

Media framing of Generation Z in Vietnam: Analyzing the “Snowflake” label in mass media representations

PhD. Dong Anh NGUYEN¹

Donganh@dav.edu.vn

Kim Ngoc CAO²

kimngoccao03@gmail.com

^{1,2} Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam

Received: 12/3/2026

Received in Revised Form: 2/4/2026

Accepted: 28/5/2026

Abstract: *Generational labels are often attached to younger people, shaping how they are perceived and how they navigate the world around them. In today’s global culture, mass media plays a major role in forming and solidifying these labels. One such emerging label is the “Snowflake Generation,” often used to portray Generation Z (Gen Z) as emotionally fragile or overly sensitive. This study explores how that label has gradually appeared in Vietnamese mass media between 2020 and 2024. It raises concerns about age-based stereotypes, adopting an exploratory approach to analyze media portrayal of Gen Z. The “Snowflake Generation” narrative may limit professional and academic opportunities for Gen Z by fostering negative perceptions of their resilience and competence. Drawing on content analysis of news and television coverage (2020–2024) and in-depth interviews with experts, journalists, and selected Gen Z individuals, this study investigates how the mass media constructs the “Snowflake Generation” label and examines views on its relevance to Gen Z. This study adds to existing theory by exploring the label’s use in non-Western contexts and offers practical insights for media professionals.*

Keywords: *Gen Z, media framing, mass media, snowflake generation.*

Introduction

Despite the rapid expansion of social media, traditional mass media continues to exert significant influence due to its perceived credibility and institutional authority. This credibility enables mass media to shape public narratives about social groups, including entire generations, in ways that often carry long-term societal impact. In different cultural and political contexts,

the role of mass media varies. In Western scholarship, mass media is often viewed as a platform for pluralistic debate within liberal democratic systems [30]. In Vietnam, however, mass media is closely connected to state institutions and national development goals, functioning as a tool for information dissemination, education, and social mobilization [14, p.6].

Mass media representation refers to the process through which media constructs meanings about people, events, and social realities [30]. Through their wide reach and agenda-setting power [24], mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of generational identities. One emerging narrative linked to Generation Z (individuals born between 1997 and 2012) is the label “Snowflake Generation.”

The term “snowflake” originally appeared in Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* (1996) as a critique of excessive individualism, but its contemporary usage has shifted significantly. Since the mid-2010s, particularly following events such as the Brexit referendum and the U.S. presidential election, the term has been widely used in Western media to describe younger generations as overly sensitive, emotionally fragile, and easily offended [24]. These portrayals often contrast Gen Z with earlier generations, framing them as less resilient and more psychologically vulnerable.

In recent years, Vietnamese media has increasingly adopted similar narratives, portraying Gen Z as fragile, stressed, and lacking resilience. This trend became particularly visible during the period from 2020 to 2024, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, which intensified public and media attention toward mental health and emotional vulnerability. Given that Gen Z is projected to account for approximately one-third of Vietnam’s working-age population by 2025, media representations of this generation may significantly influence public attitudes as well as Gen Z’s own self-perception.

This study examines how Vietnamese mass media construct and circulate the “Snowflake Generation” label through news articles and television programs between 2020 and 2024. Drawing on examples from seven major online news outlets and the national broadcaster VTV, the research explores the framing strategies used to portray Gen Z and investigates how these portrayals are interpreted by experts, journalists, and Gen Z individuals themselves.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: How does Vietnamese mass media portray Gen Z through the “Snowflake Generation” label in terms of problem definition, causal attribution, and moral evaluation?

RQ2: How do experts, journalists, and Gen Z content creators interpret and evaluate the media’s use of the “snowflake” label in Vietnam?

Theoretical framework: media framing

This study is grounded in framing theory, which explains how media portrayals select and emphasize certain aspects of reality to shape public perception. Entman [16] defines framing as the process of selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality” and making them more salient to promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, and moral evaluations.

Framing refers to the process by which media emphasize particular aspects of an issue or event, thereby shaping how audiences interpret and understand it. Media frames are not neutral but are influenced by ideology and cultural context. As Đỗ Chí Nghĩa (2009) [15, p.14] argues, media development is closely tied to ideology and institutional interests, while cultural narratives also shape how audiences perceive reality [25].

