WHAT IS IN A SCHOOL BAG: SOCIAL IDENTITY, SCHOOL BAGS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

WHAT IS IN A SCHOOL BAG: SOCIAL IDENTITY, SCHOOL BAGS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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This research explores the ways in which internet-native high school students construct aspects of themselves and composes their daily life by modifying their school bags. A school bag used for everyday life can be practical and personal, providing opportunities for self-expression. It also plays a role in online practices related to school life and extracurricular activities. To narrow down the scope of the research, an initial investigation was conducted by observing students’ daily lives and analyzing their online activities on forums and social media platforms. Based on the insights gained, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 23 high school students who were well-versed in social media platforms and had provided photographic evidence of their modified school bags. The research findings illustrate the multifaceted relationship that high school students have with their school bags. The practical use of school bags shows how students employ them as tools for organizing and managing their daily lives, while the modifications that students make to their bags establish connections to aspects of self that allow them to construct a self-support system, a way of relating and communicating with others, a way of materializing their life goals or values. In conclusion, this study sheds light
on the use of everyday life objects while also revealing how the means of material objects are reproduced through interactions with social media.

Keywords: School bags, Generation Z, Materiality, Modifications, Practice Theory, Social Media
ÖZ

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kurmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır Bu çalışmayı sonuçlandırmak için, gündelik eşyaların kullanımının özelliklerini vurgulamanın yanı sıra, maddesel nesnelerin maddesel olmayan dijital içerikle iletişim halinde yeniden üretildiğini gösteren boyutları vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul çantası, Z kuşağı, Maddesellik, Modifikasyon, Pratik Teorisi, Sosyal Medya
To my inner teen and loved ones
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation of the Study

This study aims to investigate how internet-native generation high school students construct aspects of self and compose their daily life through modifying their school bags. While the central focus of this study revolves around the orchestration of life in relation to material objects, it also sheds light on the influence of social media as a shared communication platform on these relationships. I have observed that Gen Z spends considerable time online and uses social media platforms to communicate and express their thoughts. Consequently, as a designer, I wanted to explore how this group of teenagers demonstrates their connection with physical objects through these platforms. I intended to examine how they express individuality through the modifications and embellishment of their school bags and how they replicate and communicate this relationship with their school bags online.

My interest in researching the culture and behavior of Generation Z stemmed from my personal experiences and observations within my own family. As a middle child born in 1997, I grew up with access to various forms of technology, such as computers, cell phones, and televisions. Despite being closer to my older sister, born in 1995, I was more familiar with the culture of Gen Z, as I grew up in an environment that promoted independence, similar to my younger sister, who was born in 2006. My position in the middle allowed me to observe and differentiate the everyday patterns of my older sister, who belongs to Generation Y, and my younger sister, who is a part of Gen Z. This sparked my curiosity to investigate the design implications of the different lives of this new generation.
Having a background in industrial design, I became particularly interested in exploring how the prevalence of digital technology and social media in the daily lives of Gen Z influences their material culture. Specifically, I aimed to examine how this relationship with technology and social media is reflected in the design of commonplace objects.

I observed my younger sister and her peers daily to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. In addition to observing their use of digital technology, I also observed their everyday practices and routines. This strategy enabled me to obtain valuable insight into their distinguishing characteristics and how they portray themselves on social media platforms. Based on my observations, I've discovered that high school-aged individuals from Generation Z use a variety of items to meet their daily challenges. Among these products, school bags were particularly interesting due to their importance in the daily activities of Generation Z. Despite the immateriality of online media; school bags have a tangible materiality that plays a significant role in expressing individuality through modifications and everyday use. School bags represent a conjunction of various social practices and are not just fashion items or pure representations of personal taste. The way students carry their bags, what they put in them, and how they use them are all part of their daily routines and practices, which connect the school bag to various social practices and make it an intriguing object to investigate in relation to the online world.

Moreover, during my high school years, I used to modify my bag with badges, pins, and drawings that showcased my interests in music, bands, movies, and hobbies. Considering my personal experience, I began to view bag modifications as a noteworthy practice that can offer insight into relationships between individuals and material objects. Since modifications are a way of modifying the bag’s materiality, they can offer insights into the interactions and relationships surrounding the school bag. As there were various studies conducted on different everyday objects, the focus of my study was specifically on the modifications made to school bags. Surprisingly, despite the existence of studies on various objects, I found no studies on school bags, which highlights the significance of my research topic.
On the other hand, social media is a domain that is not material and presents abstract identities. Gen Z defines a generation that is more fluent in online communication and the online type of being in the world. In light of this, I deemed it essential to conduct research on the correlation between school bags, digital media, and self and explore implications for the future of design practice and research.

This thesis is located in conjunction with these relationships and works with concepts of social identity, social practices, and socio-material reproduction concepts. This research aims to explore the relationship between Gen Z's digital identities and their material world, with the goal of informing industrial design practices.

1.1.1 Internet Native High School Students

This study was primarily conducted in 2022, focusing on high school students' engagement with school bags. As such, providing a demographic and cultural overview specific to this cohort was deemed essential. While previous generations also modified everyday objects to express their identities, this research centers on Generation Z, the internet native generation, to examine the impact of digital literacy on their relationships with materiality. It is important to note that this study has yet to assert a complete departure from previous generations regarding modification practices and engagement with material objects. Instead, it seeks to illuminate the influence of digital literacy on these relationships. Hence, this section provides an overview of the internet-native generation, highlighting their cultural and social familiarity with various social platforms.

With the increasing impact of technology on everyday life, new generations are frequently named based on their association with these technologies. One such term is the "digital native," a concept first introduced by Marc Prensky in 2001, which refers to young individuals who are fluent in the use of digital devices and platforms, such as computers, video games, and other technologies. The internet native generation, on the other hand, refers specifically to the cohort of young people who
were born into the internet culture and have been both shaped by it and active participants in its construction. It should be noted that prior to the internet generation, Jean M. Twenge (2006) identified a cohort of young people born in the 1990s who were self-centered yet not selfish, known as 'Generation Me'. However, the Internet generation is distinct in that they were born into the internet culture and did not need to learn its language; they are naturally part of it. This is similar to the "app-generation" described by Katie Davis and Howard Gardner (2013), who was born in the late 2000s and were immersed in an application-focused culture from birth. Unlike the internet generation, they did not need to learn how to use apps; they were born into an application culture and grew up within the internet and social media habitus.

![Figure 1.1. A timeline to show how generations involve each other and defined by whom.](image)

Born between the mid-1990s and mid-2010s, Generation Z is the first generation to grow up in a dominant world of digital technology. (Twenge, J. M., 2017) The widespread use of smartphones, social media, and other digital platforms has fundamentally altered how Gen Z interacts with each other and the world around them. They use these platforms to connect with others, consume and create content, and navigate their daily lives (Twenge, J. M., 2017). This constant connectivity has led to the formation of a digital habitus or the set of dispositions and practices that
shape how individuals engage with digital media. For Gen Z, their digital habitus has become an integral part of their individuality and social interactions.

### 1.2 Aim and Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore how the generation born in the internet age builds and portrays their connection with material objects, particularly their school bags, through social media platforms. This study particularly builds on previous literature that highlights internet-native high school students’ interest in individuality and how it affects behaviors involving tangible items of daily life as well as digital technology. Therefore, it was aimed to add to the body of knowledge about the materiality of everyday objects and their role in creating and maintaining social identity, especially in the context of the Internet age.

### 1.3 Research Questions

Regarding the aim of this study, the questions below will be addressed.

