

A group of young people, likely Gen Z, are shown in a dimly lit setting, all looking down at their smartphones. The focus is on a young man with curly hair in the center, with others blurred in the foreground and background.

How stereotypes shape the image of Gen Z

How does society perceive today's youth, how do they feel about it, and how do these stereotypes affect their lives?



YouthLens
Predicting the future



THE RESEARCH

The goal of this study is to examine the most common stereotypes experienced by young people, how they perceive them, and how these stereotypes influence their lives and the image of their generation.

YouthLens conducted the research in April–May 2025 via social media, specifically Instagram and TikTok

N = 384

Age:

25% 13-17 – 55% 18-24 – 20% 25-34

Gender:

48% Female - 42% Male - 3% Non-binary - 2% Transgender -
2% Other - 1% I would rather not say

Today's youth live in a world full of labels — sometimes they glorify them, other times they confine them

Top **POSITIVE** stereotypes that Gen Z has personally encountered...

#1 Good with technology

#2 Open-minded

#3 Socially responsible

#4 Creative thinkers

#5 Independent

Top **NEGATIVE** stereotypes that Gen Z has personally encountered...

#1 Addicted to technology

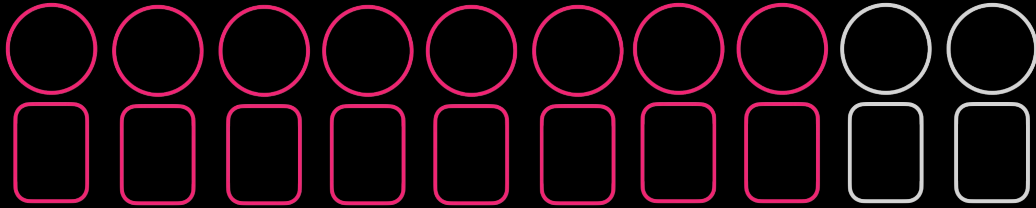
#2 Overly sensitive

#3 Lazy

#4 Short attention span

#5 Unrealistic career expectations

Gen Z carries the stigma of the “lazy” generation that never lets go of their phone



8 in 10 (80%) say that the most common stereotype they’ve heard about their generation is **“Lazy”**.

88%

Say that the most common stereotype they’ve heard about their generation is **“Addicted to Technology”**

69%

Say that the most common stereotype they’ve heard about their generation is **“Good with Technology”**

Today's youth have self-awareness and acknowledge that excessive technology use is a problem

74%

Agree with the stereotype that they are **“Addicted to Technology”**

“

We're more ambitious when it comes to improving living conditions... [On the other hand], **there's definitely a problem with tech addiction.**

- Transgender, 13-17

[My generation] knows how to use technology in a way that saves time. [However], we're also **largely addicted to it**, which leads to leading touch with the real world and be less productive.

- Male, 13-17 ετών

They know how much the excessive use of technology can affect them

60%

Agree with the stereotype that they have **short attention span**

61% say that this is the most common stereotype that they've heard about their generation

47%

Agree with the stereotype that they **struggle with face-to-face communication**

52% say that this is the most common stereotype that they've heard about their generation

“

Tech addiction makes me anxious because it's linked to independence. I don't like seeing people become divided, relationships turning impersonal and superficial — people being forced to deal with everything alone.

- Male, 13-17

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue sweater, is sitting in a dimly lit room, looking down at her smartphone. The background is dark, and the lighting is soft, highlighting her face and the phone. A large pink quotation mark is in the top left corner.

“

Our technology addiction makes me feel sad, because **it often keeps us from truly living**, from having meaningful conversations, from connecting with nature and others. To some extent it helps, but I think **it's also destructive**.

- Female, 13-17

But they refuse to fit into the boxes of previous generations just because they dare to see things differently

84%

Disagree with the stereotype that they are **“Lazy”**

[91% among 25-34]

71%

Disagree with the stereotype that they are **“Selfish”**

[78% among 25-34]

“

I get angry and upset. You can't put “labels” on people. Everyone is different, and every generation has its own principles, values, and ideals.

- Female, 18-24

I feel it's unfair, because people treat me like they already know me without giving me the chance to tell my side of things. They don't listen and they just put a label on me.

- Female, 25-34

They believe older generations judge them for behaviors that actually arose as responses to the problems those same generations created

I've noticed that as a generation, we didn't get the support we needed when we were younger. So when I hear negative comments about us, I feel angry because many of the difficulties we face, individually and collectively, were caused by the very people making those comments.

- Female, 18-24

It's awful to be judged before people even get to know you. And since it's usually older people who grew up in a different era, they can't easily accept that things have changed. They criticize us constantly, even though we're growing up in a very difficult era economically, socially, and politically. And the worst part is that they are the ones that led to this situation via their actions.

