

TECHNOLOGY HABITS OF GENERATION Z IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: This is right time for researchers to have a deeper understanding about the next generation that will enter the young workforce and soon become a very appropriate part—Generation Z (or Gen Z). This research will generally show how Gen Z is different from previous generations - but somehow, they are also similar. Focusing on the impact of technology, the research team - from a marketer's perspective - will examine how Gen Z in Vietnam uses digital technology and which technology habits they are getting involved.

Keywords: Technology habit, tech habit, gen Z, digital natives, Vietnam

I. INTRODUCTION

According to a research by Pew Research Center (2019) [1], Generation Z is defined as those were born in 1997 or later. Till 2021, the oldest member of Generation Z will be 24 years old while the youngest will be 9 years old.

After only a short period, Generation Y has been gradually replaced by Generation Z as the youngest adults in the market. Unlike the transition of other generations in the past, there has been a sudden shift in behavior from Generation Y to Generation Z – and the technology is at the heart of this change. While previous generations had to learn how to live in the digital world, Gen Z adults (18-24 years

old) grew up in a world full of technology then they couldn't be aware of the difference between two worlds.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020, Gen Z consumers are better prepared than other generations in adapting to a life relying on technology to connect, but on the other respects, they also have to face more challenges. Their comfort with digital technology makes placing orders at home easier to get used, as they have been using technology since childhood to integrate into society.

In a report titled “How to engage with Generation Z in Vietnam” by Nielsen (2018) [2], Generation Z is predicted to make up 25% of Vietnam's workforce by 2025, equivalent to more than 15 million potential consumers. Understanding their characteristics, their thoughts, and their behavioral trends in Gen Z's technology habits will be the key to success in implementing digital marketing as well as effectively reaching this generation.

The research focuses on solving the following specific objectives: 1) Determine the characteristics of Generation Z and 2) Research on technology habits of Generation Z in Vietnam. The author mainly applied quantitative research method, used questionnaire survey and collected data by online survey through Google Form. Specifically, the process of designing a survey questionnaire for this research consists of 07 steps:

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Step 1: Define research objectives and questions

Step 2: Determine the survey object and expected survey sample

Step 3: Determine the ways to collect data

Step 4: Identify the questions in the questionnaire

Step 5: Arrange the order of questions in the questionnaire

Step 6: Test interview and consult with experts

Step 7: Edit and complete the questionnaire

II. OVERVIEW AND CONSTRUCTION OF RESEARCH THEORIES

Characteristics of Generation Z

Generation Z was born between 1995 and 2012, and is also known as "Digital Natives," "Me Generation," and "Generation N" (Feiertag & Berge, 2008) [3], with Generation X as their primary predecessor. They were born into a challenging era, with issues ranging from terrorism to global political instability to environmental concerns. They are the first generation to be widely and directly exposed to digital technologies such as social networking sites and the overabundance of information available on the internet (Turner, 2015) [4]. There are many conflicting arguments about determining the exact starting and stopping points for the birth year of Generation Z, as following:

Age	Author
Born from 1990 to 1999	Half (2015) [5]
Born from 1991 to 2000	Tulgan (2009, p.5) [6]

Born from 1993 to 2012	White (2017) [7]
Born from 1993 to 2005	Turner (2013, p.18) [8]
Born from 1995	Singh (2014) [9]
Born from 1995 to 2012	Jaleniauskiene & Juceviciene, (2015) [10]; Schroer (2016) [11]

Figure 1: Statistics on age division for generation Z

Some salient features of Generation Z can be summarized as follows:

- Hypertext frame of mind

Generation Z generally was the first to be known as having poor face-to-face interaction and being less likely to use brain logic when it comes to thinking. Merriman (2015) [12] stated that their heavy reliance on the internet has enabled them to obtain any information quickly and easily. Despite a lack of physical social interaction, they are highly multi-tasking and heavily reliant on social media (Cowan, 2014) [13]. The ability stems from their routine of performing multiple activities at the same time.

- Overprotected

According to Cowan (2014), Generation Z is nicknamed "the curling generation" in Denmark because their parents diligently sweep away the obstacles in their path as they march effortlessly towards their future. On the other hand, their parents are spoon-feeding them. In this case, they are likely to demand that the same atmosphere be created at universities (Jaleniauskiene & Juceviciene, 2015).