**Main Question**

- How does the internet native generation construct relations with material objects in their everyday life and produce these relations on social media platforms?

**Sub Questions**

- What is the relationship between identity and materiality?
- What are the uses of material objects?
- What is the relationship between self and social media?
1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The introduction chapter explains the study's background, aim and scope, detailing the research questions and giving information on Gen Z to introduce this generation to the readers. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis's structure, indicating the chapters included and their content.

The second chapter presents a literature framework, focusing on the three core domains that serve as the basis for the research: consumption, materiality, and a conceptualization of Gen Z’s habitus as a ‘digital habitus.’ It starts by conceptualizing consumption as production in terms of individuality, materiality, and practices. Following this, the chapter conceptualizes Gen Z as a digital habitus.

The third chapter describes the methodology adopted for this qualitative research study. The section begins with an overview of the research methods, including observation and social media harvesting. The following sections describe the data collection phase, including semi-structured interviews, photographic evidence of participants' school bags, and an explanation of the analysis methods. Context mapping is used to organize the analysis. The chapter concludes with a brief review of the study's limitations.

In the fourth chapter, the findings of the field research are presented. This chapter is divided into three sections that explore the complex relationship between school bags, social identity, and digital media. The first section, titled "Bags as Daily Companions", highlights the primary finding of this study, which underscores the practical roles fulfilled by school bags and their significance as indispensable companions in the daily routines of high school students. The subsequent sections of the study were designed to provide contextual insights into the specific needs and preferences of the demographic under investigation, thereby enhancing our understanding of their relationship with school bags.

The second section, "Styling the Bag-Styling Self," focuses on how individuals modify school bags to express different aspects of themselves, including their
character traits, attitudes, and interests. Individuals construct themselves and their relationships through these modifications, forming sub-groups and reproducing practices around bag modifications. The third section, "I am Perceived Therefore I am," investigates how social media affects the relationship between school bags, materiality, and social identity. It is revealed that social media plays a significant role in shaping individuals' aspirations and relationships with their bags, with content on social media often carrying over into everyday life.

The concluding chapter presents the study's major results and discusses their implications. The study emphasizes the significance of understanding the relationship between internet-native youth and material items, especially in the context of social media. In addition to providing recommendations for future research, the chapter concludes by stating the significance of the study.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is intended to help the reader to have an insight into the theoretical framework of the thesis, which focuses on school bags. A school bag stands at the conjunction of different theoretical understandings. It is, on the one hand, a consumption item, even a fashion item, and so an expressive but also personal object. However, their practicality, (i.e. the fact that they are actually used) connects them to various everyday social practices and daily use. Therefore, to understand school bags, it was essential to elaborate on theoretical approaches that address the dynamics around consumption and daily life practices. In this respect, consumption in everyday life and using practice theory as a way to address the relationships between these domains were explored. In addition, the generation on which this research focuses, GenZ, necessitates an investigation into the aspects of the self extensions to digital platforms. Based on this approach to consumption and everyday living, the interconnections between social media and the reproduction of individuality were studied within the specifics of school bags. This chapter will start with a review of consumption literature and then bring in a practice theory perspective. Finally, the identity reconstruction by material objects on social media will be focused on.

2.1 Consumption

Consuming is a part of the routine of our daily lives. From our basic to complex rituals as a community or self, we consume in a manner. However, in this once and future social manner, the practice of consumption changes in the means of motivations, ways and consumed things herewith production. Therefore, throughout history, consumption has been argued within the questions of “how” and “why”.
Thorstein Veblen (1967) phrases in his book ‘The Theory of the Leisure Class’, “In a society built up with common meanings, people use consumed goods to express themselves”. According to him, what one consumes and how one consumes are indicators that individuals use to enhance their social prestige and socioeconomic status. The possession of wealth could be expressed by how money or leisure time is spent, such as driving luxurious cars, wearing expensive perfumes, or taking family holidays to exotic destinations. According to Veblen, individuals communicate their social status in such materializations and practices.

Veblen distinguishes two motives for consuming conspicuous goods: “invidious comparison” and “pecuniary emulation”. To explain further, comparing an individual's socioeconomic worth to others is an example of invidious comparison; pecuniary emulation is the endeavor to attain one's own riches by imitating a wealthy role model. In modern terms, these two motives can be explained as higher class consuming to distinguish themselves from others and lower class consuming to be considered a part of the higher class. Thus, individuals tend to position themselves depending on the wealth spent. They keep and carry commodities as tangible signs carrying meanings of themselves. Both motives show us that consumers have socially communicated information about the value of their own assets. Moreover, they attempt to signal and express their wealth by consuming conspicuous goods.

However, consumption does not only communicate wealth, but it is a social communication of all sorts. While Veblen focuses on conspicuous consumption constructing society, Bourdieu (1984) analyses consumption within the relationship between social position and lifestyle. In his book *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), he demonstrates how society and individuals impact and sustain one another at the micro and macro levels. He defines this affected and effective culture that people are born into as *habitus*. Bourdieu claims that cultural preferences are rooted in the systems of perception, judgment, and action of cultural matrices. Again, habituses orchestrate common practices and shared circumstances. With habituses having social dynamics, they are open to change and can move through social space.
People tend to place themselves in society with their dispositions, habits, and skills. Hence, habitus becomes a safe place and platform for people to stand out from the naturally gathered society. Bourdieu (1984) proposes that cultural, social, and economic asset holdings define these distinctions and class positions. He claims that individuals invest in themselves by consuming and showing using material commodities to express their individual social value. Individuals use motives both to be a part of the appreciated culture and to be distinguished among society. Therefore, even though people are born into a low-class habitus in a cultural, social or economic asset, they tend to disposition themselves with symbolic means of conspicuous commodities.

Just like any other consumption item, bags, as wearable commodities and fashion items, are costumes of social classes. Accordingly, Georg Simmel (1957), in his book titled Fashion, claims that defining consumed goods is in no case a perfectly independent expression of oneself devoid of their social group. The consumer of these fashion items makes their decisions based on what others think, and once they wear it on the street, the others really portray them with the means of the item. To describe a fashion possession, he claims it is “the imitation of a given example and satisfies the demand for social adaptation” (Simmel, 1957, p. 541). People tend to get on the higher level of society and will act and wear that way. The social adaptation of the imitation in this phrase reminds another concept by Simmel, which is uniformity.

Simmel (1957) claims that there is still a line of the consumers’ true selves in the shell they carry. While consumers want to gain the social equalization of the higher class, they still want to stand out from the equals. In his own words, they want to show others that they are part of their luxurious lifestyle and still can say, “There is more within me” (Simmel, 1957; p 541). Because the consumer is aware that if they are not unique in a way, they will not be imitated by others. This creates two opposites in the means of a fashion item. The consumer must be able to ‘imitate’ the elite and ‘distinguish’ themselves from similar others (Simmel, 1957).
Thus, distinction and imitation are two sides of the same coin: one imitates an idealized other to differentiate oneself from others and also by shifting one's imitative loyalty. According to Simmel, these polarities can only be sustained by following the route of those who claim to be society's superiors. With each luxurious purchase, consumers demonstrate to everyone around them that they have an eye for or appreciation for fashion. That demonstrates that they are exceptional superiors' followers.