This study applies three framing elements: problem definition, causal attribution, and moral evaluation to examine how Vietnamese mass media reinforce the “Snowflake Generation” label. Drawing on Goffman’s Frame Analysis [18] and later developments by Entman [16] and Iyengar [21], the study analyzes how Gen Z is framed within Vietnam’s distinctive political, cultural, and media context.

Literature Review

Mass Media Representation of a Group of People

Media plays a significant role in the formation of generational experience, identity, and habitus [3, p.42]. In the process of “generationing” mediated nostalgia also contributes to social formation by highlighting differences and distinctions between generations [3, p.21]. When emphasized, these differences can become fixed traits that separate social classes and generations.

This process is illustrated in O’Donnell’s study *Visual Persuasion: The Media’s Use of Images in Framing People Groups* (2013) [36], which demonstrates how mass media employ framing tactics to reinforce specific characteristics of five social groups in the US. Similarly, Kelly’s study *Frame Work: Helping Youth Counter Their Misrepresentations in Media* [22] found that teenagers often feel misrepresented and portrayed negatively in media coverage of their lives. Kelly identifies dominant media narratives that reinforce stereotypes, reproduce social anxieties, and marginalize youth voices.

Global Research on the “Snowflake Generation” Label

The concept of the “Snowflake Generation” has attracted attention in academic and cultural debates. Høidal and Stiklestad [19] describe “snowflakes” as less resilient and more easily offended than previous generations, while also noting their strong digital skills and capacity to acquire new competencies

quickly. Other scholars view the label as a media-driven stereotype linked to overprotection and individualism [4]. These narratives tend to emphasize emotional fragility while overlooking adaptability and resilience. External pressures such as economic instability and changing social values are also identified as factors affecting the emotional and psychological states of younger generations.

Localized Studies in the Vietnamese context

In Vietnam, research on the “Snowflake” label in mass media remains limited. Nguyen Quang Manh and Ngo Hoang Thao Trang’s study examines the role of verbal violence in family settings in shaping characteristics associated with the “Snowflake Generation” [35]. Using survey data and OLS regression models, the study identifies correlations between family dynamics and traits such as hypersensitivity and intolerance within the Vietnamese context. These findings align with global research highlighting the influence of technological change, parental overprotection, and broader social pressures on generational characteristics. At the same time, research that treats the “Snowflake Generation” as an object of study may unintentionally reinforce the label by contributing to its continued circulation in public discourse.

Research gap

While existing research offers valuable insights into the “Snowflake Generation” phenomenon from both global and Vietnamese perspectives, there remain notable gaps in understanding how these narratives operate within Vietnamese media. Although studies by Bolnet [4], The Abbotts [1], and Manh and Trang [35] explore various aspects from media stereotypes to family dynamics, there is limited research on how Vietnamese media specifically frames and influences generational narratives.

This study fills this gap by examining two key aspects. First, it will explore how Vietnamese mainstream media outlets (news articles, TV programs) portray Gen Z through the “Snowflake Generation” label in terms of three core framing elements. Second, it will investigate how the relationship portrayed by these three elements to create the “Snowflake Label” for Vietnamese Gen Z individuals. By focusing on media framing techniques and viewpoints generated on this label, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how generational stereotypes are constructed in Vietnam.

Methodology

The mixed-methods approach provides complementary insights: content analysis quantified patterns in media representation, while in-depth interviews

explored how these representations are interpreted by experts, journalists, and Gen Z individuals. This combination enables methodological triangulation and ensures validity and reliability [17],[31]. This approach is particularly valuable in framing research, as it enables researchers to first identify dominant media frames through systematic content analysis before investigating their reception through qualitative inquiry.

Content Analysis

Sample

The sampling process involved collecting news articles from eight Vietnamese online news outlets (“báo điện tử”): VnExpress.vn, Tuoitre.vn, Dantri.vn, Thanhnien.vn, Tienphong.vn, Laodong.vn, giaoducthoidai.vn, and reportages from state broadcaster VTV. These outlets were selected based on their significant readership, national reach, and consistent coverage of generational issues.