- Lack of communication

Generation Z is described as more individualistic, self-absorbed, but less team-oriented than other generations (Turner, 2015). This 'Google' generation assumes that information is always available to them; instant, immediate, and free. As a result of their upbringing, they are impatient, rebellious, and expect immediate results (Turner, 2015). They are a generation that can form huge communities and maintain a constant communication loop with people they have never met and will never meet in real; ironically, this generation is collaborative, chatty, and sociable on the internet, but in 'the real world,' they tend to be less well able to develop personal relationships (Riva, et.al., 2012) [14].

- Immediate gratification

According to Prelude Consulting Limited (2016), extensive internet exposure has made Generation Z impatient and require instant gratification, as well as introvert and disengaged with society. They are a younger generation with a shorter attention span.

Technology habits

There is an existing approach in the concept of technology habits (Anderson & Wood, 2021; Bayer, Campbell et al., 2016; Bayer & LaRose, 2018; Schnauber-Stockmann et al., 2018; Tokunaga, 2016) [15, 16, 17, 18, 19]. A "memory representation of [a] habitual response" is referred to as a habit (Wood & Runger, 2016) [20]. The habitual outcome (for example, checking one's smartphone) is preserved in a cognitive structure (i.e., a behavioral script) that was previously learned through behavior repetition in consistent contexts (Bayer & LaRose, 2018; LaRose, 2010; Schnauber-Stockmann et al., 2018) [21]. The automaticity of behavior initiation is the conceptual core of habits.

Technology habits have been studied for over a century and have produced heuristic cases for the study of habits over the last two decades. One of the recurring challenges in researching technology habits is determining how to define them and describe the set of qualifying behaviors. Researchers have focused on habits across a range of technological innovations in the years since the first study of telegraph habits. Is riding a bike a form of technology? Probably not in the contemporary sense, but perhaps they should: Prior to the invention of the telegraph, modes of transportation such as stage coaches were synonymous with "communication" (DeLuca, 2011) [22]. Over the last two decades, a plethora of keywords have been used to categorize the daily habits associated with emerging media, including Internet, electronic, device, gaming, virtual, online, interactive, mobile, digital, network, and information and communication technologies (ICT) habits (LaRose, 2010a; Limayem & Hirt, 2003) [23]. "Technology" is increasingly being used as a catch-all term, possibly due to the convergence of traditional mass interpersonal communication systems (Walther & Valkenburg, 2017). (e.g. Clements & Boyle, 2018; Kuss & Billieux, 2017) [24, 25, 26]. Of course, if we define "technology" as literally "the study of technique," then the transportation, health, and exercise habits which seem to dominate habit research (Orbell & Verplanken, 2015) [27] could also be referred to as technology habits. Despite this caveat, we use the term "tech habits" in this context to avoid further fragmentation while reflecting on the state of research progress, with a special emphasis on everyday innovations investigated in the fields of communication and information systems.

According to academic and industry research, Generation Z is a generation of "digital

natives," a term coined by Prensky (2001) [28]. This new generation of students, according to Prensky, are "native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games, and the internet" (2001, p. 1). Bruce D. Perry discusses the theory that technology is changing the brain structure of students in the same article (Prensky, 2001). The theory of digital natives began with researchers attempting to explain the differences in student behaviors and communication methods caused by the introduction of technology. Some researchers disagree with Prensky's theory of digital natives and believe that students do not have drastically different learning styles; they believe that students are impacted more by teaching methods than by early exposure to technology (Margaryan, Littlejohn & Vojt, 2011) [29]. Most researchers agree that changing technology has an impact on every generation's communication habits.