Distinction and imitation define mechanisms through which social groups and their material environment and practices are produced. However, this does not define individuals' end position, nor does it frame their production. According to De Certeau (1984), the users are not only passive and submissive consumers but also active and can manipulate the habitus around them through their everyday practices. In this sense, in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certeau divides society into two groups: the producers of the culture (ruling class) and the users (the ordinary people) and describes consumption as a creative process and a “silent production”. This point highlights Veblen’s conspicuous consumption theory as an explanation of silent production. With each individual of the society re-analyzing the objects and re-defining their social identity, they re-produce new means as they consume. His revolutionary approach, where the usual theories were defined upon the modern world and metropolis being routinized and degraded, propounds that individuals manage to maintain control over their everyday lives. De Certeau (1984) explains this as individuals becoming active members of society by walking their own path through the grid of the city and reading in ways that escape the social hierarchy and ‘imposed system’ of the written texts. Within this imposed system, individuals make themselves visible through creative routines such as talking, reading, shopping, cooking, dwelling, and liking.

De Certeau’s approach to everyday life has a basis for the distinction between ‘tactics’ and ‘strategies’. According to him, the tactic is a technique of space, and strategy is a technique of place. These two concepts could explain the long-going discussion of having power in everyday life. According to de Certeau, while tactics
rely on limited information, sometimes nothing other than our senses, that is why he defines tactics as *the arts of the weak* (de Certeau, 1984). Also, time-based tactics require individuals or groups to move fast to avoid detection. Conversely, strategies rely on an accumulation of information and accurate mapping of space instead of tactics. De Certeau explains strategies as a ‘home base’ for exercising power and domination” (de Certeau, as cited in Gardiner, 2000; 172). By weighing the options, controlling the risk, and determining a route, strategies do not need to rush and be flexible with time. Strategies operate from a position it already has access to, such as their land; whereas tactics not having access to power; they depend on time and watch for opportunities to insinuate themselves into other’s place almost invisibly and silently. To explain this power exchange with an example, de Certeau wants us to think of having a property of land. It is expected that there will be boundaries and walls set up to protect the land, sources of water and electricity, education buildings, places for shopping, where to sit and relax, even where it is not allowed to walk. By planning and setting up rules, the piece of land will become a strategically designed space that does not rely on time—the walls and buildings will be there tomorrow, next week, or next year unless anything changes with the plan. So the strategy will be an open book for attacks; however, with its power, it will protect itself. Once an individual or a group of citizens have problems and complaints over the strategy to rule the land, they will come up with tactics that rely on time, such as protests. Not well-organized and rushed moves of the crowd will occur up against planned and coordinated police forces. Even though the police have the power and the strategies, the crowd may rush and move the protest to another street by manipulating the place. Since the strategies of police are restricted, they will take time to align again to the other street, and the power will change between these two concepts. The intended and structured plans and routes may not be stabilized in everyday life.

This shift of power occurs not just in interpersonal relationships but also in consumer-product interactions and relationships. De Certeau (1984) explains the strategy and tactics of consumption with an everyday shopping practice. The market or shop has shelves to display the goods. Since all the products on the shelves are
designed to be sold, they have the power of attraction and information. De Certeau argues that products, particularly brands, have a certain power over consumers, similar to a home base that has power over its people. He refers to customers as "silent, symbolic or second-level producers" who are like nomads exploring and creating within the territories of the products they consume. This means that even the act of a customer walking down the aisles of a store designed to influence their behavior strategically is a form of design action. The customer is not passive in this process but is still subject to the influence of the product or brand. A crucial point of de Certau’s example is that once the customer finds a product to buy, they transform the object from an alienable condition to an inalienable one (Miller, 1987, p. 190). Once they own the product, it is now up to the tactics they constructed in their everyday life to give it a role of expression. This is how de Certeau's techniques and tactics reflect on consumption, resulting in consumption being a vehicle for creating new meanings.

2.2 Materiality and the Individual: Symbolic Meaning and Daily Practices

Social life is inherently intertwined with the interactions and practices that take place between individuals and material objects. In light of section 2.1's literature review, commodities are essential to social practices as they actively shape and restrict the acts and relationships that form everyday life. Moreover, commodities have symbolic meanings and values that impact social and cultural situations. This concept of the significance of materiality in social life is fundamental to practice theory since it emphasizes the connection between individuals and the materials that construct their environment (Shove et al., 2012).

Practices are "patterns of corporeal, practical activity within a horizon of meaning," according to Reckwitz's fundamental point (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). In other words, practices are influenced by larger social and cultural settings rather than being only a concern of individual actions. According to Reckwitz, practices are not static but
dynamic and ever-evolving as people engage with them and transform them through time.

Reckwitz's attention to how material things shape practices is one of the main characteristics of his approach. In his words, the materiality of things, tools, and technology "plays a fundamental role in forming practices" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 259). He furthers his statement by explaining that materiality includes material things and the meanings and values assigned to these items in certain settings. Material things and technology are not neutral; they actively change practices by limiting and enabling certain actions and interactions and carrying symbolic meanings and values that create social and cultural environments.

Reckwitz's approach highlights the relevance of uniqueness in developing practices. Although social and cultural contexts impact practices, people are not only passive actors; they actively engage in and modify practices through time. Reckwitz states, "Any practice is the result of the active engagement of people, whose modes of activity are formed by their biographical experiences, choices, knowledge, and abilities" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 251). This implies that although social and cultural circumstances provide the framework for practices, the human agency also plays a key role in developing practices. People may reinterpret and change practices based on their own experiences and knowledge, gradually creating new practices. This underscores the practices' dynamic and continuing character and the significance of understanding how the social and cultural background and human action affect practices.

The practice theory approach of Reckwitz has also been used to investigate the link between material items and the self. Using the phrase "extended self," Russell Belk (1988) offers a definitive approach to self-expression through commodities. According to Belk, the extended self is the portion of one's self-identity that is defined by objects such as gifts, money, bodily parts, monuments, and locations. Belk's extended self-concept emphasizes the intricate relationship between people and the material items they surround themselves with. He claims it to be an
unavoidable aspect of contemporary life that we come to know, define, and continuously renew our sense of ourselves through our material goods. He furthers by referring to Bourdieu’s (1977) habitus.

*Developmental evidence suggests that this identification with things begins quite early in life as the infant learns to distinguish self from environment and then from others who may envy our possessions. Emphasis on material possessions tends to decrease with age but remains high throughout life as we seek to express ourselves through possessions and use material possessions to seek happiness, remind ourselves of experiences, accomplishments and other people in our lives, and even create a sense of immortality after death. Our accumulation of possessions provides a sense of the past and tells us who we are, where we have come from, and perhaps where we are going.* (Belk, 1998; 160).

In this manner, people born into a certain cultural habitat may, consciously or subconsciously, see their material belongings as extensions of their own selves. Considering this approach, material objects are used to identify and express themselves. Therefore, the purchased possessions carry the importance of owning the power and means of the object.

According to Dick Hebdige (1988), material objects are more than just manufactured goods—they become thumanity'senvironmenvironment and background props. Hebdige (1988; 117) phrases in “Object as Image: The Italian Scooter” that “nowhere do we encounter a “network of relationships” more familiar and “material” yet more elusive and contradictory than those in which material objects themselves are placed and have meanings”. According to him, material objects have a duality of being tangible and spiritual in the historical and visual appearance of products.

Hebdige (1988) questions whether it even would be possible to talk about the objects and the practices without including the larger network of relationships. According to Hebdige, this network of relationships is created through the principles of metaphor and metonymy that will express moral codes and aesthetic and ideological
characters. Hebdige phrases the objects within the network of relationships as “markers of identity and difference—organized into meaningful relations through their location within cultural/ideological codes.” (Hebdige, 1988, p. 124). This network of relationships creates a “field without fences” with an intractable mass, which was named “cultural significance.” (Hebdige, 1988, p. 120).

