particular importance not only for the academic community across various disciplines, including but not limited to communication, marketing, psychology, and sociology, but also for professionals who work closely with social media platforms. These insights can enhance both theoretical and practical knowledge, providing a foundation for future research and offering practical applications for industry practitioners seeking to better understand user behavior, online identity formation, and the dynamics of authenticity in digital spaces.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX A – Interview Script

#### **1st part- Social Media & BeReal**

- What do you think of when hearing the term social media?
- Which platforms do you use?
- What are your experiences with these platforms? How much time do you spend on them?
- How does social media influence your life and in what ways?
- What do you think about BeReal?
- Do you share a picture daily? And do you do it right after you receive the notification that it is time to post?

#### **2nd Part- Authenticity & BeReal**

- How would you define the term authenticity?
- Is authenticity important for you on these platforms?
- Do you think you are authentic on social media platforms? On BeReal?
- Do you think the people in your network, and the people you follow, are authentic? On BeReal?

**- Instruct the participant to open his BeReal account and look through his/her BeReal archive of shared pictures.**

- Do you think those images show what your life is really like?
- Could you share one photo that you feel is authentic in the way you presented yourself and one that you feel isn't (if any)?
- Have you been influenced by any social media practices and what are your feelings about the experiences? Do you have any concerns related to these practices?
- Will you continue to use BeReal? What do you think will happen with BeReal in the future?

## **APPENDIX B – Interview Transcripts**

### **Participant 1**

#### **So first, what do you think about when you hear the term social media?**

Social media, I think immediately of social. So the fact of being sociable with other people, like, I think it's an easy way to connect between ourselves. Yeah. And I just think about like, the main social media. I use like, Instagram, Twitter. Not really. BeReal. When I hear social media, I'm more in the social media, I would say, where you can share more text. So maybe more Twitter and Instagram, I would say.

#### **Okay, that's actually what's going to be my next question. Which social media do you use?**

So Instagram, then twitter. I don't really use Facebook anymore.

#### **Okay.**

I have Snapchat still in France. We still use it a bit, but just to talk to my friends and. Yeah, BeReal. I think it's. Yeah, it's social media. I think that's it.

#### **And like, how much time do you say do you spend on average every day in social media?**

I will check right now because I know on my phone is like 7 hours, but I know it's mainly WhatsApp.

#### **Okay.**

But I don't think I use TikTok also. I forgot. But I like really TikTok at the end of the day to go on TikTok to disconnect my brain. Let me check time screen. So Instagram. Wait, I'm going to try to find the, the rate because I have today week. Okay. So in a week in average Instagram, it's almost 3 hours. Same for TikTok.

#### **Okay, what about BeReal?**

I don't think that much. 15 minutes.

**Okay, so you think that it's short?**

Yeah, yeah. Basically I just take my BeReal and I go see what my friends are doing. But that's it. Like, I don't really. Then I have Twitter half an hour and Snapchat, same, but 8 hours. I mean, it's not a social media, but WhatsApp, like just to talk to my friends. But yeah, BeReal. It's really quick. Usually I'm just, when I can, I'm posting my BeReal. When I have the notification, when I can't. Like for example, yesterday I was at my grandparents house. I don't want to be like, BeReal time with my grandparents. So I just did it after. But yeah, I'm not that much on BeReal.

**Do you usually take a picture daily? And, like, how often do you do it? Like, on the exact time that the app says?**

I mean, it depends on my routine because, for example, I was doing my internship. I finished on Monday now. So for the past six months, I mean, when I'm at work, I'm receiving the notification. I'm not going to do my BeReal. Sometimes I will do it when I see my boss is not here, but usually I'm doing it after, when I'm free, like coming back home. But when I'm not doing anything, like, for right now, for example, and if I have a notification, I will do my BeReal right away.

**Okay. And in general, like, what do you think about this app?**

So, yeah, no, I think it's a really nice app. I think it was created for, like, during the lockdown in 2020, but I have it only since the end of 2022. I think. Because Giselle and everybody, they were like, okay, let's download BeReal. It's nice. And I was like, okay, nice. Because the main purpose of the app was, like, to be real. You know, while mainly on Instagram, I would say people tend to take an aesthetic story, like when they're at the beach. No, this picture is not nice. Oh, I'm going to use face app to correct this. So I think the purpose of the app is nice. But the thing is that most of the time, I feel like people, when they're not doing anything without makeup, like eating chocolate, they're gonna be like, well, now I'm horrible, so I'm not gonna take my picture right now. But I know that in 4 hours, I'm gonna meet my friend to have dinner. Like Pamela, she's doing this all the time, and it's okay. Like, it's totally fine. But, like, personally, I'm not waiting for me to do something fun in my day to take my picture.

**So you don't think that the people you follow are authentic, in BeReal?**

I don't know, most of them, I think they are, but some people, yeah, I think they're just waiting. And the worst is that when everybody. And I'm doing this, too, when everybody's like, BeReal. And everybody is like taking it together, but I don't know, like, if it's better to do it like this or just take your picture and not say it to other people, I don't know. I think most of them are authentic, but some of them, they just wait to have something cool to do and show people, basically.

**And how important is it to you? Like, that people are authentic on BeReal, but also in other social media.**

For me, on BeReal, I don't think it's really important because I follow, like, I don't know, 20 people. It's more my friends. So if they want to be fake and be like, pretend, it's okay. I don't care. But I think on other social media, especially Instagram, it's not really nice. Especially when it's like celebrities like Kylie Jenner, Selena Gomez, Hailey Bieber, like Kim Kardashian even, because they really, when you go on their Instagram account, you really think that their life is amazing. And I'm sure it is, but, I mean, people, they just want to feel like on social media, especially Instagram, they want to make other people jealous of their life. Like, look what I'm doing. Look all of my friends. And it's not. It's not the reality. But of course, like, I would say we're a bit like this in the daily life also, like, like, I don't know, if you argue with your boyfriend and you're super sad you're about to break up with him, you're not going to say to all of your friends in real life, by the way, I'm terrible, and it depends, but probably to most of the people you meet, you're going to be pretend like everything is okay, nothing is happening. But I think it's. Yeah, I think it's, uh. I think it's bad on Instagram to do this because a lot of people compare each other to themselves. And, I mean, when you see that they have an amazing life and you, everything you're doing in the day is just scrolling on Instagram and looking at other people lives, you're like, but me, compared to them, I mean, I am nothing, you know?

**Taking all of this that you have said, like, how then would you define the term authenticity? What is authenticity to you?**

For me, it's just being true to yourself. I would say in general, like, for the example I said before, if you have a part of your life and you're not, like, okay to share it with other people

when you're sad because of this, for me, it's not being authentic, not saying the truth. But for me, being authentic is just like being true to yourself and authenticity for me, it's more like the respect of your own values, I would say. But if it's on social media, it's a bit complex because you can be authentic by. For me, the contrary. The opposite of, like, authentic is lying. But you're not really lying if you're just taking pictures of the good moments. But I mean, usually it's not only taking pictures of the good moments, like using face up to, like, to erase a pimple you have or anything, pretending, you know. So, yeah, it's a bit difficult to define authenticity. But I will say this.

**For this part, I would ask you to go into your BeReal to your archives of pictures, and if you could share with me, and then maybe you can screenshot it and send it me to the WhatsApp. Like, one picture of you that you've taken that you've think it's authentic, and explain to me why and one that you think is not authentic. If there is any. Like, if you think there's one.**

Okay. Yeah, I think they are. So when I'm not authentic, probably my friend or, I don't know, let me check, because I'm posting almost every day, so. Okay, authentic. I think I have one from last week just because it was so funny. We can see the backstage also, like, the video, I will send it to you right now. Basically, it was Aurora and me at the gym, but doing spinning classes. And on the. When you click on the BeReal, you can see Aurora doing like, you can see she's moving. And I'm, like, sweating so much, I'm horrible. But it was just so funny with the brazilian music, and I was dying. The truth is, I was dying. I stopped a bit on the course, and I was like, okay, let's take my BeReal.

**Is this a picture that you would have shared on Instagram?**

No, never. Or maybe. Maybe in my private friends. But, I mean, I don't think it's relevant. You know? I think it's just funny because I think on Instagram, if you post something, even on your story, I feel like it needs to be relevant while on BeReal. The purpose of the app is just to take a picture, you know?

**Yeah.**

So I'm sending you on WhatsApp right now. Okay. Yeah, I have a lot not authentic. Like, when I don't have time or I don't remember if I'm being like, Pamela, being like, I'm not

gonna do my BeReal and wait for my event tonight. But I have. I have a lot also authentic. Sometimes I just don't really care, so. But I would say.

**Would you say it's more authentic than not authentic or 50/50?**

I mean, it depends on what you mean by authentic. Because most of the time, I'm not taking my BeReal when I have the notification because I'm busy and I don't want to be, like, the girl always on her phone. I have the notification. I need to do it. No, like, you have a life, so do it when you have time. But if you talk about authenticity, meaning, like, when you're not doing anything. And most of the time, I'm just taking my BeReal when I have time, and I'm not doing anything. But, yeah, maybe a recent one. Also, I have not authentic it's this one. Basically, it was last two weeks ago, I think I had a friend. She's half portuguese, of Vietnamese, and I met her during my, not my erasmus, but, like, my gap year in Lisbon. Okay, I will take a screen. And she was coming back this week with her parents, and so we spent the weekend together. She was sleeping at my house on Saturday night, and we decided to meet with another friend of ours to have dinner. And then we went to, like, a rooftop. And when I took this BeReal, I didn't take it before because that's the day I didn't do anything. I was horrible doing my hair cleaning and stuff. And I was like, oh, I'm gonna take my BeReal tonight because I will be with Eva, my friend. That's why I think you can have a less authentic one. But usually it's like this. Me, it's an example of me waiting to take my BeReal because of an event. But usually it doesn't happen that often.

**Have you been influenced by any social media practices that you think that now you're more conscious about because, you know, everybody else does something specific? Or maybe you're more aware of people doing it, so you try to do it less?**

I would say, especially taking pictures, like, at the beach of the sun, of the pool, or especially in summer, like in Portugal. And I must admit that sometimes I'm doing it. Like, last weekend, I went to the beach and I took, like, a picture of the palm trees because I think it was nice, but also because it's cool. Like, I know in France they have a shitty weather, so I'm like, see what I have in Lisbon? But, yeah, so I'm bragging a bit about that. But in their posts, like, not the stories, but more of the posts on Instagram, I think people, they use, like, face app or stuff like this a lot. Maybe not my friends, but, like, more celebrities. And I've never done this, I think, because when I post on Instagram, first I post. I post really rarely on the.

On the platform. And when I do is a picture I think I'm pretty or a picture of a landscape I like. So I don't see the, like, just don't, don't post a picture if you don't like it. No need to take this picture, change it, and then post it. I think it's stupid. I think that's it. Yeah.

**And my final question would be, do you. Do you still think it's, like, you're still going to be using. BeReal? Do you still think it's a cool app or, like, you're finding that you use it less and less and that eventually it will kind of die?**

I don't know, in a general way about BeReal me, I think I will use it because I like that I'm not spending too much time on the app. It's just to have a quick picture of what your friends everywhere are doing. And it's nice, especially when you're not living in your country. Like me, I like to know what my friends are doing, or friends I don't talk a lot. I'm like, oh, okay. So he's still at school. Okay. He got a new job because he seems to be in an office, stuff like this. So I think it's fun and it's like, it's quick. You know, you just have to take a picture. And I think people like it because it's a bit like curiosity. You can enter in the people you're following in their life like this. Just, you know, sometimes I don't have anything to post, and I don't even want to post, but I'm going to post a picture just to see what my friends are doing, you know? So, I think I would keep using it, but I think it's not a revolution because it's not an app where people are staying too much depends on the people you're following. But usually I don't think they have a lot like me. I think I have 20 or 25. So once you checked all the pictures of your friends, that's it. And, yeah, I don't know. I would say it makes me think a bit of Snapchat, and I know that I don't know in other countries, because when Snapchat was created, I was in France, but in France, we're using it way less than before, but we're still using it. And I know that, like, in Portugal, my boyfriend told me that it was never a big thing, but, for example, no one is using Snapchat in Portugal anymore. I know when I'm seeing someone on their phone being on Snapchat, I know they're probably french, so I don't know. Probably depends, really? French, too, I think probably depends on the country, But no, I think it's fun, and I think I like it because I think it's difficult to become addicted, to BeReal. So I feel like it's a really safe habit, I would say. Even if some people, they're, like, trying to fake it and stuff, it's never, like, a huge thing. I don't follow. And I've never seen people being, like, pretending to be in that spot, in that place, just going somewhere to take a BeReal. I don't think, like, it's too much effort just for a picture that's lasting one one day. So. Yeah.

## **Participant 2**

**So what do you think when you hear the term social media?**

What do I think? I think about exchange of information. I think about friends. I think about also, like, maybe like, famous people or, like, tweets, stuff like that.

**Okay. And, like, when it comes to social media, which platforms do you constantly use?**

I use mostly TikTok and Instagram. I also use BeReal, WhatsApp. I don't know if it could be considered, like, a social media or not. Yeah, sort of. Yeah, I think those are the main ones.

**And, like, how much time do you spend on social media in general? Like, on all of those per day? More or less.**

A lot. A lot. If you want, I can check the actual. Let me see. So from all the apps and considering also WhatsApp, which is probably my most used ones, actually, but it's like, screen time. It's like four to 5 hours a day.

**Okay, nice. And, like, on BeReal. How much time do you. Do you have it per. Divided?**

Let me see if I can find it. No, I have my most. You. I only have my most used ones, but to be honest, I think probably less than 30 minutes. Less than 1 hour. For sure. For sure. Less than 1 hour.

**And how do you think, like, all these platforms and social media have influenced your life specifically?**

I mean, I use them a lot to get information, so I follow news outlets and stuff. I also, of course, use them as. Just like, to relax, to decompress. Like, maybe use them before going to sleep, doing some scrolling on TikTok. I also. I mean, nowadays not so much, but I remember when I was younger, I also, I was influenced in the way that I wanted to post maybe, like, stories on, like, maybe Friday night, Saturday night, to show that I was doing something as well, like, to showcase. Now I don't have that anymore. Like, I've grown up, so I don't care that much. But it was to, it was like, I also used them a lot to show what I was doing and show maybe, like, the beautiful places that I've been and the stuff that I do and

stuff like that. So it was like, give and take, like, to know what others are doing and also to showcase what I am doing.

**Okay, and what do you think about BeReal?**

BeReal? Like, in general I think at the beginning, I think it was like, it was very different from, like, the other social media. And I appreciate the, like, I really like the fact that it was like once a day they give you a notification, and it was also, I really liked the fact that it's just really, really, really close friends. Like, I mean, for me personally, on Instagram and maybe, like, you have, like, friends, people that, you know, but not very, like, maybe you saw once or twice, like, or friends of a friend and stuff like that. While BeReal is just my close friends, and so I really like that about BeReal. And, yeah, it doesn't take a lot of my time, so it's. I don't waste time on it. It's just to see.

**But do you share, like, a picture daily? Do you usually, like, follow the rule of when it gives you the notification to post, do you post it?**

So I think I downloaded, I was checking, actually, I downloaded in April 2022. I get the end. So I, like, it's more than two years that I have it. And it depends sometimes. Usually when I'm just at home, I don't follow the notification while, if I'm doing something nice, I follow the notification. I do. I post on time, but it really depends sometimes. I, like, I'm not super attached to the notification. I. Sometimes I just don't notice it. Like, I didn't see it, so I post it late just because I didn't see it. So it really depends. Yeah, it really depends, to be honest. Sometimes I do. It depends on my mood.

**Yeah, but do you actually post, like, do you think that you post every day?**

Yeah, I think daily. And if I don't post daily, I post every other day. Okay, but I think daily. See? Daily. Yes.

**Okay. And how would you define the term authenticity?**

Authenticity probably would be to post on time and to. Yeah, yeah. To actually be real. And because even. Even on. BeReal, like, you. You do poses, so you tell your friends, I'm doing a BeReal, like, do something nice or, like, laugh and stuff like that. So it probably, like, the idea behind it probably was, like, to show authenticity. But of course, people get their way,

and if you don't want to show something or if you want to showcase yourself in a different way, you can always do it. So. Yeah.

**And for you, is it important, like, the authenticity in these platforms, in social media in general?**

I don't know. It's probably yes, but I mean, even if it's not, like, on my top priority, I would say. I know that social media are not, like, real in the sense that people show what they want to show. And even if they seem to have the perfect life on social media, I know that that's not real. So I just know that they can't be authentic.

**Yeah, but do you think that you are authentic on social media?**

I think I am. I think I'm not all the time, but I think he always, like, with me, really came. I mean, I'm 23, so I'm very young, but he came with the age when I started using it. I really cared a lot about what other people thoughts and, like, I should post, like, every day or, like, put a story and blah, blah, blah. But now I know. I mean, I don't know. I think I changed.