The increasing use of smart technology, which includes smartphones and other mobile internet-connected devices such as smart watches and tablet computers, along with their common personal device ownership and the decrease in watching TV, is a defining feature of this generation. According to a Pew Research Center survey from 2018, 26% of Americans report being online almost constantly (Perrin & Jiang, 2018) [30]. However, 39% of 18- to 29-year-olds report being online almost constantly (Perrin & Jiang, 2018). When looking specifically at teens aged 13-17, the reported number rises once more, with 45% of teens reporting that they are online "almost constantly" (Anderson & Jiang, 2018) [31]. This growth in technology use as age brackets become younger demonstrates a trend in which younger people spend more time online. Turner (2015) demonstrates that, unlike previous generations, some members of Generation Z have an emotional attachment to continuous

online access; some Generation Z members view losing their online connection as punishment. Online habit of Gen Z has led to their various range of digital activities, the popularity of social media platforms and many continuous social media activities everyday. In a recent study of Generation Z members, researchers discovered that the answer to the question "Do you know how to exist without smart technologies?" was "no" (Roblek, Mesko, Dimovski & Peterlin, 2019) [32]. In a different study, their interview stated, "from the moment I wake up, I will use it...every day, hour." (Toh, Howie, Coenen, & Straker, 2019) [33]. Therefore, the availability and acceptance of constant smartphone usage has a significant impact on Generation Z's technology habits.

Aside from the constant updates of smart technology, Generation Z's use of innovation to communicate is distinct. Members of Generation Z communicate frequently through multiple media and platforms, including text (SMS or iMessage), Instagram, FaceTime, Snapchat, and other mobile applications. Mobile applications, also known as apps, are pieces of software designed specifically for mobile devices. Apps of various types include financial (Venmo), health (Fitbit), music (Spotify), social media (Facebook), and instant messaging (Whatsapp). There is some similarity in the functions of the apps: Facebook, for example, is primarily a social media app, but it also has an instant messaging function called Facebook Messenger. Social media sites are generally defined as networking platforms allows users to create and share content, as well as interact with other user-generated content provided by connections or friends (Alhabash & Ma, 2017) [34]. Members of Generation Z frequently communicate with multiple people at the same time. Managing these multiple conversations can be difficult at times, necessitating frequent checks of multiple social

media accounts and instant messaging platforms (Seemiller & Grace, 2018) [35]. Generation Z use a variety of social media platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. In a recent Pew research study, 51% of respondents reported using Facebook, but only 10% reported that Facebook is their most-used platform (Anderson & Jiang, 2018); thus, Generation Z views Facebook as something that older people use. Generation Z does not share information on Facebook, viewing it as merely a place to communicate with family members (Seemiller & Grace, 2019; Mims, 2019) [36]. Therefore, it is important to find out Gen Z's preferences on their social media choices.

The use of instant messaging is one of the most popular digital activities at home for Gen Z. According to a Pew Research study, texting was the most common way for teens to communicate with their friends (Lenhart et al., 2015) [37]. Instant messaging is also widely used in social media apps like Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook. According to Generation Z research, while texting and instant messaging are similar, teens do not consider them to be the same platform (Seemiller & Grace, 2019). When texting and instant messaging are compared to traditional phone calls, 73 percent of Generation Z and Millennials prefer messaging to voice capabilities (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). Generation Z is clearly more at ease with texting and instant messaging as their primary modes of communication. In a recent study on texting by generation, Generation Z was found to have the highest volume of texts as well as the greatest preference to text rather than call, compared to other generational groups (Long, 2018) [38]. They prefer textual communication to voice communication, specifically texting and instant messaging.

According to current researchs, Generation Z divides their online platforms into aim

categories such as communication, learning, personal empowerment, and entertainment (Roblek et al., 2019). The use of different personas for different purposes by members of Generation Z is one behavior that supports this viewpoint. While segmenting and targeting have long been part of the business/marketing realm, Generation Z members have recently developed and defined the concepts of personal branding and exploring multiple personas for your personal identity and personal communication. Generation Z, for example, maintains multiple Instagram accounts to share with specific audiences, giving rise to the terms "Rinsta" (real Instagram) and "Finsta" (fake Instagram, or private account) (Seemiller & Grace, 2019; Lorenz, 2017) [39]. In a recent study on Fake Instagram, or "Finsta" accounts, researchers discovered that teens were posting less filtered content to a smaller audience on a "Finsta" account and may regard these accounts as a more private and "safe space" online (McGregor & Li, 2019) [40]. Content posted to Instagram or any other social media platform is viewed as an act of personal branding, and Generation Z appears to be fully aware that whatever they type, or photograph can end up being used outside of its original context (Mims 2019). "Finsta" accounts appear to offer a way for people to segment and communicate outside of their primary online personas, as well as a way to protect their outward personal brand. This segmentation of online personas demonstrates a potential conflict for Generation Z between the constantly online world they live in and the desire for privacy—or, at the very least, a "safer space" online. Content placed on Instagram or any social media platform is seen as an act of personal branding, and Generation Z appears to be fully aware that whatever they type or photograph may end up being used outside of its original context (Mims 2019). "Finsta" accounts seem to offer a way to segment and communicate outside of their