Cultural significance lets individuals appreciate their sub-group and eventually have them win a space. This space can be both in literal urban life and in an area where forms of identity could be developed. Even though this appreciation and space were possible through consumption and materializing of oneself, owning/acquiring commodities as an extended part of themselves helped along the way. This was named “the ‘dressed’ image” by Hebdige (1988; 146). The cultural significance could be exemplified by the study conducted by Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2001). They highlight how black people’s fashion trends, such as gold chains, expensive sneakers, and high-end sunglasses, also become a determinative part of their culture. Even ghetto urban streetwear has the fashion elements of luxury brands, materials and looks. This gained respect and appreciation is not only a trend appearance but also related to and appropriate for their daily ”rituals” such as dancing. Therefore, a young black individual wearing ideologically coded elements will help them win a space in society.

In a world where there is an increasing quantity of commodities that could act as props in the process, self-identity becomes more than ever a matter of self-image being personally selected and designed. Alan Warde (1994) explains this by saying that individuals are obliged to choose their identities by simply consuming. While there is a substantial residue of truth that modern urban society people express and therefore present themselves, this involves concentrated attention to details supported by a vigorous amount of consumption and shopping. Elizabeth Shove (1998) claims that creating and presenting oneself is evident in self-promotion, continuous self-recreation, and fantasizing about consumption.
Daniel Miller (2005), in his book “Materiality”, claims that material and human beings have a mutual relationship in routine practices, which will be explained below. Material possessions have means in daily life and enrich or devalue each other's public image. This disposition practice is caused by, mentioned above, the networks of relationships. Miller explains this mutual construction as humanity creating itself in front of a mirror.

According to Miller (2005), “material culture” can be described as humanity existing not through only the body and consciousness but as an exterior environment that habituates and prompts itself. This highlights that material and humanity mutually construct each other. Consumption is more than simply an element of social interaction; it is fundamental to the anthropological perspective, which holds that consumers are reflexive and may contribute to their own significance when appropriating the commodity.

In this respect, to look deeper into this social phenomenon, we must shift our focus from people only to nonhumans. He mentions that daily rituals, even the religious (a concept common among humanity, yet so abstract), are in a mutually constitutive relationship with material possessions. For example, the Indian culture’s feminine fashion element Sari carries the meanings of Hinduism and is also being used in the daily rituals of an Indian woman (Miller, 2010). For Indian moms, the sari is used for swaddling babies; cleaning; hanging things; covering the inappropriate parts of the body according to their religion; moreover showing the bare skin to attract lovers and the like. Sari, as a material, becomes an extended part of the body. Moreover, the fact that the sari lets women be perceived as appreciated in their religious culture creates this mutual relationship between the object and the subject. In this manner, it may seem that the sari is being relavued by usage, making it distant from the industrialized production process and a unique commodity. The empirical approach used by Miller, based on ethnographic research methodologies, has led to new insights. Commodities, in addition to having a symbolic value that might change over time, are tokens that can be used in routine and interpretation to add depth to one's world experience. Miller thinks that investigating the significance of objects
should extend beyond the checkout line at the mall. (Miller, as cited in, Bouchez, 2012; 53). He uses the concept of “creative appropriation” (Miller, 199, p. 81) to explain the re-valuing consumption process. The ownership/possession of the material object creates a dynamic between alienation and creative appropriation. In this manner, his approach opposes the static form of material symbolism (Bouchez, 2012, p. 53).

Sartre (1943) explores the concept of object ownership in his study, outlining three critical approaches to claiming and internalizing objects as extensions of ourselves. Firstly, through the utilization and control of the object by means of modification or personalization. Secondly, by actively creating the object itself, whether through the addition of colors, manipulations, or the use of different materials, imbuing it with the creator's unique identity and making it an integral part of oneself. Lastly, acquiring knowledge about the object's features, sizes, usage, cleaning, and limitations can evoke a sense of possession, similar to the process of getting to know a newly acquainted person. In these practices, a dynamic power exchange can be observed between the possessor and the object.

As studies by Miller indicate, objects are not only meaningful on their own, but their significance is revealed in use. At this point, it is useful to introduce ideas from practice theory.

Moving from this point of view, materials are being used not only as images of means but individuals interact with them physically, and they help accomplish social practices. Andreas Reckwitz’s (2002, p. 249) defines social practice as “a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another”.

The first of these elements is bodily activities, which refer to individuals' “physical actions and movements” when carrying out a particular practice. In relevance to this study, these can include anything from how a person holds and carries their school bag to the specific gestures and movements involved in modifying it. The second element of practice identified by Reckwitz is mental activities. This includes the cognitive processes involved in understanding, interpreting, and making sense of the
world around us. School bag modification might involve thinking creatively about how to customize a bag to fit individual needs or reflecting on the meanings and values associated with particular bag designs and styles. The third element is "things and their use". This refers to the material objects and artefacts involved in a particular practice. These objects are not simply passive tools or instruments but are actively shaped and transformed by the practice. A fourth on the list of Reckwitz’s (2002) element of practice is “background knowledge”, which refers to the cultural and social understandings that individuals draw upon when engaging in a particular practice. The fifth element is “emotional and motivational knowledge”, encompassing the practice's affective and subjective dimensions. Emotions can range from pleasure and satisfaction when successfully modifying a bag to frustration or disappointment when things do not go as planned.

Reckwitz’s approach emphasizes how objects and material culture are integrated into daily practices and routines and how they contribute to constructing and maintaining social and individual identities. He claims that objects are carriers of symbolic meanings that focus on acquisition more than use. In this manner, he centralizes things and their way of use together. By paying attention to the interplay between bodily activities, mental activities, things and their use, background knowledge, and emotional and motivational knowledge, we can better understand the social and cultural significance of this practice and its relevance to this study.

Elizabeth Shove's (2003) approach builds on Reckwitz’s (2002) perspective by exploring how objects are not just passive elements within social practices but are an active part of them. In her 2007 book, ‘The Design of Everyday Life’, Shove says everyday objects significantly impact the routine of ordinary life. Despite their often-overlooked significance, the impact of material objects on daily routines becomes evident when technological advances facilitate changes in how tasks are defined and performed and how individuals manage their time. She claims that as they acclimate to new practices and assist individuals in navigating the complexities of modern life, the significance of common objects becomes more apparent in these situations.
According to Shove (2003), the co-construction of consumed goods and society have a relationship based on possibilities. She highlights that possessions are consumed not for their own sake but for their potential and what they can make possible. This potential and possibilities may include functional usage in everyday life rituals and the representation of the public image. She explains her approach by saying, “...objects are not just semiotically communicative: they are also pragmatically useful” (2007, 13).

According to Elizabeth Shove (2012), neither the person nor the object can alone fully function when doing daily activities. Therefore there becomes a “hybrid arrangement”. Therefore, materiality and practices should be focused on when discussing the hybrid arrangement among people. In her 2007 book ‘The Design of Everyday Life’, Shove explains human-material objects as ‘hybrid’ with the example of using a hammer. The hammer is an artefact that serves as an extension of the human limb, allowing individuals to carry out various do-it-yourself (DIY) home projects. As a tool, it does not generate novel materials or functions independently of human use. Instead, the hammer's effectiveness lies in its ability to amplify the skills and capabilities of the human user. The hammer enhances the user's competence and proficiency across various tasks and domains by improving their physical and mechanical abilities.