**Do you find that you're more authentic on BeReal than on Instagram, or do you feel that you act the same in both?**

I don't know, because I use them in different ways. So I can say that I more, like, probably just because of the way the app is, I'm more authentic on BeReal, but I would never, like, not never, but I would never post, like, a selfie on Instagram, like, in the stories, so I don't use them the same way.

**Why? Why wouldn't you post a selfie?**

Because. Because there are, like, too many people that I don't. I don't know that much that follow me, and I don't want to show. I'm not, like, a huge. I don't like being, like, the center of attention. So I don't really like posting that much of me on social media, but BeReal is fine. It's like a safe space. Like, I can do that. I can make, like, silly faces and stuff like that. It's. It's more acceptable, I think, but that's what I feel.

**And do you think your friends are authentic on BeReal, the friends that you have in there?**

I think it depends. Most of my friends are, I think. Yes, most of my friends are, but they follow more the notifications.

**Do you find that they post different things, like you said? Do they use it differently, Instagram and TikTok, then the BeReal what they post on each?**

Yes. Yes. I think also the fact is that BeReal is, like, every day, while other social media, you can spend maybe, like weeks without posting anything. So of course, you use it in different ways and you showcase different things. Yeah.

**Now, I was going to ask you if you can open your BeReal and go through your memories and choose two photos. One that you think you're being, like, your most authentic self, and one if you think there is any that you are, maybe not as authentic as you could be, and then you can screenshot it and send me to my WhatsApp so that we can, like, you can explain them to me.**

Okay. It's gonna be interesting. Let's see.

**And while you're at it, like, looking at your memories of all. BeReal. Do you really think those images show what your life is really like, or do you think it's only snapshots of the good things, but not really what your life is about?**

Mm hmm. Question. You know that BeReal now, you can do more posts a day if you do it on time.

**Yeah.**

Okay. I'm looking because I'm sure that I posted some black ones, because sometimes I just post because I want to see what others are posting, but I don't want to take a picture. So, yes, I also do that, maybe. Yes, maybe, like, this can work. Let's see.

**Do other people in your circle also do that, like, posting a black photo?**

I think maybe I saw it, like, once or twice. Not very. Not very often. The thing that I'm finding most difficult is actually finding an authentic one.

**Interesting because you said that you were mostly authentic right?**

I know. That's why. Yeah.

**Do you see any trends in BeReal, like, some type of picture that everybody does or a kind of photo that everybody takes? Or do you think it's pretty random what everybody decides to post in there?**

No, I think it's pretty random. Yeah. Just selecting a few. Probably the ones that I find more authentic are the ones that are, like, at home. If I post something at doing something at home, I think that's what I. Okay. Okay.

**I got it. So the first one, you would say it's authentic because you're at home.**

Yes.

**Okay. You're watching a movie?**

Yeah, I think I'm watching a series. I'm not sure. Yeah. Movie or a series in bed. Nighttime. Yes.

**And the second one?**

The second one is more like. I feel like it's inauthentic in the way that I post. I decided to post when I was out of the house, and I remember this was three days ago, so I remember that I saw the notification and I didn't post, but I decided to post outside and I didn't put my face in it.

**And do you do it often, like, without your face as well here in BeReal?**

Yeah. I mean, not super often. I think maybe, like, in a week, I do it maybe, like, two times just to give you, like, I'm not sure I do it two times, but, like, what I think it is.

**Okay. And finally, like, what do you think about the future of bereal? Like, are you planning on keep using it? Do you think it will still be trendy? What do you think?**

I think the use for me is very connected to my friends use. Like, I do it to, like, sometimes I post black because I just want to see what others, like, what my friends or my family is doing. I really like the fact that they're, like, showcasing, like, you can see people having dinner and, like, doing, like, normal stuff. So I really like that. So if it keeps being like that,

I would continue using it. But I know that recently they're, like, they're doing some changes. So there are, like, now brands on it and, like, also, like, singers. I saw some singer or something on it and I really don't care about, like, I really don't want it there. Like, for me, no, I don't want it. So if it keeps being the way it is and people that I care about use it, but it's. Yeah, I don't know. I'm not sure. I don't think I'm gonna use it for long, to be honest. So it's less and less people. But for me, like, living abroad, I really like to see what my friends from Italy or my family is doing.

### **Participant 3**

**Tell me a little bit of, like, what do you think when you hear the term social media?**

So, for me, it's a platform where you can connect with other people, not face to face, but kind of face to face, because social media allows you to see people's photos, videos and. Yeah, but it's mainly a platform that helps connecting people from around the world.

**Okay, and which platforms do you use?**

Mainly Instagram. I have Facebook, but I barely go on Facebook anymore, so it's mostly Instagram. TikTok, BeReal. WhatsApp? Yeah.

**And what have your experiences been with these platforms? Like, what are your experiences? And also, how much time do you use it per day?**

Okay, so I work with Instagram, so I spend a lot of time, work wise on Instagram. So I don't know, it's like five to 7 hours, maybe a day. It's a lot, I know. So Instagram, I think, is my most used platform. And then my experience with Instagram is sometimes frustrating work wise because of the algorithm. You never know, is your content being shown to people or not? But other than that, it's easy to handle, easy to understand. It's very interesting to do your research on a platform like social media, like Instagram and. Yeah, and the other platforms, like WhatsApp, I only use to text people. So it's a very good experience on WhatsApp. TikTok, I think, is, for me, a good experience because I've been using it for six months now, I think. And it's really different to Instagram because they have a much better algorithm and it's easier to grow and. Yeah, and with BeReal, it's like, I only use it with my friends, so it's nothing, like public.

**So, like, my next question, which maybe you kind of answered, was, how does social media influence your life? And I'm guessing because you work with it, it has a lot to do. But how has it been different since before you were working with it?**

So before I was working with it, I had a private account, so I used it only for my friends, and I barely posted anything. But to be honest, the influence, for me, wasn't too negative because there are a lot of people that say that social media has negative impacts on you. But for me, I don't feel that much pressure when I go on social media. When it comes to, like, many people have like, body problems when they see people on social media, or they get insecure

when they see what people eat throughout the day or what vacation they're on. So for me, it's more like inspiration rather than something that brings me down. And I think it always depends on what you like on social media, because then you get into this kind of algorithm and, yeah, so I always try to like positive stuff and things. I only follow people I like, so, yeah, okay.

**And what do you think about BeReal?**

I think it's fun. It's a cute little app. It's nice that they don't have something like advertisement on that app. And it's nice to see what your friends are up to, even if it's just one time a day and even if it's not that real anymore. But, yeah, it's still nice to see and go through what people are doing and without having to reach out to them.

**Do you use it daily? Like, do you post daily? And do you actually post when the notification appears?**

So, no, I try to use it daily, but sometimes I'm like, ugh no. Like, I'm sitting on the couch now and, like, I have my ice cream. Like, I'm not gonna post it, but yeah, if I feel like it, I post. So it's, I would say in, during the week, I would post like five times per week, maybe. And then I don't post when the message comes on because most of the time I have my phone on silence on the little moon, so I don't get the notification. But sometimes I see it in time. And when I'm doing something cool and I see it on time, I post it on time.

**Because, like, what you just said, which is, like, when you're with the ice cream on the couch, isn't it that's what it's supposed to be about? Like, then you post something, like, completely irrelevant.**

Yeah, it should be. It should be. And to be honest, like, in the beginning, I think there wasn't even the option that you can post. Not within the two minutes. I think right when they launched BeReal, you had two minutes, and if you didn't make it in time, you didn't have the chance to post. Right. I think it was like that. Yeah. So when they had this kind of rule, I did post the stuff that I was doing in those two minutes. But now that you have the option and you can decide, maybe, oh, I have, I don't know, a dinner tonight or I'm going out tonight. This is much cooler. Like, in 2 hours I'm going to do something much cooler. So I'm just

going to post it in 2 hours. Yeah, that's. I don't know. That's why you have the option. And now it's like you can decide when to post.

**Okay, and how would you define, like, in your own words, the term authenticity?**

So, for me, something or someone that is authentic is someone that shows their true self. And it's not telling, not lies, but it's not like, you know, for example, an influencer is authentic to me when they really like the product and show it to their followers rather than you get money for the product, and then because the money is very good, you show the product. So this is not authentic. Or someone who's, like, pretending to be someone else on social media and is a whole different person in real life is not authentic to me. And in terms of BeReal, obviously authenticity would be to post in time rather than to post, like two or 3 hours later when you actually do something cool. You have makeup on, you have your cool outfit on, everything. Yeah.

**So is it really important for you to see authenticity being used in the different platforms, or is it something that you don't even consider?**

So I think with that, like, for example, on Instagram, it could be really hard for someone who doesn't know the person in person to know if it's authentic or not. So if there's an influencer who's doing commercial every day, I think this is like a sign that it's not really authentic because I don't use, like, in my everyday life, I use one cream and I don't use, like, many creams on different days. So this would be something that would feel unauthentic to me. But in this case, it's, I think, the most important to be authentic because people will eventually find out that you're not authentic, and then they will kind of cancel you. And on BeReal, for example, I I don't care because it's hard for me to know what people are actually doing right now. So if there's someone posting a bereal with makeup on, maybe they put the makeup on 2 hours earlier, but just post it now because, I don't know, they just felt it, like, to post now. So, yeah, in BeReal. I don't really care, but I feel like if it comes to selling products to people and, like, fooling people, I think authenticity would be, would be good.

**And, like, do you think your close network of friends or the people that you follow constantly and you're up to date with what they're posting. Are they authentic? And**

**do you see a difference with what they post on Instagram versus BeReal that makes them less or more authentic on each of those?**

So, yeah, so my friends, they are normal social media users, so they don't work with social media. But of course, I see them posting BeReals, and they are not wearing makeup, and they're just chilling somewhere, eating, I don't know. And on Instagram, they show themselves from their best side, and they show only the coolest places they go to. And, yeah, on BeReal, it's like, I don't know, they're laying in bed and watching Netflix, or they just came out of the shower with the towel on their head and everything. So, yeah, I can see a difference there.

**Do you post similar or very different content? Like, would you post the same picture in Instagram than in BeReal? Or do you use it, like, completely different?**

No. So, I mean, sometimes I would post. I wouldn't mind posting a BeReal on my Instagram, but most of the time I wouldn't, because I just use this app with my friends. I'm, like, very strict with who can. Like, who can be friends with me on BeReal, because I really just want my friends on there. And. Yeah, so that's why I'm a little bit, like, I wouldn't post every photo that I post on BeReal also on Instagram.

**Okay. And last thing, I would ask you to go on your BeReal app. If you can open your memories and you could select two pictures and screenshot it and send it to me. But the idea is that you select one that you feel that you have been authentic and one that you consider that maybe it's not authentic, if there is any, and then you can explain to me why.**

Okay, wait, let me check.

**And while you're at it. While you're looking at your memories, like, do you really feel that this is, like, a true representation of what your life is? Like, does it actually show your real life?**

Yes, I think so. Okay. I have a good example for that. Yeah, I'll screenshot it. Okay. One. One that is very authentic. Another one. Let's see if I find an unauthentic one. Actually, I think I'm very authentic Okay, I'll send you the first one now, and I'll tell you the story behind it. Okay, so in our apartment here, we. Our toaster is broken, so if you press down the button,

it doesn't stay. So we always have to put the water, the tea thing, you know, we have to fill it up with water so it's heavy, so it stays. That's how we toast our. That was, like, an authentic. There was one thing that's a little unauthentic. I remember that I posted it, but I need to find it. It was in the second semester. Ok I just sent you one because I can't find another one, but it was. I know that it wasn't, like, in time, and, like, I could have also taken a photo in class, you know? But I decided to take, like, a selfie, you know? So this is maybe a more unauthentic.

**Do you think that BeReal? Will you will continue to use it? Do you think it will be trending, especially you, that you work with social media? Do you see it still continuing to work or people will eventually stop using it?**

No, I think. Okay, so it's interesting, because I have a little brother. He's six years younger than me, so he's turning 20 this year. And I feel like his generation was in the beginning, very into BeReal, and now they kind of stopped using it a lot, from what I'm hearing, and I think my friends and our generation is there are either people that use it, like, a lot or people that don't use it at all. But I think those who use it a lot really like the app, and I personally like it too. It's always fun because you kind of are up to date with what your friends are doing without having to ask all the time. So, yeah, I think it will stay.

#### **Participant 4**

##### **Ok so what do you think of when hearing the term social media?**

I think of being online and it used to be before about connecting with friends but now it is more of a source of income since I am working with social media and use it in a more professional way.

##### **And which platforms do you use and how much time do you spend on them?**

I use mainly Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest, I don't know if Pinterest counts. Now that I have a boyfriend, I spend less time on my phone. I would say that on average now around 2 hours per day on Instagram and TikTok just for personal things but maybe more. It depends on how busy I am during that day at work.

##### **And how would you describe your experiences with these platforms?**

I really like to use social media and for me it helped me get my first job as a fashion stylist, so I am really lucky to use it as part of my job. I think it has made me more aware of what happens around me and to also be more careful with what I share.

##### **What do you think about BeReal?**

I think the idea when it launched was good but then I only used it for a like 6 months and stopped.

##### **Why?**

Because I couldn't remember to post daily. My life got really busy and it became more like a chore to post on BeReal.

##### **When you were using BeReal did you share a picture daily and right after you received the notification that it is time to post?**

I used to share it at the time the notification when off at the beginning but then I couldn't keep up and since I wasn't doing what the app was intended for, I didn't see the purpose of continuing any more.

##### **How would you define the term authenticity?**

For me authenticity means being the first to do something like the first coming up with an idea instead of following someone else's trend or idea.

**Is authenticity important for you on these platforms?**

It is but I don't think you are less authentic if you get inspired by something you saw and try to do it in your own way. I always recreate styles that inspire me but I do it in my own version.

**Do you think you are authentic when you post things online?**

I think I am sometimes because I try to be myself but I also want to post pictures that I look good so I will try to post the best one. The best version of myself. In BeReal I think I was being more authentic because I only had a couple of friends so it was easier to not take it as seriously.

**Do you think the people you follow are authentic?**

I think nobody is completely authentic. I mean everyone follows some type of trends. Even on BeReal I think people were using the same pose. Like this very cringey but they were all posting the photo like with 0.5 camera from above and sort of sticking their tongues out and for me that made no sense that everyone had the same angle in every picture. They were more authentic than in instagram but still they were waiting for the time of the day were they were doing something cool to show off.

**Now for this next part could you log into your BeReal and choose one photo that you feel is authentic and one that you feel isn't, if you think you have one.**

Ok let me check. Ok this picture is authentic because I was just going to the class and I was in the elevator and my hair was undone and I didn't retake I just shot the photo and shared it. This one is inauthentic because it is what I was saying before. It was shot with that angle that everybody was using from above. So the photo might not be in a nice place but what I was doing is not authentic.

**What do you think will happen with BeReal?**

I think there are some people that will continue to use it, but for me personally it makes no sense to keep using it. I think it also depends on the country because in Spain is not as trendy anymore as it used to be but I have some friends in other countries that I know continue using BeReal and Snapchat.

## **Participant 5**

### **What do you think when you hear the term social media?**

To have a version of yourself that is digital, one that does not necessarily goes together with the way you are physically.

### **Okay. And when it comes to your social media use, which platforms do you use?**

I use Instagram, I use Twitter, and I use BeReal.

### **And how much time would you say that you use it daily? Like, in total, all of those apps?**

I would say more or less an hour, something like this. It varies. Some days, probably two or three. Some days I barely go there.

### **What have been your experiences with these platforms? Like, how have social media influenced your personal life?**

Okay. I've been a greater fan in the past, social media, especially. Especially Instagram. Currently, I use it to just check on my friends more than to just post something about myself. It's been quite some time since I last did it, but that's the way I have to still connect with them, especially because most of them, they're out of the country. So that's the usage I do of Instagram about Twitter. I do it for mostly for news, for what's happening at the moment. I do not necessarily follow any friends there. It's just really big accounts, people accounts, football teams accounts. And about BeReal. I have a very strict number of people that I feel close with so that I can post a BeReal at any given moment without thinking twice.

### **Okay, so, like, what do you think about BeReal about this concept?**

I like the concept, although I have to say I think I would have enjoyed it more when I was in university, when I had less strict schedules. So, basically, currently, if I follow the hours at which BeReal sends me the notifications, most of the times it's just going to be the same. It's just me in front of a computer working, so there's not really much value added. However, I also know that's the reality for my friends. So sometimes it's also good to know that if you're having a harder day at work or something and also going through the same, so it kind of helps you feel better.