The data collection focused on a four-year period from January 2020 to December 2024. Articles were retrieved using Vietnamese-language search terms including “Generation Z,” “Gen Z,” “Snowflake Generation,” “stress,” “weak,” “healing,” and “resilient.” Manual verification was conducted to ensure comprehensive coverage.

The initial search yielded 62 articles and 3 reportages. After removing duplicate content and tangentially relevant articles, a final sample was established based on inclusion criteria focusing on Gen Z characteristics, behaviors, or societal roles.

Coding Procedure

Content Analysis Framework

To address RQ1 (How do Vietnamese mainstream media outlets portray Gen Z through the “Snowflake Generation” label), a content analysis framework based on Entman’s (1993) framing theory was employed. Each media piece was analyzed according to three core framing elements: problem definition, causal attribution, and moral evaluation.

Problem definition focused on how media defines Gen Z’s characteristics as problematic and how the “Snowflake” label is applied. Causal attribution examined the factors identified as causing these traits, such as education, family, or broader social influences. Moral evaluation assessed value judgments made about Gen Z, including comparisons with previous generations.

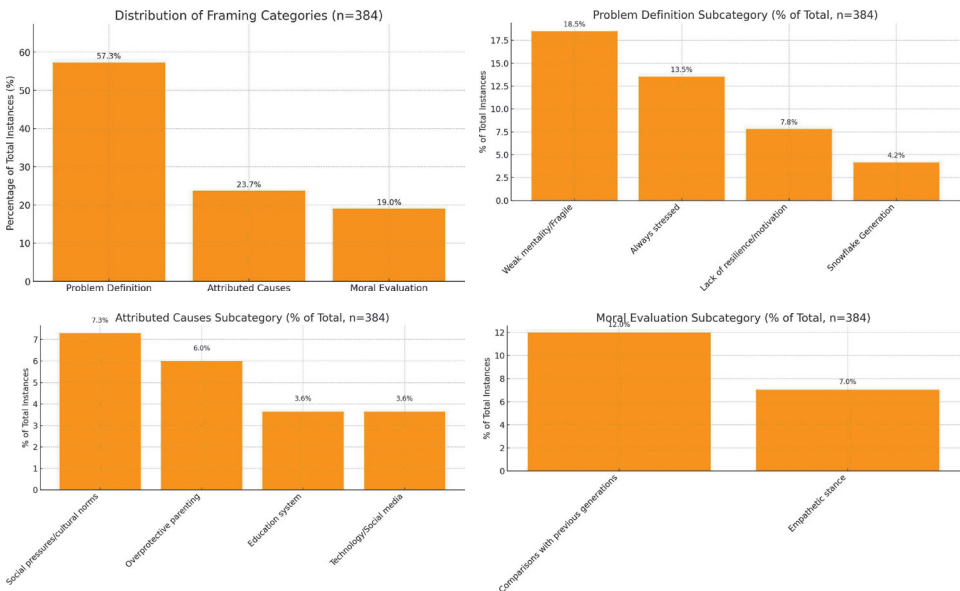
Following data extraction, ATLAS.ti software was used to conduct a systematic analysis of textual content from the collected articles and reportages.

Materials were coded according to the three framing elements to identify patterns in media representation. The software also enabled the identification of co-occurrence patterns, allowing further examination of how different frames were interconnected in media discourse.

Results

Overall depiction

After importing the data into ATLAS.ti and calculating the frequency of each framing element, I visualized the results with charts to provide a clear overview.



The chart depicts that Vietnamese media most often portray Gen Z through a problem definition lens - emotionally fragile and overwhelmed. Beyond simply labeling them “snowflake” reports repeatedly emphasize their perceived lack of resilience and constant stress. A secondary narrative dives into why these traits emerge - pointing to social pressures, shifting cultural norms, overprotective parenting, and the omnipresence of technology. Finally, moral judgments appear less often but still shape the discourse, contrasting Gen Z with earlier generations while occasionally acknowledging the very real pressures they face today. Together, these elements not only spotlight Gen Z’s vulnerabilities but also unpack the structural and cultural forces.