Everyday life practices, whether they are spontaneous or being done as a ritual, create the interaction between things and people. Elizabeth Shove explains this mutuality with her words as “consumers’ actions and aspirations are somehow structured by the objects with which they share their lives” (2003, 2). Similar to Daniel Miller’s (2010) example of the Sari and the practices an Indian mother does in her everyday life, this relationship revolves around each others’ mutual development processes. The ownership of an object only becomes completed after orchestrating the new everyday practices with it. Once it is utilized and modified in terms of means or appearance, the commodity becomes a hybrid in daily routines.
2.3 A Digital Habitus

In this section, drawing on the concept of "habitus" introduced by Pierre Bourdieu in 1977, we will explore how the digital realm has become an integral part of young people's lives and how it shapes their habits, routines, and social interactions. According to Bourdieu, habitus refers to the collective organism that establishes and reproduces dominating social and cultural circumstances. The term "digital habitus" refers to how their constant engagement with digital technologies has shaped young people's social and cultural dispositions. By examining the role of digital technology in Generation Z's daily lives, it was aimed at gaining a better understanding of how materiality has transformed our social practices and how we relate to one another.

According to Bourdieu (1984), subcultures are created through time by the interactions and practices of their members, which ultimately result in the formation of a common habitus or way of being. As new members or generations join the subculture, they become surrounded by this habitus, transmitted through various media and communication channels. Thus, subcultural boundaries are maintained, and members continue to develop and reinforce their practices and identities through time. In the past, the mass media used for transmitting cultural practices, values, and beliefs were physical objects made of stone, clay, paper, and parchment, which had a physical form, volume, and weight. Individuals had to be physically present in the same location at the same time to engage with these objects, which were sometimes heavy and challenging to transport, in order to share cultural knowledge. The limitations of time and space applied to these items even if they could be moved about. The communication of cultural knowledge has grown much more open and widespread, nevertheless, with the development of digital technology.

A 2006 study by Valkenburg, Schouten, and Peter found that early adolescence is a critical period for self and identity development for the internet-native generation. The study surveyed 600 children aged 9 to 18 and found that the internet is a common tool for identity exploration, with younger adolescents using it more frequently to communicate with strangers and play with their identities, while older adolescents
use it to communicate with their existing social networks. There were no significant differences in self-presentation methods between younger and older adolescents. The study specifically focused on how older adolescents use online media to express their identities through their school bags.

William Gibson (1997) names the digital habitus as “Cyberspace”. Gibson as a sci-fi novel author, has created this place in his book Neuromancer, which is a technology of social saturation that can dislocate time, space and personal characteristics of human interactions. According to the fictional realm of cyberspace, individuals can log their minds into computer technology and explore the matrix while still interacting with each other. Cyberspace allows individuals to construct new places, roles, and personally meaningful identities in a flexible and lively environment. Individuals become a part of a society where geographical and cultural realities are redefined. With the numerous opportunities cyberspace presents, users learn to live in virtual worlds.

In her book "The Design of Everyday Life", Elizabeth Shove (2007) argues that objects can act as hybrid agents of production and creativity during the transition from the physical to the digital realm. The example of digital photography highlights the complex interplay between traditional practices and new opportunities for creative expression. While digital cameras still have traditional photography practices, it also opens a new space in digital practices. Digital tools offer new possibilities for digital manipulation, storage, and sharing of images previously unavailable by amateur photographers.

Shove (2007) argues that these new possibilities have expanded the range of skills and competencies required of individuals in order to effectively engage with the photographic practice. This includes technical skills related to operating digital cameras and editing software and a broader range of social and cultural competencies related to evaluating and categorizing photographs for sharing, editing, and manipulation or even 'cheating' (Shove, 2007, p. 83).
With the growth of creative expression options and the introduction of new interaction and engagement techniques, the development of digital photography has altered the connection between people and things. This dynamic is not exclusive to photography but can be seen in a variety of daily practices and things. Knowing how things and technology may function as creative agents in people's daily lives is fundamental to comprehending hybridity. We may get a deeper grasp of how technology influences modern culture and society by examining the intricate interactions that exist between people and products.

Williams and Copes (2005, p. 68) phrase that “The internet offers a means to overcome such barriers by minimizing or eliminating geographic and parental control barriers”. Internet users' ability to expand their social worlds allows them to interact with correctly influenced individuals to create subcultures and seek alternative means of being together. They can emerge, develop and change within this social space of the digital world. Therefore it is possible to say that the internet became an “expressive” platform and space for individuals to collectively or individually experiment with identity. This space has emerged as a socially perceived place where individuals can communicate, interact, comment or explore other shared interests and motives. Moreover, the online world encourages people to create meaningful identities while interacting with each other. Members of each internet subculture may view public activities privately and vice versa; develop relationships regarding physical distance; perceive unreal events through and digital platform, and act as if they are real (Waskul & Douglas, 1997).

Research on creating an artificial online persona often utilized the phrases "strategic self-presentation" and "selective self-presentation" before the concept of online identity reconstruction was suggested (Huang J et al., 2021). Junghyun Kim and Jong-Eun Roselyn Lee (2011) referring this as “a configuration of the defining characteristics of a person in the online space” and defines this creation outcome as “online identity”. This creation outcome will be mentioned as an online identity throughout this study.
MacKinnon (1995) simply put this online identity expression into words by taking another approach to the common phrase “I think, therefore I am” and reconstructing it appropriate for cyberspace to “I am perceived, therefore I am”. Thus, according to MacKinnon, to be perceived on the internet, an individual's first step must be to express their cyber identity. This is how the constantly expanding communication and data matrix encourages its users to be involved in collective practices of the internet. Moreover, Markham furthers this discussion one more step to the phrase “I am responded to, therefore I am” (2007; 249), which defines the primary practice of social media platforms.

2.3.1 Digital Habitus & Digital Self

As we continue to engage with one another through online interactions, our habituses are also beginning to locate in digital systems. This phenomenon is consistent with Bourdieu's (1984) perspective on cultural preferences, which suggests that these preferences are rooted in the systems of perception, judgment, and action of cultural practices. This same approach can be applied to how individuals interact with one another on digital social platforms. The digital world offers a new context for forming habituses, with individuals navigating and negotiating the rules and expectations of these digital spaces just as they do in physical spaces. As the internet continues to shape our social interactions and practices, our habituses will likely continue to adapt and locate in digital systems.

The concept of digital habitus is beneficial for individuals in creating and shaping their digital selves and personas while being connected to society. It allows individuals to navigate the digital world with ease and proficiency, using the digital tools and technologies available to them in an intuitive and natural way. As Baym (2010) described, digital habitus is a set of embodied dispositions, practices, and ways of thinking developed over time through engagement with digital media. These habits are shaped by the individual's social, cultural, and economic background, as well as their experiences and interactions with digital technologies. By developing a
digital habitus, individuals can form and express complex and nuanced identities in
the digital realm while also remaining connected to the society and culture around
them.

Furthermore, by utilizing digital technologies and social media platforms, individuals can express and emphasize different aspects of their identity, connecting with others who share similar interests or beliefs. This can lead to the formation of online communities and the strengthening of offline social ties (Boyd, 2011). Additionally, the ability to craft and curate one's online identity can provide a sense of agency and control over how one is perceived in the digital world (Marwick, 2013).