**Okay, so you do post, like, every day, just not at the time that it says?**

I do not post every day. I post more or less weekly, on average. Again, there are some days that I just post every day and I follow the hours and I have more time, like weekends and stuff. But during the week, eventually, I just think I had a notification at 09:00 a.m. it's already like 08:00 p.m. and then I just do something else and then end up forgetting about it. But I try to post it more or less weekly for the same reason as I follow people on Instagram, which is to check up on people and people to also know that everything is okay with me and I'm just doing fine.

**Okay, and how would you define the term authenticity or being authentic?**

Try to be yourself without filters. And if you have to apply, to BeReal is to not think twice about what you're gonna post. It's just you're at a specific spot at a specific point in time. You just show whatever you're going through at that moment, which eventually translates to authenticity.

**And for you, authenticity. Is it important in the different platforms that you use? Do you follow accounts that you consider authentic on Instagram, on Twitter? Or is it a concept that it's not really relevant in what you decide to follow?**

Okay, so the answer for Twitter is a bit different, the one from Instagram. So for Twitter, it's bigger accounts, not anyone specifically. So I'm looking for news for some content on what's happening at that moment. For Instagram, I try to be more and more strict with the people I follow. Also, knowing that on Instagram you post whatever is going on with your life. When it's going well, when it's not going well, you're not going to post anything. So I also tend to filter some people out. Some people that I feel like, well, they have a normal job, they have a regular job, and all they do is just going on vacations and being on a beach and stuff. So I also try to filter it sometimes just by myself. Sometimes I even just go to these people and unfollow them. Like, I don't like them as much to keep on following them and ruining my feed.

**Okay. And do you consider that you are authentic, like being in BeReal? Do you also consider that you act different on BeReal than in Instagram, like what you post there?**

I wouldn't say I'm less. I'm not authentic, but I just choose more carefully whatever I put on Instagram because I know that it's going through to more people. In BeReal, I have like 20 to 25 people, so I don't really have to take into consideration if I'm posting something or not. But about Instagram, I know that it's going to more people, people that I don't talk to every day. So, yeah, maybe I filter something, but it's not to filter something that I'm nothing. It's just to kind of do a best off of what I did, like, in the past year or six months, which is more or less the frequency that I post these days.

**And your circle, like, for instance, these 25 people that you say that you have on BeReal. Do you feel that they are authentic? And also do you feel that they are more authentic in BeReal versus Instagram?**

Yes. Yes. So basically, let's put an example. If there's an Instagram post of a picture on the beach, I know on Instagram, I know that probably on BeReal, there's like the making of that photo and it's like people stumbling or just trying to mess with their hair or something like this. So in that sense, yeah.

**But like, in general, the 25 pictures that you see, or for instance, 20 on the day, do you, like, you go through BeReal and say, okay, yeah, this is like their true life?**

Yeah. That was also something that I was looking for when, when getting BeReal, which is if you're just gonna show the best of your day or your week, then there's really no point of having BeReal.

**Okay. And what do you think is going to be, like, the future of BeReal? Like, do you plan on keep using it?**

That's a good question. There's something that goes in favor of BeReal, which is the fact that it renews every day. So basically there is no, there's no log you don't need to take care of. Oh, I did this already in last year or something like this. So you can just keep on being yourself. I'm not sure if it's gonna die because I also made that assumption about Snapchat and it just refuses to die. So I hope. I don't think it's gonna die as well. Maybe we'll have to adapt. Maybe instead of pictures, maybe it'll have some videos. I know that you have and have some like 1 second clips or so, but maybe it can go for like three to 5 seconds. I don't know, something like this. Maybe that's a way to adapt. Like, now? I think there's brands. I

also have seen that you have, that you can unlock two more pictures if you post on the time? Like, yeah, I think it really depends on the user about myself, personally. If I just post at the right time and I have, like, two additional slots, I just could not care less about those slots and about big accounts and brands and stuff. I also don't follow them because that'll be the purpose of Instagram and Twitter. So I try to separate things these ways.

**For this next part, can you open your ber real and go through your archive of photos and select two. One that you consider, like, your most authentic self, and one that you would say, if there is any, that you would say, like, oh, this wasn't me being so authentic. And then you can screenshot them and send me to my WhatsApp.**

Okay. That'll be a bit hard because in most of them, I'm actually being real. Okay, I have one that I took it deliberately so that I could, I mean, show my friends. So the first one. The one, I wouldn't say not authentic, but, like, I thought about where to take it. Because I'm very proud of my collection wall in my home in Viseu and I wanted my friends to see it. And the last one was just me coming home, so I think that was very authentic.

**And do you tend to do this, like, where you don't show your face or it was just like, coincidence of those two?**

I don't know. I usually just show my nose. Like, you're seeing it from my perspective directly. I just care about what's going on in front of me.

**And, like, now that you've had seeing kind of your archive of pictures, like, do you feel that this represents, like, your life?**

Yes. Yes. Most of them. You're gonna see the same setting again, as I said, sometimes you're gonna see something from sporting, from the games that I go to. For instance, if I know that I'm going to a game, then I receive the notification in the morning. I'll wait until the end of the day. So that's. I can show that I was there. I mean, I would be there anyway. So it's not a matter of being authentic or not. It's just that. So I can show something better than my face and a computer as I do everything. So, basically, if I had a more exciting daily life, probably it'll be different. But I also want my friends to know that I do something else rather than just work, and so I save it for them.

**Any last thoughts or concerns about BeReal or like, social media?**

I think moving forward, I will probably. I won't create another Instagram account, but I'll do go through some very harsh filtering. I mean, I did some filterings in the past, but I want to use Instagram just to check up on my friends and kind of have the same perspective as BeReal, because eventually I feel that I lose too much time on Instagram checking people that I don't really need to know what they're doing, or I could not care less. So maybe that would be the way to go forward. There was a time, also where I had TikTok and I removed it because I thought that I was losing too much time there. So I also have that kind of conscience. I understand that if I'm up to a stage where I'm not doing anything and within the first 30 seconds, I just grab my phone to check it, it means that I'm addicted, and I should be the one putting a hard stop to it. That's one thing. Big thing that goes in favor of BeReal, which is I just go there. It takes me, like, two to three minutes maximum, and then it's done. I know that there's no addiction. Also because I want it not to be addictive by only having close friends.

## **Participant 6**

### **¿Qué piensas cuando escuchas la palabra social media?**

Hoy por hoy Instagram se me viene a la mente primero TikTok un business place literal un lugar donde se puede hacer negocios un lugar donde puedes captar la atención de la gente.

### **¿Y qué plataformas de social media usas tú y cuánto tiempo más o menos le dedicas a esas aplicaciones?**

Instagram, TikTok y YouTube a veces para cuando quiero aprender algo, YouTube 100% es la plataforma a la que voy y la que yo uso como para yo distraerme pero si soy yo creando contenido para generar una audiencia mayor y crecer, ahí si uso Instagram y TikTok y si diría que uso semanalmente más de 40 h o más diría talvez sí, pero es un poco sesgado porque ahora sí estoy trabajando con eso.

### **¿Y cómo crees que las redes sociales influncian tu vida?**

Influncian si full mi toma de decisiones, me publicitan productos que si a veces sí me sirven, hay otros que sé que no me sirven pero igual termino comprando porque por el Poder del Influencer Marketing y de gente que está usando trends y sí creo que a la final si afecta en mi toma de decisiones de que hacer, que como que hago esta semana los lugares que están volviendo trendy para visitar o literal cosas en la ciudad de quehacer, actividades, nuevas ideas de negocio para aprender. Ahora de momento si estoy 100 % aprendiendo todo de social media así que creo que sí afecta heavy.

### **¿Y qué piensas de BeReal?**

Cuando empezó me pareció una súper buena idea, me pareció que era un concepto interesante que proponía que la gente sea más real subiendo las fotos justo cuando te tocaba subir pero eventualmente ya todo el mundo estaba esperando, ya todo el mundo, no sé, como que los features hacían que salga la hora pero al final igual si podías subir eventualmente cuando tú quieras y salía late BeReal y la gente ya como que estaba hasta inclusive si no se preparaban para el BeReal, o sea se volvió algo como me molestaba que la gente estaba esperando que ya salga el BeReal y se estaban preparando y luego cuando ya tomaban volvían a hacer o hacían como que borraban el caché memory para que para volver a intentar entonces no sé, como que lame literal es que y ya ni siquiera eso era real. No sé, de momento

no conozco ningún amigo que siga usando por un momento si era muy heavy. Creo que sí he visto un par de gente que el otro día que me fui por algún lado vi que si alguien estaba haciendo un BeReal, pero creo que es la gente que justo se descarga y y te dura un mes, dos meses el hype, pero de ahí ya no te aporta nada a la final porque no sé, a mí no me sirve de nada.

**Y cuando sí estabas usando, tú usabas, o sea, le usabas todos los días, ¿subías justo y hacías justo cuando te mandaban la notificación?**

Cuando me mandaban la noticia, intentaba. Pero si hasta yo volví a tomar las fotos porque no me gustaba cómo salíamos o que estaba saliendo en la foto y no sé, no, no sé. Eventualmente no sé por qué para eso ya me empecé a olvidar de qué había que hacer y también me sentía como presionado de ahí, como que eso me pareció cargoso, que la gente tenía que no sé, estábamos en un momento y todo BeReal y estábamos como que pasando bien. Al final estábamos como que en un evento social y todo el mundo de la nada separaba. No, no, que el BeReal estábamos como en una fiesta o con amigos y no sé, como que interrumpía literal el momento. A la final si la gente dejaba de te distraía de lo que estábamos haciendo y empezabas a hablar de BeReal al que no sé qué. No me encantaba eso tampoco.

**Ya. ¿Y tú cómo defines la palabra autenticidad? ¿Qué es autenticidad para ti? ¿O que ser auténtico?**

Auténticos es poder expresarte en tu día a día a través de todo el conocimiento y experiencias de vida que te han pasado a ti sin que estén tan afectados por lo que está haciendo el resto. Aunque eso termina siendo como lo que tú sigues, lo que tú vives. A la final si es si estás afectado por por el mundo y por el input que estás teniendo de otras personas. Entonces hasta cierto punto todo es siempre vas a ser tipo. Siempre estás tomando cosas de lo que está haciendo las otras personas, inspiración de otra gente. Entonces sí, buena pregunta, pero no sería que, aunque sea ponerle ese toque de toque personal a las cosas que estás haciendo día a día y no aunque sea no ser una copia exacta de los demás.

**¿Entonces tú sientes que tú si eres auténtico en las redes sociales?**

Sí, yo creía que sí soy auténtico. Claro, usando inspo de de gente que me de artistas o gente que me inspira, otros influencers, otros trends. Pero sí, creo que sí tengo ese toque de

autenticidad en la forma en la que me expreso. Hablo de dónde soy la cultura y valores con los que yo crecí.

**¿Y tú crees que tus amigos o la gente de tu network es auténtica en la gente que tú sigues en las redes?**

No todos, la mayoría diría que no. Como te digo, yo creo que no soy. Soy un poco más auténtico porque de momento igual ni siquiera publico casi nada y cuando publico son cosas que en verdad me gustan. No pienso mucho en como que si me va a gustar a las otras personas, aunque sea no en mi cuenta personal. Sí, obvio. Cuando estoy compartiendo para el trabajo y cosas, obviamente si me lo primero que me pongo a pensar es si es algo que se va a volver viral o si va a ser algo que va a ser compartido por más gente y me empiezo a pensar en el algoritmo y en todos los factores que pueden hacer que tu contenido se explote más. Pero no, en mi cuenta personal no. Y lo que sí veo que mucha gente hace es solo copiar los estilos que están trendy de otra gente, de los major influencers de EE.UU. Y de de Europa, como que copian su mismo feed, el mismo tipo de post y eventualmente hasta ahí está influenciado las actividades que hacen para poder transmitir ese estilo de vida. Porque a la final es eso, o sea que lo que están tomando en Instagram y todo es esa recopilación de tu lifestyle que que ahora es como yo que sé, me invento las fotos de como que con el vino y en cierto tipo de background o cierto tipo de restaurantes dim light, por ejemplo. Y creo que la gente empieza a hacer estos planes para tener ese tipo, literal, solo para tener ese tipo de feed. Entonces sí me parece que no. Por ejemplo, gente que yo conozco que nada que ver con ese. No sé hasta qué punto, si es como que se ven inspirados en eso y eventualmente pueden adquirir esa forma de ser y esa es la forma de ser que eventualmente les gusta más que la que tenían antes. Entonces esa es difícil pregunta porque todo el mundo va a poder decir si no, pero ahora yo soy esto y por qué no podemos evolucionar y por qué no.

**¿Pero entonces no crees para nada que tus amigos eran o el grupo de gente que seguías en BeReal era un poco más auténtico en esa red o era la misma cosa?**

Algunos sí, pero te juro que a veces hasta yo, nosotros decíamos, o sea, me acuerdo de que yo que sí estábamos diciendo hay gente que hasta planeaba estar en ciertos lugares por justo cuando ya. Porque ya podrías, si ya usabas BeReal por mucho tiempo, ya hasta podrías predecir que, si no salió otro día, salió una noche como que. Y hasta yo sabía, decía puedes

salir en las siguientes horas. Gente se iba y hacía tal cosa en cierta hora para. Porque obviamente si es que si es que salía el BeReal a las 12 y justo a las 12 estabas en el Mónaco grandprix justo esa hora, obviamente quedabas como un rey.

**Pero claro, por eso ahora tiene BeReal esa notificación de que si haces en el momento te dan dos BeReals más como para que la gente lo haga.**

Sí, claro, yo sí justo llegué a ese punto y obviamente es lo que te digo, es mejor era tú quedaba súper bien si en tu BeReal salí justo en el tiempo. Si es que no salía que hiciste un late BeReal, sino que hiciste el normal. Si justo en ese estabas en una actividad súper top, quedaba súper bien y esas eran las que más reacciones tenían según yo. O sea, si es que estabas, yo que sé, justo en el. Justo en ese BeReal estabas en Wimbledon y a esa hora eras una bestia, obviamente. Y la gente que sabía que iba a estar, por ejemplo, en Wimbledon en la tarde y ya salía el BeReal sí o sí, no iban a subir a esa hora. Según yo lo que vi, se esperaban hasta subir hasta. Si justo en ese momento no estabas haciendo algo súper arrecho o súper cool se esperaban hasta estar en su highlight del día y todos subían late. O sea, ya como que se volvió como hacer su mejor parte de tu día.

**¿Notabas una diferencia entre las publicaciones de tus amigos en BeReal y en Instagram Stories donde hay más seguidores?**

La gente quería que vean, que veas en ambos mi experiencia también. O sea, yo también me incluyo que yo también estaba esperando hasta el mejor momento del día. Si es que sabía que iba a estar con amigos o que íbamos a ir a tal mirador, yo sabía que iba a ser mejor que solo subir en mi casa sin hacer nada. Obvio, si había esa gente que subía, yo que sé, o gente hasta allá se volvió como subiendo en el baño. O sea, y es como si no me parece que estaba ayudando mucho la autenticidad solo. Y por eso creo que está destinada al fracaso esa red social.

**La última parte de la entrevista es que me mandes un BeReal donde crees de tu archivo de BeReal como uno que tú creas que fuiste auténtico y una en el que crees que no fuiste auténtico, si es que hay alguno y que me cuentes un poco por qué.**

A ver, ahí te estoy mandando. No, pero qué raro, no se está. Es que ninguno fue tan auténtico. Todos estos BeReals eran falsos. No, no todos, pero o sea, lo que sí creo que es cool era que

sí, o sea, sí o sí capturaba el momento de ese de ese día. Y lo único bueno, lo que sí me parecía bueno era que tenías como una. Sí o sí luego tenías una memoria de cada día. Pero si esa es una función que sí, si me parece, es un plus, aunque sea de eso tener una un archivo de las cosas. Bueno, ese sí fue verdad. El primero que estábamos viendo como mi dj favorito aquí y el otro si era como con mi roommate. Pero sí, aunque sea cuando me acordé si estaba ahí el otro me acuerdo de que estaba medio falso porque estaba posada, cambié de pose, la ella tampoco le gustaba cómo salía y que. Bueno, estábamos haciendo música y estamos poniendo un beat y cantando eso cool. Eso no es algo que hubiéramos subido, por ejemplo, a Instagram, pero sí, sí, no sé la verdad, pero no sé. Es cierto que por más cool y todo, a mí no me estaba aportando en nada más que no me estaba aportando por ende ya no uso y hasta me olvidé de la app.

## **Participant 7**

### **A ver, entonces empecemos primero cuéntame, ¿tú qué piensas de cuando escuchas la palabra social media?**

Pues pienso que es como algo para conectar entre las personas, pero últimamente es como más relacionado con el contenido y como siento que hay una sobreexposición de contenido ya todo el tiempo. Al menos siento eso en mi experiencia personal, porque paso viendo cosas y no puedo parar y es como ya necesito parar y como desconectar mi mente. Y creo que eso afecta también el multitasking. O sea, siento que puedo hacer más de una cosa a la vez y es como me afecta full en mi productividad.