- Female, 18-24

They feel that persistent stereotypes about their generation limit them and widen the gap with older generations

74%

Believe that Gen Z stereotypes **create more distance between generations**

82%

Believe that Gen Z stereotypes **group everyone into the same “box”**

91% among 13-17

1/2

Believes that Gen Z stereotypes **confine young people to roles deemed “appropriate for their age”**



For many older people, Gen Z is the generation that gets easily offended and wants everything handed to them

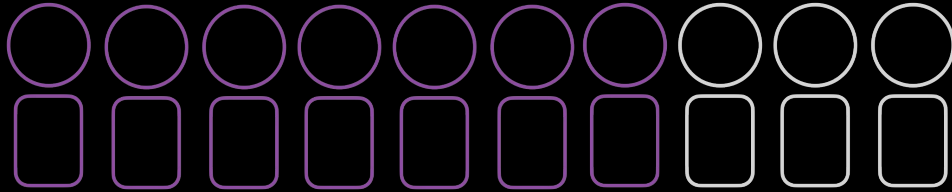
60%

Say that the most common stereotype they've heard about their generation is **"Overly sensitive"**

49%

Say that the most common stereotype they've heard about their generation is **"Entitled"**

These stereotypes negatively affect young people's working conditions and relationships at work



7 in 10 (69%) believe that Gen Z stereotypes lead to their
“**professional contributions being undervalued**”

[8 in 10 (79%) among 25-34]

IMPACT OF GEN Z STEREOTYPES ON THEIR WORK LIFE:

Some employers avoid hiring or promoting young people

48% vs **56%** 25-34

Feel pressure to always be online and available

44% vs **59%** 25-34

Make communication with employers/colleagues harder

43% vs **63%** 25-34



“

I've heard we're lazy and don't care about our companies, that we only think of ourselves... But the employee-employer relationship hasn't been healthy for decades. My generation is here to change that. We know what we deserve and look for it in our jobs. There must be respect for workers above all. We're not money-making machines — we're people, and to give more, we must first receive more.

- Transgender, 25-34

But Gen Z is simply standing up for what they believe they deserve and refusing to settle

84%

Disagree with the stereotype that they “**have unrealistic career expectations**”

79%

Disagree with the stereotype that they are “**entitled**”

“

When it comes to laziness and career expectations, I'm glad people no longer accept terrible working conditions and are trying to build a better professional future. It annoys me when people criticize this, as I see compromising on bad conditions as socially harmful for our and next generations.

- Female, 18-24

We know our rights as employees and we're not okay with the 'at least it's a job' mentality. If we're paid peanuts for slavery (half insurance, over 8-hour shifts, no notice, etc.), we immediately look elsewhere and we don't just feel grateful that we have a job. That's a big problem older generations caused, and we're still paying for it.

- Female, 18-24

For Gen Z, it's not them who are out of touch, but the older generations with their unrealistic expectations

66%

Say that **expectations are high but support is lacking**

[77% among 25-34]

60%

Say that their **economic struggles are not recognized**

[84% among 25-34]

“

Gen Z is going through very tough times as there's never been a period that actually helped us grow and develop. Most of us were born during the crisis, we never saw growth... And then came the pandemic, sacrificing some of our most important years for social development.

- Female, 18-24

I think people judge us without putting themselves in our shoes or remembering what they experienced at our age. That lack of empathy really saddens me.

- Transgender, 18-24

They feel constantly judged and the need to prove who they are all the time

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF GEN Z STEREOTYPES FOR YOUTH?

We are perceived as “weak” when we talk about mental health

84%

We feel that we constantly need to prove who we are

69%

79% 25-34

Our activism is perceived as “excessive” or “superficial”

55%

62% 25-34

But they don't give up and they believe that they are change makers

“

I think my generation is more political, open-minded, and tends to react more strongly against injustice than older generations.

- Male, 13-17

69%

Agree with the stereotype that they are **socially responsible**

66%

Agree with the stereotype that they are **open-minded**



*I think we're more accepting of diversity, we experiment, and **we're gradually breaking down social stereotypes.***

- Male, 13-17

*A good thing about our generation is that **we're not afraid to express our opinions**, whether political, religious, or about sexuality. Compared to older generations, **we're more accepting of diversity** and don't exclude people who are different.*

- Female, 13-17

*Having access to information regarding to the whole world, **our generation is more open to diversity and multiculturalism.** We're also more sensitive to social, environmental, and human rights issues.*

- Female, 18-24

*As an LGBTQ+ person, **I've experienced much better treatment compared to previous generations**, and I'm no longer as afraid to come out. There's **more understanding about mental health**, and I think our generation is working hard to **heal its wounds** and build a better way of life.*

- Transgender, 13-17

A group of young people are shown in a dimly lit environment, all focused on their smartphones. In the center, a young man with curly hair is looking down at his phone. To his right, a young woman is also looking at her phone. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders are visible, also looking at a device. The background is dark and out of focus.

Thank you!

Contact Information: Christina Poimenidou, christina@youthlens.gr, +306985926505
Website: www.youthlens.gr



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