Even with this simple representation, individuals can perceive and comment on one’s put-out information in cyberspace. Feelings like love, hate, fear, and curiosity may emerge in people who see them on the screen. Therefore the photos of the profile used for expressing the identity can be called passports in the world of online relationships (Mowlabocus, as cited in Roth, 2014). As mentioned, with technology bypassing physical boundaries, social media platforms have become the “perfect instrument” for personal branding (Vitelar, 2019, p. 260). Social media tools provide individuals to manage their personal brand through blogs, profile information, online discussion forums, and the like. While communicating their ideas and feelings, individuals use conceptual platforms similar to physical spaces, such as rooms, lobbies, and information highways. This indicates that, even though cyberspace is changing with new activities and data structures, it is still being fashioned to fit the dimensions of the real world. Since cyberspace is “real” in the sense of chips, bits and wires, even though individuals act traditionally in a newly created media, cyberspace is considered an alternative reality. With internet users approaching social media platforms as tangible places, they do have the desire to protect, be a part of and develop the society they are creating—hence “cyberself” emerges (Waskul & Douglas, 1997, p.375). Waskul and Douglas explain cyberself with simple terms as “an emergent set of transient and situated meanings temporarily associated with a
screen name… a cyberself is the meaning of personhood (or experience of personal identity)...” (1997; 387).

The concept of "cyberself" raises questions about the relationship between an individual's self and society and the type of society it creates. Sociologist Sherry Turkle (1999) has asked what happens to the self when it functions as a society and divides its labours among its constituent "alters." According to Turkle, cyberspace provides the opportunity for identity play, allowing individuals to explore different aspects of themselves and even externalize parts of their identity. Traditional practices focused on appearance and style are losing their significance with flexible expression tools. Digital social platforms encourage anonymity and privacy, enabling individuals to be more aware of what they project into everyday life. Turkle argues that online interactions, such as joining fan-based subcultures and communicating with other members, allow individuals to follow the development of their ideas and arguments. This cycling process of ever-changing and constant communication gives individuals power over their unstable entities. In addition, individuals with similar problems who interact develop solutions collectively, providing them with a subcultural identity in psychological and cultural aspects (Williams & Copes, 2005). As the interaction of being perceived and responded to moves from 'I' to 'you,' it brings individuals closer to 'we' (Natanson, as cited in Vieta, 2005). This process of interaction and identity formation in cyberspace can be related to social reproduction, as individuals can create new forms of subcultural identities and solutions to problems that are unique to their experiences.

According to Francis and Hoefel (2018), the use of digital media has resulted in differences in identity development between Gen Z and Generation Y. While Gen Y prefers to experiment with shaping their identity over time and as they grow into adulthood, Gen Z tends to act quickly and fluidly, parallel to the nature of social media. Furthermore, for Gen Z, the boundaries between "real life" and the "digital world" are blurred, and they view their lives as having two foundations in both networks. Unlike Gen Y, who may use anonymous profiles on social media as an alternative character, Gen Z tends to create a complex and multidimensional identity
in face-to-face and online interactions. Therefore, they can be considered "identity nomads." To investigate the role of school bags in human relations with materiality, it is essential to consider how Gen Z constructs and communicates their identity and social practices in both the physical and digital realms.

In order to investigate the social interactions of adolescents who grew up with technology, Davis and Weinstein (2017) conducted research. They discovered that children are exposed to social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat at a young age and feel interpersonal pressure to join to maintain contact. With their offline friends becoming part of their online worlds, the same society perceives both online and offline behaviors. Through careful curation of their posts, these youths construct a "glammed up" (2017,6) version (which refers to presenting oneself in a polished or attractive manner) of themselves online, seeking social feedback from their online followers through tools such as likes, comments, and shares. This allows them to manipulate their online presence to influence their followers. Therefore, it is crucial to consider how Gen Z constructs and communicates their identity and social practices in both the physical and digital realms when investigating the role of school bags in relations between self and materiality (Davis & Weinstein, 2017).

There are various approaches to distinguishing between online identities and physical world characteristics. However, Marcela Vieta emphasizes the multidimensionality of interaction and argues that internet social practices should not be studied as separate from each other since practices and their context are intertwined. Similarly, Sherry Turkle (1999) suggests that our online identities are not a departure from our real lives but a space to experiment with different aspects of ourselves. Nowadays, technology and practices are integrated into our everyday lives, and individuals find motivation in both the physical and digital realms (Davis & Weinstein, 2017). The stages of personality development, including identity synthesis and confusion, are structured in both dimensions simultaneously. The internet provides an opportunity to craft and express multiple identities, and the lifelong process of individual identity development leads users to be active in both the physical and digital realms.
Yoel Roth (1997) emphasizes that digital identity cannot be separated from the physicality of our bodies. He explains that even though the internet allows us to switch into multiple identities, our real-life bodies should not be considered independent of their digital manifestations. The body, as a physical form, shapes our virtual environment and identity in the interactions we create. Since the internet is not a whole other concept of communication from the physical world, it is essential to acknowledge that online identities would instead complement and supplement ‘real-life’ interactions. Marcela Vieta (2005) adds that online social experiences and practices are deeply rooted in real-life networks and contexts. As such, it is essential not to draw a sharp line between online practices and real-life areas. The interactions we create in digital communication networks are saturated with almost every aspect of everyday life.

In investigating the role of school bags within material relations, it is necessary to consider both the physical and digital realms and how they intersect in shaping identity and social practices. This literature review has shown that online and offline identities are not mutually exclusive but rather intertwined and complement each other. The internet has given rise to a new generation of individuals, particularly Gen Z, who are natives of the digital realm and use it as a means of self-expression and exploration. This includes projecting physical objects such as school bags onto digital platforms, highlighting the intersection of physical and digital realms in shaping identity and social practices. Therefore, any investigation into this study focuses should consider both the physical and digital realms and how they intersect to shape the way internet-native youth construct and communicate their relationships with material objects.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The literature review has highlighted the importance of materiality in shaping human experiences and interactions in everyday life. Given the pervasive influence of digital media on contemporary culture, this study aims to investigate how internet-native youth construct and communicate their relationships with material objects, specifically their school bags, on social media platforms. The main research question guiding this study is:

How does the internet native generation construct relations with material objects in their everyday life and produce these relations on social media platforms?

The methodology chapter will thoroughly describe the research design and methods employed to address the research question. It will then explain the rationale for selecting semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection technique and emphasize the benefits of this approach. The chapter will then discuss the stages to prepare for data collection, including creating a pilot and primary group participant selection process, which will consider criteria such as age, social media usage, and school bag modifications.

Also, in this section, each participant is introduced by anonymizing their identity but displaying the specifics of the bags they were talking about. This is important to familiarize the reader with the material world discussed in the thesis. However, also it allows for expressing the uniqueness of each participant and demonstrates the uniqueness of the modifications applied to the bags.
Stage process descriptions were then provided for the data collection and analysis processes. The processes used to conduct interviews, capture data, and transcribe the interviews were all specified in detail. In addition, the data analysis techniques, including the discovery of codes and themes, were described. Following data processing, the codes that emerged were reviewed in light of the study's literature review. The study's findings were compared and contrasted with prior studies on the subject, and their implications were examined.

In addition, the chapter will discuss how participants' privacy and confidentiality were protected. The chapter will then describe the data analysis process, including how the data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed. It will be concluded by discussing the study's limitations, including potential biases and other potential sources of error or uncertainty.

3.2 Qualitative Research

In this section, methodological approaches and their reasons will be described. This study is structured according to qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that stresses understanding the social world from the viewpoint of the persons and groups under study. In qualitative research, non-numerical data such as words, pictures, and observations are collected and analyzed. It is often used to investigate social issues that are hard to measure quantitatively.