### **¿Y tú qué plataformas usas normalmente?**

Instagram mayormente. YouTube cuenta como plataforma, WhatsApp y TikTok, pero menos, más de Instagram.

### **Ya. ¿Cuánto tiempo crees que le dedicas más o menos al día? ¿En promedio?**

Unas 2 h, mínimo 3 h.

### **¿Y cómo sientes tú que te influncia o te ha influenciado el uso de este tipo de redes sociales en tú en tu vida?**

Como influenciado siento que me me causa como que se me hace más difícil estar desconectada del celular y poder hacer actividades que no requieran usar el celular. Y también como siento que sí encuentro cosas útiles como de información o alguna alguna cosa que me interese ver, pero el momento en que veo eso, luego caigo en un ciclo porque me aparecen 3000 vídeos más y termino y termino viendo todos.

### **¿Y qué piensas específicamente de BeReal?**

BeReal le veo menos tóxico que el resto de redes sociales. La verdad siento que. Bueno, no sé qué más le hayan agregado últimamente, pero siento que es como más para que la gente sea literal, real y como de rato que te llega la notificación, subir la foto y te vas enterando de lo que hacen tus amigos día a día en vez de solo lo que deciden postear y con el caption que ellos deciden y toda la cosa, porque como Instagram es muy pensado, creo. Y en cambio BeReal es como muy como inmediato, literalmente lo que estaba haciendo, muestras y ya.

**¿Y cuando tú le estabas usando más seguido si posteabas una foto diaria y si la posteabas cuando te salía la notificación o como era como tu uso de la app?**

Capaz no inmediatamente, pero si posteaba una vez al día y intentaba hacerlo cuando podía. Pero, por ejemplo, si estaba en una reunión o en alguna cosa y no podía, como que cuando veía la notificación y ahí yo lo hacía cuando veía la notificación.

**¿Cuál es tu definición de la palabra autenticidad o ser auténtico?**

Pues no sé si a mostrarte como eres o solamente como que sentirte que que está siendo como quieres ser. Como no sé, ser auténtico es como literal decir lo primero que se te ocurra, tal vez un poco filtrándole, pero decir lo que se te ocurra y como que no tener miedo a ser rechazado por los demás por ser quien eres y por mostrarte por las cosas que te gustan o por lo que piensas.

**¿Y tú crees que eso es algo que se ve en redes sociales y segundo, crees que es algo que importa en estas redes sociales?**

Creo que antes no se veía tanto, ahorita más, pero ahora hay sobre exposición de eso también como que no sé, ponte les sigo a unas personas como que mamás porque me interesa el desarrollo de niños y eso y le empecé a seguir una chica que literalmente sube videos de cuando ella se pone a llorar con el hijo así al mismo tiempo porque está como súper como sobre estimulada de cosas y literalmente quiere subir como ella se siente y lo que pasa durante la maternidad y eso me parece súper heavy porque es como que lo que la gente en general no sube tanto y también he visto un montón de gente, ponte como fitness influencer que subían desde la pandemia en adelante como que un montón de videos de ejercicio y ahora hicieron como que su video de historia de que cuando les dio un eating disorder y full cosas más como que como exponiéndose más sus problemas personales y eso. O sea, en ese caso sí siento que es como útil ver también ese lado en las redes sociales. No sé si se presenta siempre porque siempre hay siempre se decide la forma en la que eso se presenta en redes, pero pero sí siento que hay más exposición de esto de lo de ser auténtico o intentar al menos y si es importante, creo que sí. O sea, pero también a esta cuestión de la estética. Entonces no sé que ahora como que yo veo videos sobre como que gente haciendo meal prep y toda la cosa y es como que todo está súper limpio y perfecto a cada rato es como eso no es normal.

Entonces no creo que sea tan importante actualmente para las demás personas para ver en redes.

**¿Pero es importante para ti?**

Tengo dos lados. Como que sí me gusta ver las cosas como que. Porque me satisface el cerebro ver como que todo ordenado y todo eso, pero sé que sé que no es real al mismo tiempo como que mi cabeza digo no, eso no es posible. Y de ahí el otro por el otro lado si me gusta ver también esa gente que como que se expone por lo que es y como que las crisis mentales que les ha dado durante cada día y cosas así, entonces creo que sí es importante, pero si me gusta ver otro tipo de vídeo también.

**¿Y tú crees que tú lo que tú posteas es auténtico?**

No, o sea. Lo peor es que ya no posteo tanto antes y subía más cosas de Instagram y eso pero ahora no, pero si es más auténtico yo creo. Antes posteaba como que fotos o literalmente iba a algún lado y me hacía que me tomen fotos pero ahora siento que me concentro más en pasar bien el rato que estoy y me olvido de tomarme fotos o de tomar fotos del lugar pero el rato que lo hago si lo subo con conciencia de como que si me gustó el momento. Pero sí, también es un poco como ah no voy a subir las mejores fotos porque así me dan más likes, como que les gusta más a la gente. Estoy en un mix ahí creo.

**¿Pero sientes que lo que subías en BeReal era un poco más auténtico o igual?**

Sí, sí creo que sí. Creo que BeReal es un poco más real porque ahí no es como que no tienes tanto tiempo para decidir qué hacer.

**¿Y crees que lo que tus amigos ponían, o sea lo que tus amigos suben o tu círculo, tu network más cercano que sube a Instagram y a BeReal, crees que lo que ellos suben es auténtico?**

En BeReal más que en Instagram.

**Lo siguiente que te voy a pedir es que abras y veas tu histórico de fotos y escojas dos, una que tú sientes que es auténtica y otra que hayas subido si es que hay que sientas**

**que no es auténtica y si les puedes hacer screenshot a esas dos y mandarme por WhatsApp y me explicas como por qué.**

Ni sabía que había cómo llegar al histórico o sea nunca me puse a buscar. Me parece bueno vi un chico que es de mi grupo de amigos de aquí que él ha subido, sube cada año un vídeo de 1s por día o cada mes, no me acuerdo creo que subió un vídeo y dice como que 1s por día así me parece súper cool porque haces un mini resumen de lo que has hecho durante ese tiempo.

Ahorita me acuerdo clarito la que no es verdad. Creo que no avance a subir nunca. Creo que esta es la primera que subí ya tenía que es en el concierto de Beyoncé, pero literalmente, o sea, yo esperé a que me llegue como que estar en el concierto así para subir la foto ya como que mi primera foto en el BeReal va a ser en el concierto. Eso quería hacer. Y una real. Pues tengo full fotos en pijama o cocinando.

**¿Y este tipo de fotos en pijama serían fotos que subirías a Instagram stories?**

Osea sí, no creo que haya nada raro. Yo ni siquiera tengo close friends en Instagram, como que se lo subo todo.

**¿O sea, ahorita que estás viendo todo tu histórico de fotos, crees que si es una verdadera representación de tu vida, que no está siendo como que muy curated así?**

No, no, no estaba muy curated. No entiendo por qué deje de subir, pero sí, porque tengo todo. Cuando iba a la oficina en Pepsico, aquí tengo, aquí subo la olla cocinando pasta y literalmente es lo que estaba haciendo ese rato. O sea, tengo full pijama como cocinando la cena. O sea, si bien no esperaba estar haciendo algo como que súper específico como para subir, no, no, nada que ver.

**¿Y crees que crees que vas a volver a usar BeReal o ya ahí quedó?**

Capaz si vuelvo a usar, el problema es que no soy mala con la constancia en las cosas, si no hubiese seguido usando, sino que como que tengo obsesiones que me duran unos dos, tres meses y de hecho esto me duró desde final de julio, final de junio hasta hoy me duró bastante como hasta enero. Está bien, pero tengo, tengo obsesiones que me duran unos dos, tres meses en general y luego dejo de hacer.

## **Participant 8**

### **¿A ver, entonces cuéntame qué piensas cuando escuchas la palabra social media?**

Social media. Uy, como se ve bien a la imagen, como no sé, como vidas perfectas, todo perfecto, como todo súper curado. Curated se dice en inglés como súper, no sé cómo se dice en español. Como planificado por filtros. Ajá. Y como ajá, preseleccionado antes de subir.

### **Ya. ¿Y tú qué plataformas de social media usas?**

Ahorita solo, bueno, estoy, uso Instagram, TikTok y BeReal.

### **¿Y cuánto tiempo crees que les dedicas a estas redes? ¿Así diariamente más o menos?**

Más de lo necesario. A ver, creo que más TikTok creo que es veo no sé cuánto será la semana, 1 h, depende. A veces como que me cojo por etapas Instagram si paso más tiempo y creo que veo diario Instagram por lo menos media hora y a veces me quedo más tiempo y BeReal solo es como cuando subo la foto y de ahí como veo los posts de la gente, pero no es como que te puedes pasar mucho tiempo ahí.

### **¿Y cuál ha sido tu experiencia con las redes sociales? Al menos con Instagram que dices que pasas más, más tiempo ahí.**

La experiencia, no sé, siento que son súper adictivas. O sea, como que he intentado full veces. Yo hago como detox y paso como que un mes que cierro, borro el app de mi teléfono, no so para nada. Y me doy cuenta que en eso cuando borro, como que tengo full más tiempo para leer, para hacer otras cosas que normalmente como que si se te van, o sea, se te va porque te empiezas a empezar a ver, empiezas a scrollear y ya terminas 1 h y en Instagram entonces creo que no sé, creo que estar expuesto todo el tiempo a no sé, como vidas perfectas y la típica como instagram es súper así, no es como tan real como la gente solo sube lo que quiere que veas. No sé si ansiedad, pero sí creo que estar expuesto a ese contenido todo el tiempo si te crea un poco de tal vez, no sé si inseguridad o sí, creo que no puede ser saludable tampoco.

### **Ok. ¿Y qué piensas de BeReal específicamente?**

A ver empecé a usar porque una amiga me enseñó y me recomendó, o sea, como me dijo ah, mira, estoy usando este app, me pareció chévere y creo que al principio fue como que ah,

para estar como con mis amigos, porque todos en el grupo empezaron a usar y dije voy a ver como que qué tal es. Y yo creo que me gusta full porque me parece que puedes seleccionar un grupo de amigos mucho más pequeño o al menos así es como yo lo manejo. Yo como que solo gente que como que amigos súper cercanos o gente que en verdad como confío y como que en verdad subo fotos como en pijamas, en maquillaje, como de lo que estoy haciendo y si salgo mal, como que a veces no me como que no me importa. Entonces me parece como más un poco más natural. ¿O sea, igual es como show off, no? O sea, me imagino el punto de todas las redes sociales es como que para que la gente vea qué estás haciendo. Pero una cosa que me gusta de BeReal es que al final del año como que puedes ver tu recap de todo lo que has hecho todos los días del año y eso me pareció chévere, que es lo que más me gusta de la plataforma y creo que por lo que sigue haciendo, porque al final del año te sale todo y como que es chévere ver como que qué estabas haciendo, qué hiciste, porque estuviste y no sé cómo que esa parte es la que me gustó y por eso me quedé ya en la app.

**Ya. ¿O sea, tú sí usas diariamente y subes la foto en el momento en el que te sale la notificación o lo manejas?**

No, no en el momento en que me salen la notificación, porque cuando trabajo yo tengo en silent mode o no disturb, pero cuando chequeo y veo la está si subo como que ese rato que veo.

**¿Y para ti cómo defines la palabra autenticidad?**

Autenticidad, no sé, hacer subir cosas o demostrar como que cosas súper del día a día sin que sea forzado, porque a veces es como que estoy en el trabajo y como que nada glamuroso, x y a veces hubo como que cosas así. Tal vez eso se siente un poco más auténtico que Instagram o como que la gente sube porque people a veces también te pone como cuántos intentos has hecho de la subida. Entonces como que no sé, creo que es en general como que siento que la gente igual sube cosas así como no importa si sales pésimo o si es que no sales bien, como que en ese sentido se siente menos. No hay filtros, no hay fotos tampoco. Puedes subir fotos antes. Ahora tienen el nuevo setting este, pero la idea es como que subas lo que estaba haciendo ese rato.

Ahora ya tienen para un filtro. Es un filtro, pero se llama bullet. Entonces puedes subir cosas como del pasado. Autenticidad diría como que como ser como quién eres. Sí, sin filtro.

**¿Y entonces tomando en cuenta esto, o sea, para ti es importante esa, o sea, demostrar autenticidad en las redes sociales, o sea, es algo que para ti lo valoras en las diferentes plataformas?**

A ver, depende, como Instagram sé que no es como, no es ese tipo de plataforma, como que no sé, de primera es como que pienso en Instagram y sé que nadie va. La gente dice que se intenta mencionar más real y todo, pero como que no es de ese tipo de plataforma, como que es muy diferente. Si tú comparas Instagram, TikTok, TikTok es como siento que puede ser como un poquito más auténtico o en general como que es otro tipo de plataforma. Igual BeReal es otro tipo de plataforma, entonces como que cuando yo subo contenido creo que sí, o sea, depende, no subo el mismo contenido a cada plataforma. Entonces en Instagram, como mis expectations no son que sea como auténtico, pero valoro, suponte en BeReal que si se mantenga ese tipo de, o sea, que sea más natural o no sé cómo. En TikTok también se me hace que a veces es un poquito más natural, no tan forzado.

**¿O sea, tú, tú sí crees que tú eres auténtica En BeReal y en Instagram?**

Sí, creo que diría como en Instagram, o sea, no diría como súper auténtica, no porque nadie no esté posteando, no sé, yo sin maquillaje o cosas así. En BeReal sí diría como no sé si súper auténtica porque creo que todas las redes sociales implican subir como sólo una parte de tu vida. O sea, hay cosas que nunca van a mostrar en redes sociales, cosas que nunca vas a convertir en redes sociales porque tampoco. Entonces no diría como que soy auténtica en todas formas, porque si creo que en unas más que otras. Sí.

**¿Y tus amigos, tú crees que tus amigos, a ver, el grupo que dices más pequeño que tienes en BeReal, crees que ellos sí son auténticos?**

No, en Instagram diría no, nada, o sea, como que eso lo hacemos como lo más chévere o como fotos súper estética y cosas así. En BeReal diría que un poquito más, pero no, tampoco diría como que eres súper auténtico porque hay partes del tuyo, partes muy personales que no vas a mostrar. Pero diría como que si veo que la gente sube cosas más orgánicas. Si quieres decir como la gente si sube fotos en un viaje, al menos de mi grupo hay gente que

sí, tal vez que sí, como que se espera hasta el momento en el día que hagas algo específico que creo que, si hay también, o sea, no subes de ese rato, entonces si hay como un poco de todo.

**Ahora puedes abrir tu BeReal y ver como tu archivo de fotos y quisiera que escojas dos fotos y les puedo hacer screenshot y mandarme por WhatsApp para que sea más fácil que me expliques. Pero una en la que tú creas que está siendo auténtica y otra si es que hay una que tú creas que no fuiste auténtica y me explicas por qué. O sea, también me interesa saber. Ponte si ahorita que estás viendo todas tus fotos, tú crees que esas fotos son el reflejo de tu vida.**

O sea, tengo esta que tengo que estaba haciendo como ejercicio de mañana y solo me tomé la foto, salí pésima y como. O sea, a mí como que esta plataforma como que me da un poco igual. Ya no diría como que es 100 % auténtica, como igual estoy mostrando la parte del día, todo es como un snip. Aunque te decía que hay fotos que subo igual como he subido fotos con el el ojo gacho y así y como que no me importa porque el grupo estoy compartiendo es muy selecto, no es como todos. No sé qué foto, pero esta foto diría como no es auténtica porque he estado como posando. La segunda como he hecho pedazos fue como la que salió literalmente como ya. O sea, como que ni siquiera me fijé si salía bien o mal, solo cogí, emplasté y subí.

**¿Y ahorita que viste todas tus fotos, tú crees que si representan como tu vida real?**

Creo que sí. O sea, yo intento que sea. Me gusta la plataforma, como me gusta ver el recap de todo lo que he hecho durante el año y los días entonces diría como que sí.

**¿Y tú crees que todavía BeReal va a seguir, como que la gente va a seguir usando?**

No sé, creo que tal vez va a pasar como Snapchat, que van a salir nuevas plataformas diferentes o se va a cambiar de alguna manera. No creo que se quede así para siempre.

## **Participant 9**

**Ok, entonces primero quiero que me digas ¿qué entiendes cuando escuchas el término social media?**

Pues al final es, bueno, es como una interconexión, como una plataforma donde la gente interactúa y bueno, a través de Internet comparten sus vivencias, contenido, digamos. Es como una especie de plataformas donde la gente genera contenido, comparte, a la vez de que sirve de entretenimiento, de información y de. Bueno, tiene muchas otras funciones a parte de estas.