In total, these three framing categories span 384 occurrences, reflecting how Vietnamese mass media create different narratives through the “Snowflake Generation” label. There is a heavy focus on fragility, societal causality, and

value judgments of Vietnamese Gen Z seen from the researched articles/ reportages.

The relationship between Traits & Reasonings

Addressing RQ1, the findings also illustrate that Vietnamese mass media linked different traits in the “Snowflake Generation” stereotype with various reasons, attributing their characteristics to broader social and technological changes.

The following table presents the most frequently mentioned traits of Gen Z and the reasons given by media to explain these traits:

Table 1. Problem Definition & Causal Attribution co - occurrence frequency

Rank	Problem Definiton	Causal Attribution	Co - occurrence Frequency
1	Weak Mentality / Fragile	Technology/ Social media	19
2	Weak Mentality / Fragile	Social Competition/ Expectation	18
3	Weak Mentality / Fragile	Parents	16
4	Always Stressed	Technology/ Social media	14
5	Always Stressed	Social Competition/ Expectation	14
6	Snowflake Generation	Technology/ Social media	14
7	Snowflake Generation	Parents	13
8	Less Resilient	Technology/ Social media	11

The co-occurrence analysis reveals clear links between how Gen Z traits are described and the reasons given for those traits. When media stories label young adults as “weak” or “fragile,” they almost always point to intense social pressures and shifting cultural expectations. At the same time, reports of Gen Z feeling “always stressed” are regularly tied to overprotective parenting, reframing personal anxiety as a consequence of family dynamics. References to a “lack of resilience and motivation” tend to appear alongside critiques of the education system and the nonstop influence of digital technology, suggesting these are structural, not individual, shortcomings.

Moral judgments complete the picture by contrasting Gen Z with older generations with a perceived drop in discipline and perseverance. Even the blunt “Snowflake Generation” tag is tempered by comments about real mental health struggles. Taken together, these narratives present a more nuanced image of Gen Z, acknowledging the broader social and technological conditions that shape their experiences.

The Relationship between Traits and Moral Judgment

The study also looks into the relationship between Gen Z's perceived psychological traits and the ways these traits are evaluated. Besides neutral observations, these characteristics often appear in explicit critiques.

The most frequently co-occurring pattern in media discussions involves the trait "Weak Mentality / Fragile", which is framed through generational comparison (29 instances) and moral judgment (17 instances). This suggests that Gen Z's perceived emotional struggles are criticized in two key ways: first, by positioning them as weaker than previous generations, and second, by positioning this fragility as a significant flaw.

Similarly, the trait "Always Stressed / Facing Challenges" is criticized through generational comparison (21 instances) and moral judgment (13 instances). This suggests that the stress levels reported among Gen Z are not simply acknowledged as a reality. They are often seen as evidence of a generational decline in resilience. These overlapping critiques shape broader narratives about Gen Z's role in the workforce and society. Their emotional and psychological traits are associated with both generational decline and moral failing.

Problem Definition Frame: Dominant Portrayals of Gen Z

Within the problem definition frame, three dominant portrayals emerge: Weak/Frail Mentality, Chronic Stress, and the Need for Healing. These frames emphasize Gen Z's emotional struggles and shape public perceptions of their resilience, competence, and capacity for adulthood.

Gen Z as Weak and Fragile

This frame depicts Gen Z as lacking emotional resilience despite their talents and independence, often in contrast to previous generations. Media discourse frequently employs language that frames sensitivity as fragility rather than difference:

"This generation is talented but fragile, easily broken." (a)

By juxtaposing competence with vulnerability, such narratives acknowledge Gen Z's potential while pathologizing emotional sensitivity. Mental health struggles are framed as individual deficiencies, positioning Gen Z as conditionally functional, capable only when adequately supported and vulnerable when navigating challenges independently.