In contrast to quantitative research, which seeks to test hypotheses and generalize results to a population, qualitative research focuses on understanding the meanings and experiences of participants in their natural settings (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Robson and McCartan (2016) assert that qualitative research has primarily three objectives: exploring, describing, and explaining a phenomenon. These objectives require data collection through open-ended interviews, observation, and other non-quantitative approaches, as well as data analysis to find themes and patterns.
Particularly well-suited to investigating complex social phenomena, such as people's views, attitudes, and experiences, is qualitative research.

3.3 Method

In this section, an overview of the method process used in this study will be provided. This will include an explanation of the selected research design, secondary sources and how I applied them to my research stages.

My interest in the topic of Gen Z's relationship with materiality and its expression through social media began with my personal observations. As a part of Generation Z myself, I have noticed the unique ways in which my peers and I engage with physical objects and how we choose to represent ourselves online. However, my interest in this topic was further piqued when I began to observe my younger sister and her friends, who are all part of Gen Z, and their habits around material objects.

I noticed that they often placed great importance on the material objects they owned and how they modified them to reflect their personalities. For example, my sister would decorate her school bag with patches, pins, and stickers that represented her interests and hobbies. Her friends, too, would modify their bags with unique designs and accessories and would take great care to ensure that their bags were a reflection of their individuality. To better comprehend the tangible modifications that Generation Z individuals make to their school bags in order to claim ownership, I initially visited local stores to witness the varieties of school bags and modifying materials available. Nonetheless, I soon realized that this method of observation was not providing me sufficient insight into the cultural and social significance of these modifications. Accordingly, I decided to focus my research on secondary sources, such as social media platforms, blogs, and online forums, where members of this generation share their experiences and opinions on this topic. Through analyzing these sources, I was able to obtain a deeper understanding of how Generation Z
constructs and negotiates relationships with material objects, as well as how they use these objects to express their individuality.

As I continued to observe this trend, I began to wonder about the reasons behind these practices and how they might be related to the ways in which Gen Z members interact with social media. By exploring the relationships between Gen Z, materiality, and social media, I could uncover insights into the ways in which young people engage with the world around them and express their identities in the digital age. To begin my research, I conducted social media harvesting by searching for relevant hashtags such as "#schoolbag" and "#backpack" on various platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Social media harvesting, according to Liang and Zhu (2017), enables the collection and real-time analysis of data. Therefore I was able to analyze the content generated by Gen Z individuals and gain a better understanding of their practices and motivations around modifying and customizing their school bags.

Figure 3.1. Results from the social media platform TikTok when searched for #schoolbag
This figure gives a visual illustration of the internet-native generation's interest in and involvement with the subject of school bags. I have seen approximately 50 million views of the hashtag "#schoolbag," which demonstrates how popular this subject is on social media. The significance of school bags in young people's life and their desire to display their uniqueness through their material things are further highlighted by alternative video content like "What your school bag says about you."

Figure 3.2. Screenshots of videos from the social media platform TikTok when searched for #schoolbag

A selection of screenshots from TikTok videos with the hashtag "what is in my bag" are shown as outcomes of this social media harvesting. These contents display the contents of different people's school bags, which may include personal goods and classroom necessities. The popularity of this hashtag and the willingness of people to post pictures of the items in their bags online emphasize the value of school bags as it accompanies their everyday lives. These pictures provide insightful visual evidence that illustrates how Gen Z builds and shares online connections with their school bags and how they create practical arrangements around their bag.

In addition to being influenced by content creators from around the world, it has been seen that some high schoolers have also started creating their own content related to what is in their bags or the modifications they have made to them. Some students use
these platforms to showcase their creativity and organizational skills, while others use them to share tips and tricks for staying on top of their schoolwork. Whatever their motivation, the trend reflects a growing interest among young people in using social media as a way to express themselves and connect with others who share their interests by using material objects.

Figure 3.3. Screenshots of videos from the social media platform YouTube when searched for #schoolbag

This figure illustrates four longer videos that provide a closer look at the practical arrangements of school packs, with each individual discussing their social practices and personal possessions. These videos provide valuable insight into how the internet-native generation utilizes their school bags on a daily basis, as well as the various ways in which school bags can be personalized and utilized beyond their functional purpose.
Through this process, I decided to focus my research specifically on school bags. These objects are particularly interesting because nearly every high school student has one, and they are often used to transport belongings from their everyday life. Additionally, school bags are highly visible objects often displayed in public spaces, making them a prime site for self-expression.

3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

To investigate this topic further, qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews to gather data from Gen Z individuals about their relationships with their school bags and online activities were adopted. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed me to explore a wide range of topics related to Gen Z's material practices and their online presence while still providing a framework for comparison across participants.

Adapting data collection methods was necessary in response to the unique challenges posed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic for conducting research. The study began with online interviews conducted with a pilot group as a result of social distancing measures. The online format enhanced the research process through various advantages. The wider geographical accessibility of online platforms has enabled the engagement of a diverse range of participants from various demographics, which is a notable benefit. Incorporating a more varied sample enhanced the data's comprehensiveness and inclusivity. The utilization of online interviews not only provides participants with scheduling flexibility and convenience. The decision to persist with online research even after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions for the final participants was made to maximize the advantages noted during the pilot group phase.

A semi-structured interview was selected as this research's primary data collection method. This strategy is consistent with Gray's (2004) suggestion that interviews are well-suited for exploratory research. The use of a semi-structured interview typology
is also compatible with Brinkmann's (2008) assertion that this method provides a mix of structure and flexibility. Particularly, a series of open-ended questions were prepared in advance. However, the questions were also modified or enlarged if unexpected narratives or descriptions developed during the interview.

According to Ayres (2008), semi-structured interviews let participants freely express themselves, as in a conversation. This method may benefit in gathering in-depth knowledge on the subject. In addition, Ayres (2008) says that semi-structured interviews are particularly effective for collecting narratives since participants may recount their experiences in narrative form. This strategy was especially relevant for the present study, given that some of the questions were targeted to collect narratives regarding modification and do-it-yourself practices.

In this manner, qualitative researchers may give rich, in-depth accounts of social phenomena that can guide theory development, program assessment, and policy choices. In light of the fact that socially created realities are examined through meaning construction and interpretation, this epistemological perspective often employs qualitative research methodologies.

3.4.1 Selection of Interview Questions

After conducting social media harvesting on the topic of school bags and observing the content posted by Generation Z, I put together a list of exploratory questions based on the themes that emerged from the data. These themes included the significance of modifying school bags, the materials and ornaments used for personalization, and how the bags were used to express individuality over material objects.

To ensure that my queries were comprehensive and relevant, I perused the academic literature and theory. This allowed me to refine the queries and include various perspectives and ideas. In addition, I tested the queries with a small group of individuals outside of the study to ensure that they were plain and intelligible.
The semi-structured interview queries were designed to be open-ended, allowing participants to share their distinct perspectives and experiences. This method is a significant asset of qualitative research because it enables participants to provide nuanced and detailed responses. I also employed a flexible interview technique, which allowed for a natural conversational flow and enabled participants to elaborate on their responses.

Using a combination of social media harvesting, literature review, pilot testing, and semi-structured interviews, I was able to gain a thorough comprehension of the topic of school packs and customization among Generation Z. This methodology enabled me to collect rich and detailed data that shed light on the meanings and practices associated with school bags and customization, as well as the larger cultural and social trends that influence them.