**¿Ya, y tú qué plataformas de redes sociales utilizas a nivel personal?**

En todo, pues sería Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, estas las. Y después Google. No, Google no se considera Social Media. Bueno, pues esas. Y después hay otros países. Es que, en la empresa, por ejemplo, tenemos algún cliente que sigue usando Snapchat. Ok, ya, pero las otras son las que más. Ah y también LinkedIn y Twitter.

**¿Cuál es tu experiencia con cada una de estas redes? ¿O sea, en general, como que cuáles tienes como más experiencias positivas o negativas? ¿Y qué tanto tiempo en verdad les dedicas a cada una de estas al día? ¿Sí, más o menos, cuánto tiempo en total en redes sociales pasas?**

Vale. Yo partiendo de la base de que trabajo con tema de redes sociales, podría decir que me paso el día en una plataforma o en otra. En temas de trabajo, pues trabajamos mucho con Facebook e Instagram a nivel de publicidad en estos canales, después también Pinterest y TikTok. Y a nivel personal lo que yo más uso es Instagram. Después también, ahora Instagram ha lanzado una plataforma que es como un Twitter pero a nivel de meta, que se llama Threads y es una especie de Twitter pero de Instagram. Entonces, básicamente miro estas dos y creo que la influencia, a ver, positiva tiene sus cosas positivas y negativas. Al final, como todo depende del uso que cada persona le haga de ello. Sí que es verdad que estar en estas plataformas te parece que no, pero estás como más conectado con el mundo. Hoy en día, por ejemplo, yo ya no miro la tele y me sirve sobre todo de un canal de, bueno, de información, tanto a nivel de noticias como a nivel de más de lo que pasa en el mundo, pero también a nivel de entretenimiento, tanto lo que hace, lo que está pasando a nivel de eventos o culturales o lo que sea, de enterarme de nuevos restaurantes, enterarme de nuevos

planes que hay en la ciudad o cosas así, o bien lo que están haciendo mis amigos. Entonces todo depende del uso, puede ser positivo o negativo. En mi caso yo creo que me aporta más cosas que me quitas. Sí que es verdad que yo usando a veces estamos más pendientes de lo que te dice el móvil o lo que están haciendo personas que están muy lejos de ti antes de conectar con tu realidad en el presente, pero mi balance es positivo.

### **¿Ok, y tú qué piensas de la aplicación BeReal?**

Pienso que fue una idea muy innovadora, porque veníamos como de que Instagram ya era todo perfecto o que la gente ya mostraba como sus mejores fotos y todo como demasiado adornado. Y fue innovador porque querían como sacar esta espontaneidad y esta y este desenfadado que al fin y al cabo tiene que tener una plataforma que no sea todo tan estudiado porque por ejemplo hoy en día las empresas ya como que preparan un post o un vídeo todo perfecto para vender su producto, su marca, tanto a nivel personal como a nivel comercial. Entonces BeReal era esta cara b de las redes sociales y pienso que fue una muy buena idea, lo único que creo que no se supo seguir adaptando porque al final es una idea sencilla de subir una foto pero faltó, al menos en mi, que sé que sigue presente, pero como faltó algo más de enganche. Sí que han ido sacando nuevas actualizaciones, pero como un algo más.

### **¿Qué es ese algo más que te hubiera sido una idea que se te hubiera ocurrido para que te siga pareciendo atractivo BeReal?**

Claro, en su día pues pensé que una foto al día era muy poco porque con una foto ya hasta el día siguiente ya está. No había ningún incentivo tampoco más allá de subir o no la foto, aparte de ver lo que publicaban o no tus amigos.

### **¿Y cuando empezaste a usarlo, si subías una foto diaria, subías la foto cuando te llegaba la notificación o cómo era como tu uso?**

Mi uso de la app realmente, como muchas veces me saltaba la notificación y yo no lo veía porque estaba haciendo otras cosas, estaba durmiendo o lo que sea, al final lo tenía como una especie de álbum de recuerdos. Yo hacía una foto diaria, en este caso estando en Lisboa y yo sé que yo tengo ahí un álbum diario de fotos que más que para uso de enseñar qué estoy haciendo, porque muchas veces no estás haciendo nada interesante, es más a nivel personal de decir mira, pero esto es para mí.

### **¿Y cómo tú defines el término autenticidad o ser auténtico?**

Claro, al final lo que yo sentí que pasó un poco con BeReal es eso, es que al principio empezó como algo muy auténtico, de que muestras la realidad al momento. Pero cuando estás en ciertas situaciones un poco más comprometidas, por muy auténtico que quieras ser, esa autenticidad no va a estar por unos modales o algo hay en la sociedad que te dice esto no lo puedes subir. Entonces esa autenticidad queda un poco camuflada porque tú ya no subes una foto al instante, sino que te esperas hacer un plan chulo para para subir eso. Entonces esta autenticidad es un poco relativa porque cada uno sí lo tiene en su mente de sí es al momento, pero todos al final nos esperábamos a un momento x para subir la foto. Entonces para mí algo auténtico es tal cual al momento, sea lo que sea, pero hay límites también.

### **¿Ok, y tú crees que para ti la autenticidad es importante en las redes sociales? ¿Es algo que es un factor que tú lo tomas muy en cuenta?**

Yo creo que depende del perfil que seas. Es decir, si eres una persona que se dedica a recomendar restaurantes y, pues al final la gente tarde o temprano va a ver si lo que hay detrás es auténtico o no. Al igual que vender productos. Para mí no es tanto el vender muchos productos que no sabes ni para qué sirven, sino mejor vender uno que realmente te guste y que la gente pueda confiar en ti porque has vendido uno, pero sabes que ese es bueno, que no vender 80 y no tener relevancia.

### **¿Pero las cuentas que tú sigues, a ti te interesa que sean auténticos, te da igual? ¿Es algo que lo tomas en cuenta al decidir si sigues alguien o no?**

O sea, yo por ejemplo he visto que en el mundo al menos de la comida, de los foodies estos, hay muchos que publican mucho contenido, pero tú entras un poco más allá y todos son contenidos de pago. O sea, mucha gente, muchos restaurantes se han contactado con ellos para hacer a cambio un post. Yo a la hora de escoger un restaurante, antes se lo preguntaría a alguien que a lo mejor tiene menos seguidores o menos, menos nivel de publicaciones y de tal, pero que sé que lo que hace es porque le gusta y me va a decir el sitio que realmente le gusta antes que uno por entonces yo creo que la autenticidad en cuanto a sinceridad sí que es importante, pero no es lo mismo tener que mostrar tu día a día al desnudo, que al final todo el mundo tiene su privacidad, a decir o no la verdad. Son como cosas diferentes.

**Entonces si tú tuvieras que decir si tú eres auténtico en redes sociales, dirías sí o no. ¿Y en BeReal?**

Yo creo que sería diferente porque en BeReal a la gente tampoco le importa, o sea, como que ya está enfocado a que puedes subir una foto en pijama en Instagram yo al menos no tengo la necesidad de subir una foto en pijama. Entonces todo depende de cómo veas lo que es real o no, pero también son las necesidades que te despierta una plataforma. En Instagram creo que ya está enfocado como algo muy comercial, como muy de vender producto. Cada vez hay más publicidad de empresas allí, más tanto de yo contar mi día, a no ser que sea una persona influyente, a nadie le interesa que yo esté en pijama haciendo quien sabe qué. Entonces creo que las plataformas también están evolucionando mucho y bueno, se nota la diferencia entre BeReal y en Instagram por eso, porque en una se ha quedado en una fase que podría ser lo que antes era Instagram. Instagram ya ha evolucionado a un nivel de que las marcas, las grandes marcas dependen de esta plataforma para vender su producto. Entonces tampoco pueden ser, bueno, tan tan informales.

**Ya. ¿Y tus círculos de amigos cercanos, tú dirías que ellos son auténticos en Instagram y tú tal vez veías una diferencia en que eran un poco más auténticos en BeReal o crees que igual todos no eran auténticos en ninguna de las plataformas?**

Bueno, más o menos igual que yo. Al final en BeReal también se esperaban a un momento x concreto para hacer una foto y en Instagram pues al final la gente también muestra lo que le interesa. Al final es mostrar en ambas plataformas de una forma más informal o menos, pero acabas mostrando lo que quieres mostrar. Entonces esta autenticidad es que yo creo que es muy relativa, porque a lo mejor un día no te importa subir una foto más informal, pero la otra dirás ay, espera que ahora voy a comer fuera, me haré la foto con mi amiga comiendo en el restaurante. Entonces es que es más o menos lo mismo demostrar.

**Ahora puedes meterte al BeReal y a tu archivo de fotos y escoger dos fotos y le das el screenshot y me mandas al WhatsApp una que tú consideres que sí fue auténtica y una que consideres que para nada es auténtica, si es que hay alguna. Y ahora que estás viendo todos tus archivos de fotos, cuéntame si es que crees que en verdad esas fotos representan cómo es tu vida. ¿Crees que si es una representación válida de una de un pedacito de tu vida o hay más inautenticidad que autenticidad?**

A ver, yo creo que la de la primera, que sales con gente, creo que al final esto refleja un momento que has estado acompañada de alguien, pero claro, tú no sabes que detrás de eso, a lo mejor durante todo el día estuviste sola, sin planes en casa o lo que sea. Entonces si tú te esperas a hacer una foto en ese momento quieres mostrar que tienes amigos o que has hecho un plan guay ese día y después si encima pones a dos cervezas de comprarnos un vuelo a Madeira es como a un querer demostrar aún más que tienes vida social y que te vas a ir de viaje ya. O sea, un análisis un poco que no sé si fue, pero yo creo que poco sí. ¿Y la otra? Pues mira, la otra tal cual, estaba en la cama mirando una serie, no me sale ni la cara porque yo creo que era de estos días que ni te arreglas ni nada. Y no puse ni texto, como en plan bueno, lo tengo que hacer, lo hago y fuera.

**¿Pero y no crees que fuera más auténtico si hubieras mostrado tu cara así, sin maquillaje, sin nada?**

Pues sí, tengo más de estas. O sea, justo tengo muchas que eso es lo que más me sorprendía del BeReal, que acababa subiendo fotos, que digo, ¿qué hago subiendo esto? Si esto se lo mandaría a una amiga, sabes. Y eso sí que es verdad que ya me daba igual subir fotos en pijama y en casa.

**¿Y tú crees que BeReal seguirá existiendo o va a morir eventualmente?**

Yo creo que o se reinventa, que realmente una forma de poderse reinventar es metiendo publicidad, pero vi que ahora ya tienen publicidad, tienen de marcas que tú puedes seguir. Pero también creo que eso le quita el punto, o sea, ¿yo para qué voy a seguir una marca en BeReal si ya le sigo en instagram? O sea, no sé, no tiene mucho sentido. Al final yo creo que la gente emigra a las plataformas donde tiene la audiencia. Por ejemplo, yo en su día con Snapchat, yo me quedé hasta el final con Snapchat, o sea, aguanté mucho porque yo era bastante usuaria de Snapchat y yo dije yo me quedo en Snapchat porque no me voy a ir a Instagram Stories. ¿ todos mis contactos, que a mí esos los Snapchat me los miraban 170 personas o más, mucha gente se empezó a ir a Stories, me quedé con 10 personas que miraban eso y dije, estoy hablando con quién? Con nadie. Entonces tú independientemente te vas a la otra plataforma pues porque es lo que se pone de moda. Entonces sí que es verdad que la gente se cansa muy rápido de todo y conseguir lo que ha hecho Instagram de enganchar durante tanto tiempo, yo lo veo muy complejo.

## **Participant 10**

### **¿Qué crees o qué piensas tú cuando escuchas el término social media o redes sociales?**

Son medios de comunicación donde cualquier persona puede publicar, aportar, opinar o cualquier, cualquier cosa. Hay mucha información, desinformación, mucho contenido creativo, mucho contenido que no vale la pena también. Entonces, pero es un medio de comunicación.

### **¿Y tú qué plataformas son las que más usas?**

TikTok, WhatsApp y puede ser que Instagram.

### **¿Y cuánto tiempo crees que tú le dedicas al día a las redes sociales?**

Depende de cuál.

### **En total, así en todas.**

Mis 24 h del día, yo le debo dejar unas 10 h.

### **¿Y crees que son más en que en WhatsApp o en TikTok?**

Sí, WhatsApp ya depende del día. Es que ahora como una relación a distancia. Entonces, obviamente WhatsApp es la aplicación que más utilizo, por supuesto, pero después va TikTok. O sea, a mi Instagram, me la pela a veces, perdón, sino porque sí me aburre, me parece un poco aburrida.

### **¿Ya, entonces, cuál ha sido tus experiencias, no sé, positivas o negativas con Instagram, con TikTok?**

La verdad es que Instagram, yo cuando llegué me cerré mi Instagram, pasé varios meses sin esa red social. Fue un alivio quitarme eso de encima, pero después me di cuenta de que la única manera, porque yo soy malísima respondiendo mensajes y sé que hay muchas personas que son igual de malas que yo, entonces me di cuenta que la única manera en la que yo iba a poder seguir en contacto con mis amigos sin la necesidad de estarnos escribiendo todos los días, la única manera en la que yo iba a saber si estaban bien o si estaban mal y viceversa era a través de esta red social. Entonces habría algo mucho más pequeño que es mi cuenta actual, que solamente para eso, o sea, para ver que la gente que me importa está bien. Pero

de ahí TikTok eso sí es ocio. Por supuesto. Pero también encuentro muchas cosas. Por ejemplo, veo noticias a través de TikTok. No soy mucho de sentarme en el almuerzo a ver noticias porque me quita el apetito leer de cuánta gente se muere en el día o de todas las tragedias que pasan. Pero al final del día tengo algunas páginas en TikTok que me dan cinco noticias muy importantes y de alrededor del mundo. Entonces escucho noticias, veo cosas de National Geographic, también veo cosas muy artísticas porque me encanta el arte. También veo tonteras, o sea, tonterías como ajá, algo que me hace reír porque también está bien eso, pero también noto que la cantidad de información que te bombardean, o sea, a un rato ves las noticias de hoy se descubrió una nueva enfermedad en China y después pasas un vídeo de un perrito saltando la cuerda. Entonces también tus emociones son como ya no sabes ni siquiera cómo sentirte al respecto. Es como te dan una mala noticia y luego solamente ves algo que hace un boost en tu serotonina, en tu dopamina y luego vuelves a bajar. Entonces es emocionalmente a abrumador todo esto en las redes sociales.

Por eso yo creo que ahora también estamos muy desconectados emocionalmente de nuestra realidad. Es como te cuentan que algo malo está pasando en el mundo, pero realmente no le das la importancia que mereces porque enseguida prestas tu atención a otra cosa y te olvidas de lo que está pasando. Y también creo que ese es el objetivo de todo eso, sea hacernos olvidar de lo que realmente está pasando y no prestarle atención a las cosas importantes. O sea, mira, tenemos múltiples guerras pasando al mismo tiempo y hay gente que publica. O sea, yo en Instagram veo historias, veo historias de las guerras, de las diferentes guerras que tenemos en este momento, de los diferentes problemas políticos y de la nada veo una historia de un man en una fiesta emborrachándose hasta más no poder y luego otra historia en close Friends del man cayéndose en el piso. O sea, es como no importa dónde estés, igual siempre tus emociones van a estar un poco confundidas. Tu cabeza también debe estar como que bombardeada de información todo el tiempo, todos los días.

**¿Y bueno, ya entrando en el tema de BeReal, qué es lo que tú piensas de esta plataforma?**

Sabes que yo, o sea, siempre trata de mantenerme muy al tanto de lo nuevo que sale porque es nuestra responsabilidad como gente que está en el mundo del marketing, de la comunicación, de todo esto, estar al tanto de todo lo que ocurre, de las nuevas aplicaciones, de las nuevas redes sociales, porque pueden funcionar como una herramienta para marketing.

Pero yo cuando BeReal en la pandemia, creo que salió más o menos en el 2020, yo no me la descargué, para ser honesta, jamás me llamó la atención. ¿O sea, era como por qué quiero tomarme una foto cuando me timbre el teléfono? Imagínate si estoy en la ducha. O sea, y hubo gente que cuando salió esa aplicación apenas sonaba el teléfono, tomaba la foto, no importaba lo que esté haciendo. ¿Y también hay un montón de TikToks que tú puedes ver de ese año, de una recopilación de los mejores BeReals que han habido y realmente hay algunos que es como por qué te tomas una foto en esa situación? Entonces yo no me la descargué, no le veía el punto de todo eso, era como ya tengo tantas aplicaciones en mi teléfono que es como para que una más. O sea, si quieres saber lo que estoy haciendo, entra a Instagram como, o sea, entiendo que es el BeReal es ser real y muestra tal y como que está, que está haciendo en ese momento de tu vida, no como Instagram que es mucho más producido. Pero de igual forma, o sea, yo llegué acá a Europa a bajarme eso porque toda la gente con la que me rodeo aquí usa BeReal. Pero realmente al principio lo usé muy regularmente hasta que ya llegué a hartarme y dije ya no le encuentro el sentido a esto. Como tengo 10 personas en BeReal, como que me interesa, o sea, si es que no elimino eso, esa aplicación es porque tengo un grupo solamente con cuatro de mis amigas que es como está bien, estas personas sí me interesan que sepan que estoy haciendo en ese momento y que sé que no me van a juzgar o no van a tomar screenshot y van a mandar o lo que sea. Es como solamente es una presión más, o sea, para mí, a mí encuentro mucho el sentido de esa aplicación.