Gen Z as a Generation of Chronic Stress and Anxiety

This frame presents Gen Z as living in a persistent state of psychological crisis, reinforced through the selective use of alarming statistics:

"Young people today constantly battle stress, leading to panic attacks, emotional breakdowns, and, in severe cases, suicidal tendencies." (b)

The reliance on expert discourse and absolutist language (“constant battle,” “leading to”) constructs anxiety as an inherent generational trait, rather than situating it within broader socio-economic pressures such as precarity and intensified competition.

Gen Z as a Generation in Need of Healing.

The “healing generation” narrative portrays Gen Z as emotionally wounded and preoccupied with self-care and recovery:

“The phrase ‘healing generation’ has become synonymous with Gen Z. They openly discuss trauma, therapy, and self - care, recognizing the deep - seated emotional wounds they carry.” (c)

While this frame legitimizes mental health awareness, its repetition renders Gen Z perpetually broken and dependent on therapeutic solutions. The focus on individual healing obscures collective and structural sources of distress, transforming emotional well-being into a privatized responsibility rather than a societal concern

Causal attribution

In the Causal Attribution frame, Gen Z’s struggles are primarily linked to social influence and social media. Social influence reflects societal pressures such as high expectations, competition, and rigid norms that shape Gen Z’s experiences and mental well-being. Social media amplifies these pressures by fostering comparison culture and the need for validation, contributing to stress and anxiety. Rather than portraying Gen Z’s traits as inherent flaws, this frame shifts attention to external forces.

“Society also plays a significant role in shaping this sense of vulnerability among young people... inflation, pandemics, high unemployment rates, and intense competition... around 81 million jobs were lost worldwide in 2020.” (d)

“The culture of ‘online sharing’... brings intense social comparison... leading to unnecessary anxiety... platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Zalo, Instagram... become key channels for self-expression and psychological gratification.” (d)

These examples frame Gen Z’s vulnerability as a result of structural pressures and internalized cultural practices. While broader socio-economic challenges are acknowledged, the framing still implicitly highlights Gen Z’s difficulty in adapting. In Example (5), responsibility is placed on individual user behavior rather than on platform structures, reinforcing an individualized critique of psychological vulnerability.

Moral Evaluation

Two dominant frames emerge: Comparisons to Previous Generations and Moral Judgment. Gen Z is frequently portrayed as less resilient, motivated, and

patient than earlier generations, particularly Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y, who are described as having developed strength through post-war hardships and limited technological resources.

Gen Z is often depicted as struggling to adapt to professional and social environments shaped by their predecessors. They are characterized as overly sensitive, prone to quitting, and lacking perseverance, framing intergenerational tension as a result of Gen Z's deficiencies rather than changing conditions.

"Gen Z is talented but highly sensitive, less communicative, and quick to give up... difficult for different age groups to work together." (e)

"Today's young generation struggles to define their own path... rely more heavily on personal emotions... disregard traditional values and beliefs." (f)

Although Gen Z is recognized for intelligence and creativity, they are simultaneously criticized for lacking emotional resilience and the ability to navigate real-world challenges. Their reliance on digital interactions is framed as undermining patience, social skills, and perseverance.

In-depth interview

To gain deeper insights into the media framing of Gen Z in Vietnam, I conducted in-depth interviews with experts from older generations and Gen Z individuals. The experts included psychologists, legal professionals, human resource managers, and journalists, whose professional expertise provided perspectives on Gen Z's characteristics and the broader societal narratives surrounding them. These experts were either writers/authors or subjects mentioned in the researched articles. Meanwhile, Gen Z participants consisted of both media consumers and content creators, including young journalists who write about Gen Z, offering insider perspectives on discourse about their own generation.

Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was conducted either in person or online. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility while ensuring key topics were addressed. Discussions were based on three framing elements, exploring perceptions of Gen Z's defining characteristics, causal attributions in media narratives, moral evaluations in relation to traditional Vietnamese values, and the impact of media representations on Gen Z's self-perception and societal expectations. By gathering qualitative insights from both external observers and Gen Z individuals themselves, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how the "snowflake generation" label is constructed and internalized within Vietnamese media discourse.