primary online persona and a way to protect their outward personal brand. This segmentation of online personas shows a possible conflict for Generation Z between the constantly online world they live in and the need for privacy—or at minimum, a "safer space" online.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the author mainly used quantitative research method. The questionnaire survey was built consisting of mostly quantitative (multiple choice) questions and a small number of qualitative (open-ended) questions. This method was chosen because the quantitative aspect of the survey will provide the author with data on trends in technology habits that are prevalent among Generation Z, while the qualitative aspect will provide data demographics of the participants as well as giving the author a closer look at the causes of those habits

Sample selection method

Survey participants were recruited from pupils, students/alumnis from Marie Curie Intercollegiate School Hanoi, National Economics University and Post and Telecommunications Institute of Technology. Survey participants were asked only 1 data related to demographics, namely age, because age is the only criterion that confirms whether a participant belongs to Generation Z or not.

Survey process

The survey method by questionnaire was selected, this is a written interview method to collect primary data and information for research purposes. Data collection from many participants was carried out at the same time, respondents answered their opinions by ticking the corresponding boxes according to an agreed convention, or there will be a team of investigators to collect comments and mark.

The survey was conducted using the Google Form online survey tool. Survey data is collected over a period of 2 weeks from October 11th to October 25th, 2021. Accordingly, the link to the Google Form will be sent to people of different ages of the generation Z. The questions are usually 'closed' with a given answer options, also there are open options for respondents to share and further explain their answers. The survey deeply explored the following topics in the research:

- The importance of appearance
- Online attitudes of Generation Z
- Priorities of Generation Z
- Average daily minutes of TV viewing
- Personal device ownership
- Household device ownership
- Digital activities performed by Generation Z
- Social networks accessed at least once a week
- Social media activities
- Trends of new technology habits
- Self-regulate technology habits

Contents of the interview questionnaire

Referred by the annual surveys of Mintel Group Ltd about technology habits and based on mentioned topics, the researcher has designed the interview questionnaire as following:

1. What is your age?
2. How important is your appearance to you?
3. Is there any following statement regarding to online habit applied to you?
4. Which of the following are important to you? Please select all that apply.
5. How many minutes averagely do you watch TV everyday?

6. Which of these personal devices do you personally own? Please select all that you personally own.
7. Which of these digital activities do you do on the computer/tablet/smartphone that you own or have at home?
8. Which of these social media platforms do you use at least once a week? Please select all that you use.
9. Do you do the following social media activities at least once a week?
10. Do you do the following technology habits at least once a week?
11. Do you self-regulate to not use any technology device for several hours during the day? If yes, please state the reason why you should do that.

Age of survey participants

The survey participants' age ranged from 9-23 years old, which belongs to Generation Z. Information of the respondent's gender is not required to be stated because the research scope did not examine gender differences in habits and behaviors of Generation Z. This question's purpose was aimed to ensure all respondents meet requirements. The result stated that, out of 251 responses received, only 250 people actually belonged to Generation Z. Accordingly, there were 4% of the respondents between the ages of 9-18, which mostly were pupils and also under the parents' control related to daily technology habits. Up to 92% of the respondents, aged 18-22, were college students, in which many individuals were living independently from their families. Only 4% of respondents aged 22-23, have graduated from undergraduates and entered the social labor force.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The market:

Appearance is important to Gen Z

The vast majority of Gen Zers are placing emphasis on their appearance, with 79% of the respondents deeming it important to some degrees and 32% seeing it as "very important". The appearance said the way Gen Z presented themselves is fundamental to who they were, while other said they enjoy experimenting with different looks.