**Cuando te bajaste así al principio, ¿tú sí posteabas como que la una foto diaria cuando te llegaba la notificación?**

Nunca llegué a ser muy organizada. O sea, por ejemplo, si es que estaba tomándome un cóctel con mis amigas y de la nada timbraba eso, es hora de ser BeReal, tomémonos la foto. Y entonces en ese rato que sonaba, yo me tomaba la foto. Pero de ahí había veces donde me sonaba a las 8:00 a.m. o sea, quién en su sano juicio se va a tomar una foto a las 8:00 a.m. o sea, a veces sonaba hasta más temprano y era como no me voy a despertar y lo primero que voy a hacer es publicar, o sea, no. Así que dejaba pasar y si llegaba a ser algo interesante, publicaba y si es que no me daba ganas, pues no, o sea, no.

**¿Y ahora ya no lo usas?**

No, ya no lo uso. O sea, tengo la aplicación, por ejemplo, la Pamela se fue a EE.UU. a la boda y a conocer a toda la familia, ese día yo publiqué porque yo quería ver lo que la Pamela iba a publicar, pero era la única razón porque de ahí para nada, o sea, realmente ya ni siquiera me interesa lo que publican ahí porque es súper puntual. Es usualmente la misma foto de Instagram, la misma gente haciendo las mismas cosas y ni siquiera es como algo interesante. ¿A veces es solo la persona ve su cara en un ángulo desfavorecedor y después ves una pantalla en negro o un fondo completamente random que no tiene nada de sentido y es como, qué hago yo desperdiciando mi tiempo viendo eso?

### **¿Y tú como entonces definirías el ser real o auténtico? ¿Autenticidad?**

Ser genuino, o sea, como ser real no significa probarle a la gente que estás publicando en ese mismo momento, en tus peores fáchas o en tus momentos más comprometedores o más dolorosos. Eso no es ser real, eso es simplemente exponerse de una manera que no es necesaria. Y al final la aplicación no es que te obligue a ser real porque puedes tomarte las fotos que tú quieras, borrar, volver a tomar, borrar, volver a tomar. Creo que te sale esta persona es su 10.º intento sacándose esta foto, entonces tú sabes que fue posada y no fue real, pero realmente no tiene nada de real, eso es como nada. Ser real es, no sé, como demostrar quién eres, hablar lo que piensas sin miedo a ser juzgado, mostrarte vulnerable con la gente que quieres y con la gente en la cual confías, luchar por lo que quieres, por tus creencias, o sea, eso es real. Como realmente basarte en tus principios, en tus valores, en defender tu forma de pensar, en, no tener miedo a expresarte, a reírte a carcajadas de un lugar público porque te van a regresar a ver o vestirse como se te da la gana, o simplemente decir quiero, tengo ganas de una coca cola, son las 10:00 p.m. voy a salir en pijamas a la calle. Eso es real. Es como estoy en mi momento más real en este momento. Es como si tú vienes de abrirme, o sea, vienes a visitarme y yo estoy en piramas, ese va a ser mi versión más real. Es como te estoy dejando ver cómo soy yo a puertas de adentro. Pero publicar una foto realmente no significa absolutamente nada. Como nadie sabe cómo eres realmente, nadie sabe cómo es que estás pensando, cómo te estás sintiendo, si es que la persona que está saliendo en tu foto es tu amiga, es tu conocida, lo acabas de conocer, le quieres, le odias, estás criticando, no sabes absolutamente nada. O sea ninguna red social por el nombre que tenga es real, o sea, ninguna, no hay ni una, o sea, ni por más de en TikTok tú ves los acompáñame en este día, hacer, yo que sé, mis mandados. No, o sea, no es real, lo lamento.

¿Nadie, o sea, esa gente que se levanta a hacer esos vídeos, tú crees que desayuno así todos los días? No van a desayunar su proteína, su fruta, su café, sus jugos verdes todos los días. No, porque a la gente le da pereza hacer eso, como te están vendiendo algo, un estilo de vida que ni siquiera ellos siguen y realmente en virial ahora hay perfiles de famosos, perfiles de marcas, perfiles de absolutamente todo lo que se te puede ocurrir. ¿Entonces que tiene realizo, o sea, tú crees que una celebridad se va a tomar una foto mientras está cagando? No, por más de que le tiemble el teléfono, o sea, nadie, nadie, nadie está.

### **¿Nunca consieraste que BeReal era diferente a Instagram?**

Mira, no digo que las plataformas, porque la plataforma en sí, esa red social tuvo una brillante idea de pongamos tiempo y si publicas a tiempo puedes ver el resto de publicaciones de tus amigos. O sea, tuvieron una brillante idea, pero también, si es que querían que funcione como querían funcionar. Entonces, si es que no publicas a esa hora, tú ya no tienes oportunidad para volver a publicar y para poder ver, porque eso ya no es ser real ya, porque te dan la opción de tomarte múltiples veces la foto, eso ya no es ser real. Como por qué la aplicación te está pidiendo que hagas ciertas cosas, pero te dan la oportunidad de hacer otras como si quieres que funcione como debería, entonces no des opción para que funcione de otra manera. Y obviamente al principio, como te digo, si es que tú tú ves vídeos de YouTube o recopilaciones de BeReals, como hay mucha gente que yo que sé, o sea, por la polémica también se tomaba el BeReal apenas, yo que sé, cuando estaban terminando de hacer el delicioso, el sin respeto, como quieras llamarle, como hubo gente que sí trató de hacer BeReal, pero creo que duró muy poco tiempo porque se estaban mostrando vulnerables en una red social y también estaban subiendo contenido e imágenes en una plataforma donde te piden términos y condiciones, que aceptes términos y condiciones y nadie lee. Entonces te aseguro que todas las fotos que tú subas se van a quedar en la nube y se van a quedar en su sistema y en su base de datos y todo, y quién diablo sabe qué pasa después. Entonces yo creo que la gente después también se empezó a dar cuenta de lo que estaba haciendo y por más de que ahora tenga 1 millón de usuarios, ya nadie es real porque a nadie le gusta salir feo en una foto, porque a nadie le gusta subir, o bueno, no a todos al menos como contenido comprometedor o que te avergüence o lo que sea. Es como por algo Instagram sigue estando en el tope de las redes sociales y BeReal casi ya no es como. Y eso que Instagram ya ni siquiera es lo que era antes. O sea, ahora es más parecido a TikTok que a Instagram.

**¿Y ya hablando así introspectivamente de ti, tú crees que tú eres alguien auténtica en redes? ¿Te consideras alguien que postea cosas genuinas?**

Mira, yo creo que antes no. O sea, cuando tenía mi perfil y tenía bastantes seguidores, no, o sea, nunca iba a subir una foto mala mía, jamás iba a tratar de hacer el ridículo, aunque en close Friends siempre he hecho el ridículo porque a mí me gusta ponerme en ridículo a mí misma, porque me gusta reírme de mí. Pero ahora en un perfil más pequeño subo cosas, subo bastante arquitectura o si subo una foto mía, obviamente puede estar bonita y voy a subirla porque yo me siento bonita, porque yo me siento bien, porque vamos a darle un boost al ego, pero real, real, las fotos tienen que estar bien. Lo que escriba en cada post es diferente porque en mi descripción de cada post trato de ser real, trato de ser quien soy, trato de mostrarle a la gente que me sigue un poquito de quién soy. No te voy a poner que bestia, qué hermosa que es la vida mientras paso encerrada en mi casa siete días de la semana amargándome por todo, no, pero trato de serlo. Sé que no siempre soy. Creo que realmente es complejo, no sé si es que alguien lo sea realmente. Creo que es difícil porque a la final uno como persona, por más abierto que sea, siempre vas a tener un lado que no le muestras a todo el mundo y sobre todo siempre va a haber lados de nosotros mismos que no todo el mundo merece conocer. Entonces las redes sociales siempre simplemente son una portada del libro y la gente te va a juzgar por eso. Entonces nadie quiere ser juzgado muy agresivamente o de mala manera. ¿Así que siempre vas a poner tu mejor cara, verdad?

**Y tus amigos, no sé, tu círculo tú notas ¿o notabas cuando usabas BeReal una diferencia entre su autenticidad en BeReal versus lo que posteaban en Instagram?**

O sea, por ejemplo, aquí la gente que es de Europa publica más en BeReal que en Instagram. O sea, en Instagram casi ni publican y en BeReal el tipo de contenido obviamente es diferente como en Instagram tú ves paseos, tú ves gente bonita, tú ves gente posando. En BeReal realmente he visto gente saliendo de la ducha, he visto gente en sus camas. Obviamente no salen mal, pero es otro tipo de contenido. Y también es porque tu círculo de amigos en BeReal, la cantidad de gente que te sigue es más pequeña, es más reducida. Creo que es un poco más privado.

**Ahora puedes entrar a tu BeReal y escoger dos fotos desde tu archivo de fotos y las haces de screenshot y me mandas al WhatsApp una que tú me explicas porque**

**consideras una que sea auténtica y una que consideres que no fuiste auténtica, si es que crees que hay una.**

O sea, hay cosas que me dan igual. Hay cosas que ajá. O sea, a mí nunca me ha importado mucho salir mal en las fotos. Solamente mira esta foto. O sea, mira mi papada, por favor. Ya como autenticidad en su máximo esplendor. Pero también hay fotos donde es como a ver, a ver, ven en el BeReal. Entonces todo el mundo está posando para el vídeo. ¿Me entiendes? Es como hay cosas. Voy a mandar mi foto más vergonzosa que publiqué. Me imagino que sí. Ya creo que esto es muy auténtico de mi parte. Ahí sí tú vas a tener que ver cuál es la más auténtica y cuál es la no tan auténtica.

**Sí te cacho. O sea, siempre normalmente cuando estás con más gente es algo más posado.**

Si o sea, tenemos la suerte, la dicha y la desdicha de tener las redes sociales. Y eso justo hablaba con mi novio el otro día. Yo le decía las redes sociales nos han ayudado mucho a conectar desde diferentes partes del mundo. O sea, tú puedes estar al otro lado del mundo y yo acá, que igual puedo sentirte cerca, porque si es que me haces una videollamada, yo te voy a poder ver. Pero también hay la desdicha de que ahora por las redes sociales tenemos la facilidad de conectar con cualquier persona desde la comodidad de nuestra casa. Y por por eso ahora la infidelidad está como al alcance de un clic. Entonces, si es que ese día estabas aburrido, te peleaste con tu pareja y decides simplemente divertirte un rato, ahí está tan fácil como un, dos, tres. O sea, y ya. Pero antes, antes las relaciones duraban. ¿Ahora si es que duran es porque o realmente se aman o porque son personas pensantes y maduras, que es como yo te elijo a ti todos los días y por eso estamos aquí, porque si no, ahora es tan fácil como nos divorciamos?

## **Participant 11**

### **¿Entonces cuéntame qué es lo que tú piensas del término Social Media o Redes sociales?**

A ver, yo creo que a día de hoy, bueno, yo soy una persona que ahora mismo me dedico un poco a las redes sociales y creo que la gente las ve como algo muy sobrevalorado, que en verdad no sirve. Y yo creo que todo lo contrario, que al final las redes sociales son un método que a día de hoy se adaptan tanto sobre todo a la gente joven, quiero decir, toda la gente joven o creo que la mayoría, diría el 99 % de la gente está allí, incluso a la gente mayor, no te digo de 80, pero sí de 50, incluso 60 años. Entonces yo creo que las redes sociales son una herramienta muy útil dentro del mundo de la comunicación, que si sabemos cómo utilizarlas, sobre cómo informar, saber cómo explotar cada una en su máximo nivel, pues igual, por ejemplo, LinkedIn, saber utilizar todos los programas que LinkedIn te incluye o te muestra en plan de aprendizaje o para ti mismo, para tu empresa, yo creo que es una herramienta muy potente, que es eso que solo valoramos la gente que nos dedicamos a ellas o que estamos dentro del mundo de la comunicación. Y bueno, y que un poco juntándolo con la tecnología y tal, sí que creo que van un poco hacia el futuro. Al final las redes sociales todo el mundo está en redes, todo se mueve por redes. Entonces eso.

### **¿Y qué plataformas, no en el trabajo, pero personalmente, qué plataformas usas tú?**

A ver, yo uso Instagram, Instagram la uso un montón, igual TikTok e Instagram creo que son los que más utilizo. Bueno, WhatsApp también la cuentas como vale, pues WhatsApp también, LinkedIn la uso, pero menos. He tenido BeReal también, y Facebook ya no lo uso, lo tenía instalado, pero ahora ya no lo tengo instalado, igual que Snapchat tampoco lo uso ya.

### **¿Y cuánto más o menos de tu día, cuántas horas al día crees que le dedicas?**

Ahora que trabajo, quitando lo profesional, porque al final por trabajo uso las redes, ahora que trabajo menos, pero antes les dedicaba muchas horas y ahora te puedo decir perfectamente que a lo mejor les dedico 4 h al día o cinco.

### **¿Y tus experiencias con estas plataformas cómo ha sido?**

A ver, yo en general he tenido una buena experiencia es verdad que pueden ser peligrosas, tienes que ir con mucho cuidado. Y hay veces que según lo que dices, si tienes el perfil

abierto, cerrado, puedes correr más riesgos. A ver, yo tengo perfil abierto, nunca me he sentido, nunca he tenido miedo de nada que me podrían haber llegado a decir ni nada. Creo que he tenido suerte en ese sentido. Y también es verdad que yo al final subo mucho contenido general. Al final no estoy subiendo mi vida personal. Si he tenido pareja no lo he subido. En plan mi vida más personal no la subo. Son un poco más viajes y más general. Entonces creo que por eso he tenido más. Me he sentido más segura y tal. Entonces no tengo ninguna experiencia mala.

### **¿Y qué opinas ya específicamente de BeReal?**

Es verdad que ahora ya no lo uso, también por tiempo y tal, pero yo creo que era a ver, a mí me gustaba mucho porque era una herramienta que al final no te enganchaba porque no te podías estar todo el día en BeReal. Al final era siempre lo mismo, por así decirlo. Y solo era ese momento de hacer la foto y ver que la gente de tus contactos y tal, tus amigos, como un poco más privado, porque al final allí tenías solo tus amigos que estaban haciendo. Entonces yo creo que era divertido porque sí, a ver, en cuanto a privacidad, podías perder mucha privacidad porque publicabas lo que estás haciendo en ese momento y y lo veía la gente. Pero como era solo amigos, a mí me parecía una forma muy guay de como de conectarnos, de ver qué estaba haciendo tu amigo. ¿Te acordabas de pues mira, ahora mi amiga Marta ha subido que está leyendo este libro de casualidad, le ha pillado el BeReal de Marta, y le he escrito pues yo también, sabes? Como que para conectar me gustaba.

### **¿Y tú cómo defines el término autenticidad o ser auténtico en redes y en general, en la vida?**

A ver, cada vez yo creo que ser auténtico, a ver, ser uno mismo, supongo que ser auténtico, pero estamos yo creo que es una sociedad que nos estamos moviendo mucho por tendencias. Entonces por muy auténtico que tú seas, creo que siempre o casi siempre va a haber alguna tendencia que te vaya a atrapar. Tendencia de cualquier tipo. ¿Yo no te hablo de tendencias típicas de redes sociales como moda, ropa, sabes? En plan o yo que sé, es una tontería, pero cuando se puso de moda el aguacate, quiero decir, yo creo que al final uno es auténtico por ser el mismo, pero hay cosas que no puedes evitar seguir tendencias. Es normal que te atraigan x o y algunas tendencias y tal. Entonces sí, yo creo que eso, para mí la autenticidad es ser uno mismo, mostrar cómo eres, lo que te gusta. Pero no creo que exista una

autenticidad en plan no creo que una persona puede ser 100 % auténtica en todo y tener y mostrar o hablar de cosas que nadie más lo hace. No sé si me entiendes.

**Sí, entiendo. ¿Y cuando tú usabas el BeReal, cómo usabas la aplicación? ¿O sea, si usabas una foto diaria, lo hacías cuando salía la notificación?**

No siempre. Si yo estaba en clase, yo estaba trabajando y estaba haciendo algo o estaba con amigos, no era mi prioridad el BeReal. A ver, si eran amigos que también lo tenían y nos soltaba el sonidito todos a la vez, a lo mejor decíamos, venga, el BeReal no. Yo al principio sí que intentaba hacerlo como más como al momento, pero luego era más cuando un poco me apetecía que entonces eso es al final un poco es como irónico en el sentido de que es todo el contrario de la función del BeReal, que es ser real, enseña lo que estás haciendo en este momento. Pero sí, yo creo que era un poco complicado también hacerlo al mismo momento, entonces cuando podía lo hacía, pero si tenía cosas que yo considero que son más importantes como trabajar o así, no lo dejaba todo por el BeReal.