After conducting a series of in-depth interviews with seven participants, including communication experts, human resource managers, journalists, legal professionals, and Gen Z individuals, all conversations were audio-recorded with prior consent. The audio recordings were fully transcribed verbatim to capture both the explicit content and the subtle nuances of speech. Transcriptions were carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Following Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, qualitative data from interviews with experts, journalists, and Gen Z individuals were coded inductively. Three major themes emerged:

Theme 1: Perceptions of Gen Z and the “snowflake” narrative

Experts presented varied views on Gen Z and the “snowflake” stereotype. While Gen Z is often described as intelligent, adaptable, and socially aware, they are also perceived as emotionally sensitive and less resilient. Shifts in values, particularly around mental health awareness and work–life balance, strongly shape their behavior and self-perception.

I1 noted that Gen Z tends to avoid confronting difficulties directly in professional contexts:

“Gen Z is very diverse, but when they encounter difficulties, they often choose not to speak up and may instead leave their jobs abruptly.”

She also commented on the “snowflake” label:

“Gen Z has been labeled as a generation with no excuse for failure and as the ‘snowflake’ generation. It is a weighty term, but not entirely wrong. Being sensitive is not necessarily bad; in the right context, it can be an advantage. However, the term ‘snowflake’ carries a negative connotation, implying excessive fragility.”

From a Gen Z perspective, I4 challenged the generalization:

“There are reasons why Gen Z is called the Snowflake Generation, but this label should not be imposed on everyone. Some are incredibly resilient and courageous. There is no single definition that fully captures Gen Z.”

They also linked this perception to broader expectations:

“Gen Z is often framed as a generation with no reason to fail. But that perception stems largely from societal pressures and media expectations.”

I2 attributed emotional vulnerability to upbringing and external influences:

“External influences are like opening a door – you welcome both good and bad winds. And at an age where their psychological foundation is not yet solid, they are easily affected.”

I3 highlighted key workplace traits:

“Gen Z is open to a variety of careers, multi-talented, highly capable, and proactive in seeking information online... They are confident yet fragile, easily losing direction.”

She further observed:

“They are highly sensitive – one slight comment can upset them, leading them to quit impulsively... Gen Z prefers smart work over hard work... While Gen X and Gen Y have experience and maturity, Gen Z is still lacking in these aspects.”

From a media perspective, I5 stated:

“From my limited understanding, I find them different from our generation... more talented, more skillful, but also more superficial... they appear to lack patience and seem less resilient in the face of hardship.”

Theme 2: Media framing of Gen Z

Experts agreed that mainstream media often portrays Gen Z as entitled, fragile, and resistant to traditional work values. I2 emphasized media power in shaping perceptions:

“Media has a tremendous impact because it shapes the perceptions of a large segment of society... if focused on negative traits, it can be highly damaging.”

She added:

“If the media fixates on Gen Z’s negative traits, people will start to assume these are defining characteristics of the entire generation.”

I4 stressed journalism’s continued influence:

“Journalism still has the ability to create more persuasive trust than information on social media platforms, as it undergoes content censorship and scrutiny.”

Bias was also noted, as narratives are often produced by older generations:

“Many media narratives about Gen Z come from Gen Y’s perspective. It is inevitable that there is a generational bias in how they are portrayed.”

One interviewee emphasized evidence-based reporting:

“Relying solely on subjective views does not provide a fair portrayal. We need to base our understanding on real data rather than broad generalizations.”

From the audience perspective, I7 commented:

“The mental health of Gen Z is often portrayed by the media as fragile and vulnerable... When comparing with older generations, it’s important to consider modern societal factors.”

“The influence of social media... intensifies both personal stress and emotional vulnerability.”

I5 also added:

“The media can’t properly capture any generation... but saying Gen Z is more fragile compared to previous generations isn’t entirely wrong either.”

Theme 3: Rethinking narratives

Experts called for more balanced representations through intergenerational dialogue, credible sources, and inclusion of Gen Z voices. I1 stated:

“To be fair, I always refer to verified sources when discussing Gen Z instead of making broad generalizations.”

I4 highlighted psychological research:

“Gen Z tends to seek mental health counseling more frequently... instead of avoiding difficulties, they confront them head-on.”