The risk of technological overload

69% of the respondents admitted "I feel like I spend too much time online". Generation Z has grown up with more technology than any previous generation. They are accustomed to it dominating many aspects of life and are quick to embrace new innovations. However, there is a danger of technological overload, as well as a desire to limit exposure to constant connectivity. While some may be concerned about data sharing and privacy, this is primarily a matter of mental health and a desire for time away from screens, with a greater emphasis on experiences and personal interaction.

Only a few Gen Zers have the latest technology

Material goods are relatively low on the list of what is important to Gen Zers. While they are accustomed to technology, having spent the majority of their lives online, and are quick to adopt new innovations, only 19% of respondents stated that having the most up-to-date technology was a top priority. In the smartphone market, there has been evidence of people keeping their handsets longer and switching to non-contract deals simply because their existing devices are of sufficient quality.

Children's live television viewing has decreased

There has been a consistent decline in average daily viewing minutes of live television channels for years. According to the survey

result, while Gen Zers over the age of 22 watched live TV channels for more than 200 minutes/day, teenagers aged 9-18 spent only 70-100 minutes/day. Because advertising has traditionally been focused on television in order to reach the largest audiences, this has put a strain on broadcaster revenues. However, the trend is especially strong among children, highlighting a larger issue for advertisers in the long run.

Companies and brands:

TikTok rapidly build a large Generation Z base

TikTok allows users to share short videos (typically around 15 seconds) in the style of the now-defunct app Vine, which shut down in 2017. TikTok launched in August 2018, after being merged with Musical.ly after TikTok owner ByteDance purchased the app. Musical.ly was a more specialized platform focused on creating lip-sync videos, with a small following among younger people. TikTok's main selling point for users is the improved video editing options, which provide more creative options than rival video-sharing apps. The app has expanded beyond music to include beauty, fashion, and comedy, among other things.

Facebook continues to innovate to attract younger users

In August 2019, Facebook was reportedly testing a new app built on top of Instagram to counter the threat posed by Snapchat. Threads, a new app similar to Close Friends, allows users to specify subsets of followers with whom they are comfortable sharing more private posts and stories. Increased customization should encourage users to share more content while decreasing the tendency of some younger users to have multiple accounts for public and private content. In addition, Facebook also launched Reels, a version of TikTok that allows users to post short-form videos, in August 2020. The

move signaled that Facebook was aware of the threat posed by competitors like TikTok.

Instagram hides public likes count to remove pressure

Instagram experimented with hiding the number of likes posts receive in July 2019 in order to relieve user pressure. This is a particularly prevalent issue among Generation Zers, with many feelings pressured to compete with peers for likes, raising concerns about the impact on self-esteem and mental health. Users can still see how many people like their own posts. In the same month, Instagram took a step to combat online bullying by flagging specific comments.

The consumer:

Smartphone ownership is almost universal among Gen Zers

While many will continue to rely on family to fund purchases, personal ownership of many devices is higher than the general population's average. With smartphones having been present for the majority of their lives, ownership is far above average at 95% (resulted from the survey)

Most Gen Zers are living in technologically engaged homes

Household ownership is higher than personal ownership across the board, with parents most often involved in the purchase decision. Many Gen Zers will have relatively young, technologically engaged parents who are still eager to invest in the latest gadgets. In early adulthood, the vast majority of Gen Zers will live with family, with many sharing housings. This will result in an increase in the number of devices in the home among parents, siblings, and friends.

Using a social media website/app is the most popular digital activity across devices

Only 43% of the respondents confirmed that they played games on their devices (smartphones, tablets, computers), making it the least popular digital activity, in which this research did not include static devices, such as Xbox or PlayStation. Meanwhile, using social media website/app has become the most popular digital activity when accounting for 72% of the respondents, followed by 69% using instant messaging. This showed a very high demand of Generation Z in updating and communicating with friends, family and social relationships, while the need for gaming entertainment was not as popular as many people thought.

Facebook remains the most popular platform among Generation Z

Facebook was the most popular social media platform among Generation Z with 85% of respondents confirmed this point, followed closely by Youtube with 77%. YouTube's popularity has gradually increased as younger Gen Zers watched less traditional television, but switched to on-demand content.