**¿Y es importante para ti la autenticidad en redes?**

A ver, a mí me cuesta un poco crearme que la gente en redes es 100 % auténtica porque al final no puede serlo. Yo creo que hay cosas que tienes que exagerar, cosas que tienes que esconder. Entonces yo no creo que haya una autenticidad al 100 %. Lo que intento buscar son perfiles que veo que sí que intentan ser un poco más ellos mismos. Yo que sé, por ejemplo, hay una influencer que se llama Lola Lolita, es un ejemplo bastante tal, pero yo creo que ella es una persona bastante auténtica en el sentido de no le importa esconder lo que piensa, no le importa tal. Obviamente tiene cosas que tienen todas las influencers y que siguen todas, pero yo busco un poco pues perfiles que creo que sí que muestren gran parte de su vida, pero que entiendo que no puedan mostrarla entera.

**¿Y tú consideras que tú eres auténtica? ¿O sea, lo que tú posteas y en lo que tú muestras?**

No, a ver, soy auténtica todo lo que subo, son sitios a los que he estado, son sitios a los que he ido. Al final la realidad de lo que. En plan, lo que subes con la realidad, ya solo con decir que todo el mundo que yo conozco, todo el mundo que yo sepa que suben fotos las edita, para mí eso ya no es auténtico porque al final pasas un filtro. Entonces tú haces una selección

cuando publicas algo, tú haces un filtro, tú te aseguras de que la foto si muevo el café un poco así queda más entonces es auténtico. ¿A ver, si yo estaba en ese sitio, si yo me estaba tomando ese café, he hecho que pareciera mejor de lo que es también entonces tienes aparte de autenticidad, porque al final estoy mostrando algo que es verdad que he estado, no voy a Google y digo foto del Caribe y subo una foto del Caribe pero es verdad que sí que buscas a menos que hay veces que haces una foto así de suerte y es un fotón a veces, pero digo, normalmente tú ya buscas enseñar que es mejor, sabes? En plan, siempre lo vas a pintar mejor de lo que es.

**¿Pero crees que lo que subías en el BeReal era más auténtico de las otras cosas que pusiste en otras redes?**

A ver, yo creo que sí, porque al final tampoco tenías mucho que editar aparte de que tenía pocos amigos en BeReal porque eres lo que te he dicho, me gustaba tener pocos, era algo más como que sí, que estoy en el baño. A veces sí que es verdad que estaba con amigos, pues posabas, a lo mejor en ese momento estábamos despeinados, te arreglabas un poco y te hacías la foto o te saltaba el BeReal y decí me espero esta noche que voy a ir arreglada pero yo creo que era un poco más auténtico, yo al menos era más auténtica en BeReal que en cualquier otra red.

**¿Y tu círculo de amigos, estos amigos que tenías en BeReal tú sí ves una diferencia entre lo que ellos posteaban en BeReal y en las otras plataformas?**

Totalmente, totalmente. Empezando porque en BeReal te enseñaban que estaban toda la tarde haciendo trabajos o estudiando o trabajando, lo que sea y quejándote, lo típico que te quejas y después entrabas al Instagram y subían una foto de la cafetería que habían ido tres días antes o el viaje que habían ido hacía un finde, sabes. En plan se nota un montón la diferencia. Yo obviamente no lo critico porque también lo he hecho y puedo entender que la gente lo haga, pero se notaba mucho la diferencia.

**¿Y ahora que ya no lo usas tanto, no sientes que te hace falta ese como que ver lo que en verdad está pasando y no tanto esto más glorificado?**

¿Lo he pensado de decir y si me lo vuelvo a instalar y lo veo más tal? Pero es verdad que me estoy intentando, aunque aún estoy muchas horas en redes, me estoy intentando desintoxicar

un poco y es más, ahora es más mi círculo también cada vez es más pequeño, tengo no menos amigos, pero sí menos no sé cómo explicarlo, en plan pues menos gente con la que hablo, menos gente que tal. Y entonces ya intento yo hablar, llamar y enterarme un poco y hacer un esfuerzo para enterarme de cómo está la gente, o qué está haciendo la gente, cómo le va. Entonces es como que alguna vez lo he echado de menos y tal, pero en verdad tampoco tanto porque me gusta más trabajar. Creo que es más importante cuando lo trabajas, cuando tú intentas, cuando lo haces por ti mismo, el saber qué está haciendo tu amigo o tu hermana o quien sea.

**Lo siguiente que te voy a pedir es que escojas dos fotos de tu BeReal, una que tú consideras que es tu versión como más auténtica y una que dirías que no, que no fue tan auténtica, que fue tal vez un poco más posada o planeada si es que hay alguna así.**

Vale, voy. Bueno, si quieres te dejo varias, a ver. Y tú eliges porque tengo varias, la verdad. Perfecto. Madre mía. ¿Vale, te voy a pasar primero dos, que son estas dos son las de verdad, vale? Las que me hice random. Y las planeadas son estas dos. De esta en la que están con el grupo.

**¿Y para cerrar, como crees que va a haber algo que se asemeje a BeReal o que llegue como que a tener otro boom?**

Yo creo que obviamente va a salir otra aplicación. Quiero decir, salió en Facebook y todo el mundo se pensaba que Facebook sería lo máximo. Salió Instagram y todo el mundo se pensaba que Instagram sería lo máximo. Snapchat. Lo que pasa es que Instagram copió la idea, entonces por eso murió en España. Pero de repente estaba Vimeo, murió Vimeo, apareció TikTok, TikTok. Ahora la gente está en TikTok, no en Instagram. Va a salir otra. Obviamente a la gente se le va a ocurrir algo. Yo creo que con las redes sociales es cuestión de adaptarse. Hace cinco años la gente, bueno, TikTok no estaba TikTok o sí que estaba, pero se potenció en 2020. Entonces en estos cuatro años toda la gente de comunicación ha tenido que aprender todas las técnicas de TikTok, de las aplicaciones asociadas a TikTok, como por ejemplo Capcut. Entonces, sí, yo creo que sí, obviamente va a salir. No quiere decir, no creo ni que insta ni que TikTok por el momento vayan a morir. Yo creo que de momento tienen una vida en plan igual que Facebook aún no ha muerto, pero sí, sí, sí, seguro que sale alguna que en algún momento reemplaza y seguro que sale alguna que tiene un

boom momentáneo como fue como ha sido Be Reak en España, como fue Snapchat y acaba muriendo. Pero yo creo que sí que van a salir. No sé sobre qué van a ser. ¿A lo mejor es una que es una mezcla entre TikTok, Instagram o no sé?

## **Participant 12**

**¿Cuéntame tú qué crees o qué se te viene a la mente cuando escuchas el término social media?**

Compartir tu vida con amigos y familiares.

**Ya. ¿Y cuando se trata de social media o de las plataformas de redes sociales, qué plataformas utilizas?**

La que más utilizo es Instagram, tengo Facebook, TikTok.

**¿Cuáles han sido tus experiencias con estas plataformas? ¿De qué manera te han afectado, sea positiva o negativamente?**

Positiva creo que al vivir en otro país hace que puedas como ver la vida de tus amigos que están haciendo como una manera de acercarte a la gente. O tengo amigos de otros países igual, entonces siento que de una u otra manera sabemos un poco de nuestras vidas a través de redes sociales. Negativamente creo que consume muchísimo tiempo, o sea, creo que el estar conectado hace que también te pierdas un poco del presente o digamos de la vida fuera de redes sociales. Y también de manera negativa, creo que las redes sociales también tergiversan un poco la realidad, como todo el mundo quiere mostrar la vida perfecta y eso yo creo que también es un detonante, creo que para las nuevas generaciones, más que para nosotros, o sea, más que para mí, pero como ese detonante de querer estar perfecto, ser perfecto, verse perfecta, creo que eso es lo negativo.

**¿Cuánto tiempo crees que tú le dedicas más o menos al día en general?**

5 h Ponle.

**Ya. ¿Y qué piensas específicamente de BeReal? ¿El concepto de esta plataforma?**

Que es muy enfocado al querer ser real, o sea, justo para evitar este problema del ser perfecto de Instagram o de otras redes sociales. Pero también es un poco hipócrita porque tienes la opción de borrar, de volver a tomar la foto. Poquísimas personas suben a la hora que realmente es del BeReal, entonces también tú subes la foto cuando estés probablemente más arreglado o haciendo algo chévere o para mostrar algo y como que siento que también se pierde un poco el concepto de realmente mostrar qué estás haciendo en ese momento.

**Ya. ¿Tú cuando usas BeReal, tú sí posteas como, o sea, cómo es tu uso de la aplicación?  
¿Tú posteas diariamente? ¿Posteas cuando te sale la notificación?**

Yo uso BeReal muy de vez en cuando y cuando uso es por algo, porque estoy haciendo algo chévere o porque estoy en un concierto o porque estoy en una fiesta o algún evento específico que quiero compartir, que es más o menos lo mismo que hago con Instagram, solo que digamos que la diferencia es que tienes de estos dos lados de la foto, lo que yo estoy haciendo y lo que lo que puedo ver adelante. O sea, como que pues dos fotos al mismo tiempo.

**¿Osea tu contenido es casi el mismo entre Instagram y BeReal?**

Para mí es lo mismo. Diría que hasta menos porque no me conecto tanto.

**¿Y tú cómo defines el término autenticidad o ser auténtico?**

Ser auténtico, ser tú mismo, mostrar quién realmente eres. Creo que eso no. Nada muy profundo, digamos.

**¿Y bajo esa definición, tú crees que tú eres auténtica en redes sociales?**

No, o sea, sí y no. Sí porque subo cosas que me interesan y creo que de esa manera muestro quién soy, pero no en el sentido de que yo no, o sea, no me muestro, no soy mucho. ¿Y ahora últimamente? Antes sí, ahora menos de mostrarme a mí mismo, o sea, de tomarme una foto yo antes las selfies, como cada vez aparezco menos en redes sociales y yo como persona y tal vez yo más mostrando un momento o mostrando un lugar. Entonces no sé si me hace más o menos auténtica, pero creo que como que ha cambiado la dinámica con las redes sociales.

**¿Y crees que tu círculo de amigos así más cercano, la gente que tienes en BeReal, son personas auténticas y tal vez notas una diferencia entre lo que postean en Instagram versus BeReal?**

La gente que yo tengo en BeReal realmente si le ponen énfasis al BeReal y publican todos los días, tratan de publicar siempre a la hora que es. Al publicar todos los días ya es un cambio completamente diferente a Instagram, porque ellos solo publican en BeReal todos los días, pero en Instagram no suben, suben contenido de vez en nunca. Entonces es diferente.

**¿Y para ti es importante la autenticidad en redes sociales? ¿O sea, digamos, en las cuentas que tú escoges seguir, te importa, es irrelevante si es que son o no son auténticas?**

Yo creo que depende, hay diferentes. El contenido, si es un contenido de, por ejemplo, qué sé yo, de maquillaje, de autoconocimiento, de ejercicio, me gusta la autenticidad porque quiero saber que no es que es perfecta, como la piel perfecta o el cuerpo perfecto, como hay un proceso que te lleva perfecta, pero es un proceso, no es como de la noche a la mañana. Y como que creo que eso sí es importante, como mostrar el antes del después del proceso como tal. Pero otra vez creo que depende de qué.

**A ver, de ahí lo que te quería pedir es abre tu BeReal ya. Y en tu archivo de fotos que has posteado, quiero que escojas dos fotos. Una que te sientas así súper auténtica y si es que hay alguna que tú consideres que fue más como planeada o menos real.**

O sea, esto me parece muy auténtica y no auténtica. A ver, no sé, esta tal vez puede ser no tan auténtica, pero realmente, o sea, también siento que depende del concepto de autenticidad como es bajo tu definición.

**Ya, chévere. ¿Y ahorita seguir usando la aplicación, piensas que ya como que va a morir, como le ves al futuro de BeReal?**

Yo creo que no va a morir porque es una aplicación que a ver, es diferente que otras porque no subes una foto y nada más y decidas o no decidas cómo tomarte la foto, es una sola foto, no es como que subes contenido u otras cosas o videos o me refiero, no es como instagram que puedes subir memes o chistes o lo que sea. Entonces es solo una foto. No creo que sea tan popular, o sea, no creo que sea algo. Pero la gente que ya la usa yo creo que la va a continuar usando. No creo que que muera como tal la aplicación. No sé si más gente se una, no sé si crezca la aplicación, pero creo que los que ya usan la van a continuar usando.

### **Participant 13**

**¿Qué crees tú o qué se te viene a la mente cuando escuchas el término redes sociales o social media?**

Normalmente pienso como que tiempo, porque pasas un montón de tiempo en redes sociales y de ahí conexión, como que es una manera de mantenerte conectado con gente que no ves todo el tiempo.

**¿Ok, y qué plataformas tú usas?**

Como personalmente no me gusta postear, pero tengo Facebook, tengo Instagram y tengo Snapchat. Tenía BeReal, pero ya no usado en tiempo y TikTok.

**¿Y cuánto tiempo tú crees que así más o menos le dedicas al día en total a todas esas redes?**

Que será unas 4 h por ahí.

**¿Y cuáles han sido tus experiencias? ¿O sea, de qué manera te han afectado, sea positivamente o negativamente?**

Creo que Facebook es más como positivo, ver como que están haciendo mis compañeros o mis profesores y conseguir información porque estoy en grupos como que de mi barrio o como que de profesores y cosas así. Entonces hay información que es útil. Y de ahí TikTok, o sea, es interesante, pero creo que también como no, no me gusta postear, no me siento la presión de como que editar o como que pensar de qué manera me estoy presentando. Entonces es más como que observar y no como que ni bien ni mal. A veces es bueno porque recibo información.

**¿Y qué piensas tú específicamente de BeReal, del concepto?**

El concepto era chévere. Mi amiga me dijo que me baje y no podíamos hablar todo el tiempo, entonces ahora sí podemos como que ver qué estamos haciendo. Entonces era chévere porque ves como que el alrededor y de ahí le ves a la persona y puedes ver como que está haciendo esto, está haciendo lo otro en este momento. Pero luego también te das cuenta que es como que puedes decidir cuándo postear. Entonces no es que es mandatorio que como que en ese momento en el que te llega la notificación tienes que hacer el post. Entonces, a

pesar de que la idea es como que sea real en el momento en el que estás, mucha gente, o sea, y mi amiga también decía como que yo espero a ver como que oh, esto está bonito, entonces ahora sí voy a poner mi post. Entonces como que aún la idea era buena de como que en este momento qué estás haciéndose real, pero la gente igual puede como que presentar lo que quiere presentar.

**¿Cuándo usabas la plataforma, posteabas diariamente cuando te salía la notificación o no?**

A veces sí, a veces sí, a veces no. A veces estaba como que, en el trabajo, entonces podía esperar como que 10 min a que mis niños no estén para tomar la foto, pero mi amiga que está más involucrada en eso, ella esperaba como que dos 3 h porque era como que ah, estoy ahorita en un restaurante, chévere, ahorita voy a post. Y muchos de sus amigos hacían lo mismo, que era como que oh, esto sería un buen momento para BeReal. Entonces creo que para ellos se volvió bastante popular, esperaban a ver como que qué tipo de personalidad o qué tipo de como qué cosa puedo crear, pero a mí no me afectaba porque es como que solo tenía a mi amiga. Entonces sí, si quieres verme en el trabajo.

**¿O sea, tú sí sientes que era como más planificado de las otras personas?**

Para ciertas personas, para otros como que no. Y como que por lo menos a veces les dejaban editar, entonces era como que no, creo que no me gustó. Entonces ya.

**¿Tú cómo definirías el término autenticidad o ser auténtico?**

Creo que es como que cómo te presentas a otras personas a base de tus creencias y de tus actos y que sean congruentes con cómo piensas y tus valores. Y de ahí sí es como que hacia las redes sociales, es como que no creo que la gente se publique de la forma en la que quiere verse, no sea auténtico. Creo que el problema es que no es completamente real y crea como que una narrativa diferente, pero no creo que es como que falta de autenticidad de ellos, porque creo que igual es como ellos se ven y lo que les importa.

**¿Ya, entonces basada en tú, en tu definición, tú crees que tú eres alguien auténtico?**

Creo que soy auténtica, así como que mayormente trato de que mis acciones y como soy se vea en las cosas que hago. Y de ahí a mí siempre me ha gustado observar y ver cosas,

entonces también me veo en eso, en como que en mis acciones dentro de las redes sociales, como que no voy a postear algo, pero sí voy a estar ahí, pero y así soy yo en persona, como que no me gusta en el medio de atención.