Patience was emphasized in understanding Gen Z’s development:

“Gen Z needs time to grow. As they experience more in life and work, they will come to their own realizations.” (I1)

I2 noted the role of both structure and agency:

“About 60–70% of the ‘snowflake’ phenomenon may be influenced by external factors, but the remaining 30–40% is up to each individual.”

Gen Z writers stressed authentic self-representation:

“We aim to create a more authentic picture – one that highlights both the challenges and the aspirations of Gen Z.” (I4)

I7 added:

“There are common traits, but each individual is independent... Representing an entire generation in a single narrative is difficult.”

Adaptability was suggested as a defining characteristic:

“Rather than using absolute labels, it is more accurate to describe Gen Z as a generation that adapts.”

Discussions

The findings from this study suggest that certain frames surrounding Generation Z are beginning to take shape in Vietnamese media. Although the phrase “Snowflake Generation” is not always explicitly stated, the traits often linked to it (emotional sensitivity, a strong sense of self, and reluctance to conform,...) appear frequently in various articles. Using Entman’s (1993) model, it’s possible to identify clear framing elements in the way Gen Z is discussed. Articles often describe not just what Gen Z does or believes, but also suggest explanations for those behaviors. For instance, their openness about emotions or resistance to traditional norms is sometimes attributed to their upbringing in a digital world, increased exposure to global culture, or shifting social values.

Importantly, these portrayals are not entirely one-sided. While some articles do touch on concerns like whether Gen Z is too idealistic or overly sensitive, they tend to do so without harsh judgment. In fact, many stories also include voices that try to understand or even sympathize with these traits. This suggests that the media is not simply labeling Gen Z as a “weaker” generation but is also making space for more nuanced discussion and reflection. In terms of in-depth interviews, we can see what emerged from these conversations was not a one-dimensional portrayal of Gen Z, but a layered, intergenerational dialogue. There was a generational gap in how Gen Z is perceived. Older experts, shaped by different socio-economic conditions and cultural expectations, often found themselves perplexed by Gen Z’s way of navigating life. What once was a norm - “work hard, say little, earn your place” - is replaced by a mindset that prioritizes emotional well-being, self-expression, and smart, not just hard, work.

Across the board, there was a shared recognition of Gen Z’s defining traits: emotional sensitivity, digital fluency, adaptability, and a desire for meaning and balance. While some framed these traits as vulnerabilities, others saw them as emerging strengths of a generation in amid rapid change and immense pressure. Gen Z was described as talented, proactive, and value-driven. Nevertheless, they are also easily overwhelmed and still learning how to translate ideals into resilience.

Importantly, none of the experts simply echoed media narratives. Their insights were not regurgitations of headlines but reflections grounded in real-world experiences. The “snowflake” label, while acknowledged, was interrogated rather than accepted at face value. Across perspectives, there was consensus that Gen Z cannot be reduced to a single stereotype.

Conclusions

This study critically examined how Vietnamese mass media spark public narratives of Gen Z as the “Snowflake Generation.” While media narratives may depict them as overly sensitive, emotionally fragile, and resistant to hardship, the perspectives of interviewees revealed a different reality - one shaped by adaptability, emotional intelligence, and a heightened awareness of mental health and social justice.

Entman’s framing theory provided a useful lens for dissecting how mass media constructs generational narratives. However, the inclusion of voices from Gen Z offered a necessary counterbalance to these dominant frames. Many participants contested the “snowflake” label, framing their sensitivity not as fragility but as a strength.

While the study focused primarily on mainstream Vietnamese news outlets, the findings open the door to broader investigations. Future research should further explore how youth actively engage in meaning - making through social media and other participatory platforms, where they resist, remix, or reclaim imposed identities.