Logging in to other sites using a social media account is risky but common

75% of the respondents preferred logging in to other sites using a social media account. They thought their social media account with detailed information would make them easy to remember and save time every time they had to create new accounts then remember too many passwords. This utility also allowed them to easily post and share information from one site to another in just 1 second. This activity is followed by 43% regularly posting photos or videos to a social media “story” (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat). This trend showed that the attention span of users was getting shorter and the way Gen Z chooses what to watch has also changed. This is why short-term content like stories are so concise, engaging and

addictive in a way that users can spend hours scrolling continuously

Live streaming trend

For Generation Z, live streaming has become a phenomenon when 75% of respondents confirmed that they had a habit of watching live videos on personal channels (such as streamer/youtuber). Generation Z preferred to watch real-time content, which provided high value and two-way interactivity. Improvements in live streaming technology optimized by event streaming services have reduced broadcast latency to almost the same level as that of live broadcast. In the near future, live streaming along with virtual reality will continue to dominate over traditional forms of media

Generation Z's awareness of self-regulating their technology habits

Aware of the negative effects of bad technology habits, Generation Z understood they needed to self-regulate their habits. Only 42% of the respondents confirmed that they would spend a while of time not using any technology devices. The most common reasons cited include: 1) Protecting eyes and health 2) To have time for other activities such as meeting friends, family, exercising and reading 3) Fear of being technology addiction. However, more than half (58%) of respondents still do not actively balance between technology habits and the real world.

IV. CONCLUSION

While Generation Z is a digital native who grew up online, having the most up-to-date technology is not their top priority. Many people are more concerned about their appearance, friendships, studies, and even environmental issues. With this in mind, while Gen Zers are likely to adopt new technology and use it for entertainment and convenience, they are unlikely to be eager to upgrade to the latest smartphone every year. This is especially true as upgrades

become more incremental, and smartphones and other devices several years old can still perform all required functions at a high level.

Generation Z has grown up watching the content they want, when they want, on a variety of devices. This trend cannot be reversed, and advertisers will need to look beyond traditional broadcast television to reach this demographic. With such a focus on uniqueness and expression, mass market advertising is unlikely to be a viable option for most brands. Because social media and short-form video content are being prioritized, digital advertising is becoming increasingly important for brands. This must, however, go beyond simply launching a campaign and seeing who it reaches. Instead, brands should encourage creative engagement and interaction on social media, motivating users to tag friends and expand the reach of a campaign. When it comes to the use of sponsorship and influencers, brands must consider more than just follower numbers and user engagement.

For Gen Zers, the willingness to adopt new technology extends far beyond the entertainment and communications sectors. As this demographic age, we will see an increase in the use of smart home products, as well as a greater willingness to use technology to improve security via smart locks, video doorbells, and connected cameras. Despite the fact that many are too young to open their own accounts, Generation Z has shown a strong interest in mobile banking apps. This will open doors for challenger banks with more upbeat, younger brand images. Fingerprint and facial recognition technology's increased security and convenience will also appeal to younger demographics.

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THÓI QUEN CÔNG NGHỆ CỦA THẾ HỆ Z TẠI VIỆT NAM

Tóm tắt: Trong suốt thập kỷ qua, chúng ta đã có nhiều bài nghiên cứu và chia sẻ về thế hệ Millennials (Gen Y), thế hệ chiếm lực tỷ trọng lớn nhất trong lực lượng lao động hiện tại. Tuy nhiên, hầu hết thế hệ Gen Y đã chuyển sang độ tuổi 30 và nắm giữ không ít các vị trí chủ lực trong doanh nghiệp thì đây cũng là lúc cần tìm hiểu về thế hệ kế tiếp sẽ gia nhập lực lượng lao động – Thế hệ Z. Phân tích trong nghiên cứu này sẽ cho thấy Gen Z khác với các thế hệ trước đó như thế nào - nhưng đồng thời cũng giống nhau ra sao. Với tâm điểm xoay quanh tác động của công nghệ, nhóm nghiên cứu- với góc nhìn của marketer- sẽ chỉ ra cách thế hệ Z sử dụng

công nghệ kỹ thuật số ra sao, có thói quen công nghệ như thế nào và đề xuất cho doanh nghiệp các giải pháp thực hiện marketing kỹ thuật số hiệu quả tới người tiêu dùng thế hệ Z

Từ khóa: thói quen công nghệ, gen Z, thế hệ Z, đặc điểm, Việt Nam



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