**¿Pero lo poco que has posteado o posteaste, si crees que han sido cosas auténticas?**

Sí, o sea, creo que en los últimos años como que si he posteado algo ha sido como que necesito ayuda en research, que es necesito ayuda o como que creo que en el 2020 fue mi último post en Instagram, que era como que oigan, cuando había como que Black Lives Matter y era todo el movimiento de como que no quería postear el coso negro porque era el como que square negro para decir que support porque es como que eso no provee resources. Entonces mi post era como que estas son las resources de como que si te quieres mantener informado. Entonces creo que es más o menos lo que yo soy, pero no he posteado más que eso en los últimos cuatro años, así que no sé si ayuda mucho. Y en Snapchat es como que más conversación con mis compañeras y eso.

**Pero digamos, la autenticidad es algo importante para ti en las redes que usas, o sea, en las cuentas que sigues o cosas así, ¿es algo que te importa o en verdad es algo como irrelevante al momento de decidir qué seguir o qué ver?**

Creo que, o sea, en TikTok ponte, tengo PCOs y es importante para mí, como que es fácil conseguir información. Entonces si voy a seguir a alguien para ver como que, ah, estas son las recetas que puedes hacer o que puedes hacer, como que es importante para mí que esa persona sea auténtica, pero que también tenga como que credibilidad. Entonces que sean como que registered dieticians y no estén promoviendo como que cosas que no son verdad o que es como que hacia diet culture y hacia otras cosas que es lo que no estoy buscando. Pero de ahí como que en lo que es, si estoy en Instagram y estoy scrolling para ver fotos bonitas o de viajes o cosas así, la autecidad no es tan importante. Entonces creo que depende de para qué estoy usándolo.

**¿Y tú crees que tu círculo así de amigos más cercanos es auténticos y también tú notabas que había alguna diferencia entre lo que ella posteaba en BeReal versus sus otras redes?**

Creo que bueno, sí, tenía tres amigos más en BeReal ecuatorianos, entonces era interesante porque mi amiga no es gringa, es de Turquía y que vive acá. No usa ninguna otra red. No, no usa muchas redes sociales más que Instagram y TikTok porque dice que el resto son de viejos y entonces como que para ella su instagram es muy curated, como que es lo que está posting, es bastante, o sea, igual es de ella, como que es hacia sus amigos y hanging out y cosas así de como que soy joven y voy a salir y su BeReal era parecido, era un poco menos como que curated que es su instagram, pero igual había como que los mismos temas de estar como que con sus amigos y disfrutando ciertas cosas y trabajando y de ahí con mis amigos ecuatorianos que estaban en BeReal era sí, creo que era más auténtico porque como que cuando ellos son de mi edad entonces creo que también hay esa diferencia de como que edad tienes y qué generación eres entonces como que si ellos están posting en Instagram era más como que en el trabajo o haciendo esto y era más hacia un como que público en general versus BeReal era más como que entre amigos. Esto es lo que estoy haciendo casi como en mi Instagram, Isa que es como que solo para amigos casi como eso.

### **¿Y sigues usando la aplicación?**

Sí, pero ya no la uso tanto porque después de un rato creo que más que nada era como que me sentía mal no poder como que tener que post todos los días y como que como no lo hago en ninguna de mis redes sociales ni nada de eso era como que un extra chore que tener y como si no postear no puedes ver lo que hacen tus amigos tampoco. Era como que me estoy manteniendo al tanto ya. Entonces no lo he utilizado en como que será uno un año o algo así.

**Ahora necesito es que abras tu archivo de fotos y escojas dos fotos una foto que tú creas que es como tu versión más auténtica y una si es que si es que hay una que consideres que no sea que no sea tu versión más real y le haces screenshot y me mandas al WhatsApp y me explicas.**

Creo que tenía que load jajaja ya salieron mis fotos. Auténtico es esta viendo tele, no hay mucho interesante ni pase mucho tiempo pensando en como posar. Y un poco menos auténtico era mi cumple y mi amiga Serra quería tomarse la foto en el restaurante todos juntos. Esperamos a que lleguen las mimosas para tomar el BeReal. Yo si creo que definitivamente hubo un boom como que qué será hace año y medio era un boom, todo el

mundo estaba usando y creo que como que yo me enteré porque mi amiga, como que ella estaba aún en la universidad, entonces un montón de universitarios estaban usando, pero creo que hasta, o sea, no, no sé qué tanto ella lo usa más porque creo que es mucho time commitment. Entonces cuando ya comenzó su trabajo dejó de usar tanto 1 montón de sus amigos lo mismo, se graduaron y ya no usaban mucho. Y de ahí en Quito, mis compañeros que estaban usando, ellos también, o sea, como que hubo un boom hace un año y medio ya dejaron de post, cosas así, pero no sé.

**O sea, ¿qué crees que hubiera hecho BeReal diferente como para que tú te enganches más o que la hubiera seguido usando?**

Es más mi preferencia personal de como que tal vez si tenía más amigos, tal vez lo que sería interesante es que si ya no posteaste en el momento te dan un time limit para que la gente sea como que no, esto es ahora.

## **Participant 14**

### **¿Qué piensas tú cuando escuchas el término redes sociales o social media?**

Para mí ya como el término de redes sociales justamente implica todo esto de conectarte con personas por medio del Internet, como publicar lo que estás haciendo, mensajearte con personas que están en otras partes del mundo, como también como que entretenerse puede ser porque ahorita igual con todos los reels, videos, como que Instagram, TikTok, como que de igual forma TikTok se ha compartido digamos en una plataforma en que igual puedes aprender cosas por medio de los videos, al igual que en instagram, recetas. Entonces creo que hoy en día en las redes sociales como que es un poco de todo, o sea como que conectarte con tus amigos, publicar fotos, lo que te gusta hacer, igual como que aprender cosas nuevas por medio de sus videos y así ya.

### **¿Y ya tú personalmente como que qué aplicaciones o qué plataformas utilizas?**

Bueno, yo digamos podría decir que tengo casi todas las redes sociales, o sea tengo Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, pero digamos que las que más utilizo sería WhatsApp, Instagram y bueno, BeReal.

### **¿Y cuánto tiempo más o menos al día crees que les dedicas a estas redes en promedio?**

En promedio diario, bueno yo creería que diario pudiera ser como que unas, no sé, 3 h, 4 h quizás durante todo el día porque a veces estar scroll down y eso, como viendo cosas por mensajes, chateando, entonces y unas 4 h yo diría diarias en total máximo.

### **¿Y cómo ha sido tu experiencia personal con estas redes, o sea con todas las plataformas?**

La verdad que sí ha sido positiva, o sea siento que igual a ver como que de todo un poco, como que positiva y negativa. ¿Positiva porque ajá, justamente puedes comunicarte con tus amigos, con familia, negativa por la desinformación igual que a veces hay o como que digamos en específico cuando están ocurriendo situaciones, no sé, como alarmantes de político, de todo esto, o sea como toda esta información como a veces un poco colapsas de todo, que es como wow, qué estaba pasando? Y tanta igual, o sea estos news que son falsos y pero ajá, sí, yo creo que sí sería mi experiencia.

**¿Y ya sí, entrando específicamente a BeReal, como tú qué crees de esta aplicación, de este concepto?**

La verdad que si me ha gustado mucho, o sea justamente yo me descargué y supe esta aplicación hace dos años que fue justamente cuando me mudé a Lisboa, porque antes en verdad que no tenía conocimiento de esta aplicación, entonces la verdad que sí me gustó muchísimo porque eso yo le veo a BeReal como esta aplicación para conectar con tus amigos y más ahora que digamos estaba estudiando allá como sin, como que sin estar en el día a día de mis amigas acá en Ecuador entonces siento que como que es chévere ver ese momento exacto de lo que están haciendo las personas que quieres, de amigos y como que en un punto te sientes como un poco conectado, o sea decir como ok, mi amiga hizo y esto y así entonces si aparece una aplicación como que interesante, igual el hecho de que no tenga filtros porque hoy en día igual como que si te vas a instagram, facebook o todas estas aplicaciones tienen los filtros que te pueden cambiar de cara o como que todo esto pero en cambio como dice literal la aplicación BeReal, o sea sin efectos y nada y como solo bajar o como que publicando ese instante de lo que estás viviendo.

**¿Y tú sí le usas como al BeReal a diario, posteas cuando te llega la notificación, cómo es tu uso de la plataforma?**

Sí, o sea la verdad, a ver, al principio si utilizaba como que digamos publicaba todos los días podría decir y como que ajá, justamente trataba de publicar en el momento exacto en que me llegaba la notificación pero hoy en día digamos que ajá, a veces ya no alcanzo a publicar en el momento perfecto y lo publico después y de igual forma, o sea, ahorita sí han habido periodos digamos de una semana, una semana y media que ya no he publicado porque como que me he olvidado o simplemente ajá, como que no he publicado ya como antes lo solía hacer, que antes si no me faltaba digamos era como que todos los días de ley pública un BeReal.

**¿A ver y para ti cómo definirías tú el término autenticidad o ser auténtico?**

¿O sea de una persona o de una aplicación o en general?

**En general, la palabra en general.**

Bueno, para mí la autenticidad justamente vendría a ser como ese extra que tienes tú como persona que te hace justamente único y que te diferencia de los demás para que justamente te recuerden o bueno, en caso de una aplicación digamos escojan como utilizar esto porque tú tienes este plus que ninguna de otra de las aplicaciones tiene, entonces lo hace más interesante.

**Y para ti es importante ese concepto, como que esa definición de autenticidad cuando decides qué plataformas usar o qué cuentas seguir, es algo que lo considera relevante o en realidad tal vez ni siquiera lo tomas en cuenta al momento de seguir a alguien.**

Sí, la verdad es que sí, para mí sí es súper importante eso porque al menos hoy en día que justamente por medio de las redes sociales tenemos acceso a tantas cosas, o sea, por ejemplo, yo en mi Instagram por así decirlo, no es que siga digamos a full influencers o como que full gente famosa, sino sigo literalmente a los que justamente me transmiten esta como que autenticidad, como que esa energía igual de las personas como que diferente. Osea no es como voy a seguir a todos mis digamos artistas famosos, es como tú quieres, quieres ver algo en tu día a día o escuchar algo en tu día a día. Es como que algo que sea único, diferente, que te motive. Entonces sí.

**¿Y tú crees que lo que tú postees es auténtico?**

Uy no sé, o sea, la verdad que a ver podría decir que en instagram claro, no sería como que auténtico porque justamente ahí es como a publicar tu foto de tu viaje, de lo que estás comiendo, de cosas y entonces creo que uno cuando sube algo a las redes sociales justamente estas como instagram, TikTok o lo que sea es como más como medio editado que se vea lindo aesthetic como dicen ahora. Pero digamos que justamente BeReal yo creo que cada quien ahí sí puede ser como que auténtico porque justamente es algo que estás haciendo en ese preciso momento entonces no va a ser igual como que el momento, el espacio, como en general todo lo que estás haciendo. Entonces creo que en eso sí podría ser que en BeReal se puede ser auténtica.

**¿Ya y tú crees que tus amigas de BeReal o tu círculo de amigos en BeReal son auténticos?**

Si yo diría que sí totalmente porque justamente las publicaciones digamos que veo de mis amigos en BeReal con instagram, con instagram es diferente porque igual en instagram es como sube de algo como que posando y así, pero en BeReal es ese momento e inclusive hay veces que las personas pueden estar con una mueca o algo porque justamente tomaste la foto en ese preciso momento. Entonces yo diría que sí, que justamente en BeReal la gente puede como que sin filtros no necesariamente posar o demostrar algo como que wow que estás haciendo porque es transmitir ese momento.

**Para esta parte puedes entrar a tu a tu aplicación e ir al archivo de tus memorias y escoger dos fotos y le haces screenshot para que me mandes al WhatsApp. Una en la que tú consideres que es como tu versión más auténtica y otra que si es que hay alguna que consideres que tal vez fue como más posada o planeada y me explicas como cuál es cuál y por qué.**

A ver, ahorita le hago eso el screenshot, a ver como que mi versión, una auténtica 1 que siento que haya posado y necesariamente tengo que estar yo en eso. ¿Puede ser, si es que tomé a mis amigos?

**Si puede ser la foto que tu quieras.**

**También ahora que estás como viendo tus fotos, ¿tú crees que esa es una representación real de tu vida? ¿Si estás feliz con lo que estás viendo?**

Creo que a ver, ahorita viendo creo que si me representa como que literal en mi día a día, puede que a ahorita que vea unas que sí, como que haya pasado o que haya como recuerdo, o sea, como retake, porque fue como no, no me gusta como salgo o la persona que está ahí literal salió como fue como que a ver otra vez.

**¿Cuál se te está haciendo difícil encontrar? ¿La auténtica o la no auténtica?**

La auténtica porque o sea, siento como. O sea, yo digamos ajá, como que la que pienso ahorita fue la primera, una literal que estaba en el gimnasio sudada y haciendo ejercicio, pero siento como que auténtica es como obviamente mucha gente también va a hacer eso, entonces que ahorita que veo mi teoría, la mayoría como comiendo, haciendo ejercicio o cosas así que creo que no es como auténtico.

Ya, ya seleccioné. A ver, entonces también ya con la de auténtica me quedo con la de ejercicio porque a ver, si bien es cierto, muchas personas quieren como mostrarse en las redes sociales como soy fitness, estoy haciendo ejercicio, como que me cuido y todo, pero digamos que jamás creo que ese día del entrenamiento me saqué la madre y estaba full sudada y todos como me cachas, como arregladita y súper bien, literal estaba roja. Y entonces creo que el mostrarte, así como que tus amigos o en redes sociales, ponte algo que creo que en Instagram, por así decirlo, no lo hubiera publicado si vamos así. Entonces creo como ajá, como que por eso creería que sería auténtico igual porque de igual forma ese día fue la primera vez que tomé una clase de boxing que justamente ahí está atrás el de boxing entonces sí fue para mí algo como mi primera vez literal tomando una clase de boxing y todo y como siento que eso es igual a algo que no todas las mujeres lo tomamos por así decirlo. Entonces ajá, esa y de ahí la segunda es como literalmente de viaje, de vacaciones. Entonces digamos que ajá, o sea, y si fue medio como que lo posado y el paraíso súper lindo como que para como que para postearlo y que justamente como que las personas vean y este me acuerdo que sí fue como que otro retake que sí hice, o sea, no fue como que el primero ya, sino se fue como que a ver, no, no, está el paisaje súper lindo y todo como que ok, poseemos bien.

**¿Y esto sí es algo que hubieras puesto en Instagram?**

Sí, sí.

**Ya chévere. ¿Y para finalizar, tú crees que vas a seguir usando BeReal?**

Yo creo que sí lo voy a seguir usando porque justamente tiene este plus de las otras aplicaciones y ajá, y como dije al principio, me gusta como ahora que estoy estudiando justamente en Portugal y todo el ver que están haciendo mis amigas y hay inclusive veces que por ejemplo, no publiqué on time y es como digo que parece publicar pero no me la notificación como que tu amiga ha publicado ta ta, ta, digamos en este caso mis amigas de Ecuador entonces es como a ver quiero ver qué están haciendo y publico cualquier cosa, o sea, a veces de hecho una foto al techo así es que digamos no quiero algo así como algo súper random, pero digo como que a ver, quiero ver qué están haciendo mis amigas, o sea, saber qué están haciendo, estar como que ahí presente por así decirlo y creo que sí, que sí es una aplicación que aún va a seguir porque justamente ajá tiene este plus igual este año no fue el año anterior me parece que hubo eso que hicieron lo de a nivel mundial este concurso

de justamente que el BeReal más como loco, más como original justamente iba a ganar, no me acuerdo cuál fue el premio, entonces justamente fue el que ganó. ¿Me creo que vi que era una chica que estaba en su cita ginecológica con la doctora, literal era como que sí y la doctora y abierta las piernas obviamente no se veía nada, no? Pero entonces creo que si tiene este plus y como que siento que igual la aplicación cada vez va a mejorar, o sea, ahorita igual tienen unos updates en la aplicación, entonces creo que van a seguir mejorando y va a ser más interesante para las personas.

## APPENDIX C – Informed Consent

<b>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</b>
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**Researcher:** Emilia Vasconez

**Advisor:** Patricia Dias

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study intends to provide a better understanding of the way authenticity is produced and perceived by Generation Z in the social media platform BeReal. Your participation in the study will involve an online interview with an estimated length of 40 minutes. This interview will be recorded and transcribed for later analysis. You may pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At any time, you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview. A summary of the results will be available to participants upon request.

### **Subject's Understanding:**

- I agree to participate in this study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that I will not be identified by name in the final product.
- I am aware that all the recordings and photos will be kept confidential.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and request that any data collected not be used in the study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_