In sum, this research underscores the critical need for more inclusive, reflexive, and dialogic media practices. Recognizing Gen Z not merely as subjects of generational critique but as agents of cultural and social transformation is crucial in today's world./.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abbott, T., & Abbott, R. (2017). The snowflake generation: A paranormal perspective. The Abbotts.
- [2]. Alyeksyeyeva, I. (2017). Defining snowflake in British post-Brexit and US post-election public discourse. *Science and Education a New Dimension*, V(39) (143), 7–10.
- [3]. Bolin, G. (2016). *Media generations: Experience, identity and mediated social change*. Routledge.
- [4]. Bolnet, L. (2020). Snowflake generation.
- [5]. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- [6]. Campbell, W. K., & Twenge, J. M. (2009). The narcissism epidemic: Living in the age of entitlement. Free Press.
- [7]. Chen, et al. (2023). Cross-cultural adaptation of generational labels. *Journal of Media Studies*.
- [8]. Collins English Dictionary. (n.d.). Snowflake generation. Collins English Dictionary.
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/snowflake-generation>.
- [9]. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- [10]. D'Angelo, P. (2018). Framing research in communication: Recent advances and future directions. *Communication Yearbook*, 32, 91–132.
- [11]. Dân Trí. (2024, November 7). Gen Z should open their hearts and stop expecting other generations to understand them. Dân Trí. <https://dantri.com.vn/lao-dong-viec-lam/gen-z-can-mo-long-ngung-ky-vong-the-he-khac-hieu-minh-20241107170027664.htm> (e).
- [12]. Dân Trí. (2022, April 7). The snowflake generation: With such fragile mentality, who is to blame? Dân Trí. <https://dantri.com.vn/giao-duc/the-he-bong-tuyet-nguoi-tre-co-tam-ly-yeu-duoi-nen-trach-ai-20220407221312935.htm> (d).

- [13]. DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education*, 40(4), 314–321.
- [14]. Đỗ, Đức Minh, & Trần, Quang Minh. (2020). Fundamental philosophy of mass communication and its relevance to practical realities in Vietnam. *Journal of Vietnamese Communication Studies*, 67.
- [15]. Đỗ Chí Nghĩa. (2009). Báo chí và dư luận xã hội ở Việt Nam hiện nay. Nhà xuất bản Chính trị Quốc gia.
- [16]. Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58.
- [17]. Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- [18]. Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.
- [19]. Heldal, I., & Stiklestad, S. (2022). Understanding the “snowflake generation”: Resilience, digital skills, and competence acquisition. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(3), 45–58.
- [20]. Henderson, A., & Chu, M. (2021). Media framing of Generation Z. *Digital Media Review*.
- [21]. Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. University of Chicago Press.
- [22]. Kelly, D. M. (2006). Frame work: Helping youth counter their misrepresentations in media. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne de L'éducation*, 29(1), 27.
- [23]. Kim, S., & Park, J. (2022). Snowflake narratives in South Korean media discourse. *Asian Media Studies*.
- [24]. Kincl, T. (2022). “Snowflake” generation: A media-driven stereotype or reality? In L. S. Zavodna & T. Falch (Eds.), *Teaching generation snowflakes: New challenges and opportunities* (pp. 117–135). Prague University of Economics and Business, Publishing House.
- [25]. Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- [26]. Mannheim, K. (2022). *The problem of generations*. Routledge.
- [27]. Marcu, S. (2024). From “snowflake generation” to “agents of social change”: Recognizing the voice of Spanish young people in the post-pandemic era. *Futures*, 164, 103500.
- [28]. Martinez, L., & Chen, Y. (2023). Generation Z and media representation. *International Journal of Communication*.
- [29]. McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.

- [30]. McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.
- [31]. Morgan, D. L. (2014). *Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: A pragmatic approach*. Sage Publications.
- [32]. Morton, L., & Davidson, S. (2021). Psychological impact of "snowflake" rhetoric. *Youth and Society*.
- [33]. Nash, C., & Stevens, R. (2020). Origins of the "snowflake generation" label. *Media Discourse Analysis*.
- [34]. Nguyen, T., & Tran, P. (2023). Media portrayal of Generation Z in Vietnam. *Vietnamese Journal of Communication*.
- [35]. Nguyen, Quang Manh. (2024). Verbal violence in the family – A contributing factor to the formation of the "snowflake generation": The case of Vietnamese youth. University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City. <https://digital.lib.ueh.edu.vn/handle/UEH/71903>.
- [36]. O'Donnell, K. (2013). *Visual persuasion: The media's use of images in framing people groups*. Peter Lang Publishing.