### 3.5 Sample of the Study

Due to the fact that I became interested in the research question after observing my sister, I wanted to conduct a pilot study with her peers. Hence in this study, nonprobabilistic sampling has been used in order to prevent the research from being counterproductive to representative sampling (Rothman et al., 2013). Representative sampling involves selecting participants that accurately reflect the characteristics of the target population, but in some cases, this may not be possible or practical. On the other hand, nonprobabilistic sampling is an approach to sampling in which participants are not randomly chosen, and the probability of being chosen is uncertain. This kind of sampling is often adopted when the target group is not clearly defined or when a researcher wants to reach out to communities that are difficult to reach.

As I collected data by using the snowball sampling method, which is a concept developed by Coleman (1958) and Goodman (1961), a type of nonprobabilistic sampling technique. Snowball sampling involves selecting a small group of
participants and then asking them to refer others who might be eligible for the study. This method is beneficial when the target population is difficult to identify or when knowledge of the population is limited.

By using snowball sampling, the researchers were able to reach out to hidden populations and ensure that the sample was selected equivalently. This indicates that each participant had an equal chance of selection and that the sample was representative of the population of interest. Through this procedure, I was able to increase the size of my sample and reach individuals who were pertinent to the research question and shared characteristics with the initial participants. This sampling method enabled me to delve into a network of individuals who have a unique relationship with school bags and materiality and provided me with a wide variety of perspectives and experiences.

In this study, nonprobabilistic sampling, and specifically snowball sampling, proved to be an effective method for selecting participants. As the first phases of the research were conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was challenging to find participants using conventional methods due to social isolation and travel restrictions. Starting with an inner circle of participants, such as the researcher's acquaintances and family, provides a solid foundation for snowball sampling.

To conduct the study, a call for participants was circulated among high school instructors in Turkey through various social media platforms (Appendix A). The aim was to recruit participants who had a face-to-face educational experience and were interested in taking part in the research. This approach was taken to ensure that participants from diverse locations and cultures were included in the study. Although my sister was from the focus generation of the study, the research aimed to broaden the perspective by including participants from various backgrounds. As a result, the majority of the participants were recruited through social media platforms, highlighting the importance of developing social media participant selection tools to reach out to newer generations.
Using snowball sampling, the final sample of 23 high school students was selected among those who expressed interest in participating. All of the participants were between the ages of fourteen and eighteen and actively attended school with their school bags. None of the participants was selected based on their familiarity with social media.

3.5.1 Overview of the Participants

This section will offer an overview of the research and its participants. It will detail the selection criteria and recruitment procedure for participants. The section will also provide basic demographic information about the participants, such as their age, gender, and educational background. In addition to the participant's descriptions of their school bags, photographic evidence was used to support the study. Participants were asked to provide photographs of their school bags, which would be used to better understand their bags' physical characteristics. This visual documentation was aimed to add a new dimension to the research, allowing for a more in-depth analysis of the participant's responses.

A pseudonym was adopted to refer to each student throughout the study in order to safeguard their anonymity. Through the use of pseudonyms, the participants' identity was preserved, and their personal information was kept secret.
Emre is a seventeen years old male junior-year high school student. He is going to a private school in Aydın, Türkiye. He has been using the same bag since 7th grade, which means for five years. He described his bag as a simple, plain Adidas bag. He uses his bag for school and after-class activities such as mathematics tutoring. Emre is an active social media user on two platforms, Instagram and Twitter.
Figure 3.5. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 2

Yağmur is a fifteen years old female freshman-year high school student. She is going to a private school in Aydın, Türkiye. She has been using this bag for three months. She participates in the basketball team in her school, therefore, spends time after-class with her bag. She modified her bag with a bandana tied up to the upper handle and a hand-braided bracelet on the zipper. She changes the modifications on her bag from time to time. Yağmur is active on three social media platforms: Tiktok, Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 3 - Ahmet

Figure 3.6. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 3

Ahmet is a sixteen years old male sophomore-year high school student. He is going to a public school in Eskişehir, Türkiye. He has been using this bag for three years. He is using his bag for both school and for going to library. He mentioned how he likes to study and read in silence, he takes his class and reading necessities to the local library for the weekends. Ahmet is active on two social media platforms: Twitter and Instagram.
Participant 4 – İrem

Figure 3.7. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 4

İrem is a fourteen years old female freshman-year high school student. She is going to a public school in İzmir, Türkiye. She has been using her backpack for five months. Outside of her school, for after-class activities, she switches into her smaller bag. She attached a plushie pompom keychain to the small bag’s zipper. İrem is active on four social media platforms: Twitter, Tiktok, Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 5 – Elif

Figure 3.8. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 5

Elif is a fifteen years old female sophomore-year high school student. She is going to a private school in Aydın, Türkiye. She takes two different bags to go to school since she is a member of the school swimming team. If there is practice, she uses the partially larger bag on the left, and if not, she uses the one on the right. She uses the same bags when travelling to other cities for swimming competitions. Elif modified her bags with Harry Potter -fiction movie franchise-related badges; attached her swimming goggles’ case to the zipper; attached a frog plushie -she is competing in the frog kick category in swimming- on the strap of her bag. Elif is an active social media user on Instagram.
Participant 6 – Merve

Figure 3.9. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 6

Merve is a sixteen years old female senior-year high school student. She is going to public school in Denizli, Türkiye. She wears three separate backpacks to school. The one on the left is her two-month-old new bag, the one in the center is the cover bag for her new bag, and the one on the right is her several-year-old old bag. She uses her old bag for after-class activities. Merve modifies her bags with sticker designs from Asian aesthetics such as a wave or dragon. Merve is active on two social media platforms: Tiktok and Instagram.
Participant 7 – Selim

Figure 3.10. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 7

Selim is an seventeen years old male senior-year high school student. He is going to a private school in Ankara, Türkiye. He stated that he does not like to study outside and he feels more motivated in his own room. Therefore he uses this bag even though he claims it to be small. He is active on two social media platforms: Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 8 – Yaren

Figure 3.11. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 8

Yaren is a seventeen years old female sophomore-year high school student. She is going to a public school in Ankara, Türkiye. She is a part of her school’s book club and uses her bag to carry small reading books throughout her daily life. Also, she uses her bag for after-class tutoring classes on the weekends. Yaren is active on three social media platforms: Tiktok, Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 9 – Özge

Özge is a seventeen years old female junior-year high school student. She is going to a private school in Aydın, Türkiye. She has been using her bag for two months. She modified her bag with a gifted bracelet attached to the zipper; a cactus plushie that was gifted to her on another zipper; a patch that has an LGBTQ+ flag and an astronaut on it. She changes the modifications on her bag from time to time. Özge is active on two social media platforms: Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 10 – Melis

Figure 3.13. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 10

Melis is a seventeen years old female junior-year high school student. She is going to a public school in Muğla, Türkiye. She uses four separate bags for school and switches between bags from time to time according to her mood. The pink bag on the upper left corner is her oldest bag, she was using it for five years, since middle school. She has been using the bottom left, red bag and the bottom right, blue bag for two years. Her most used is her new bag in the upper right corner, the dark green bag. Melis is an active social media user on Instagram.
Participant 11 – Azra

Azra is an eighteen years old female senior-year high school student. She is going to a public school in İzmir, Türkiye. She has been using her bag for four years, since the beginning of high school. Azra uses her bag for both school and after-class activities such as private lessons on the weekend. She modified her bag with a bandana tied up to the upper handle of the bag and a monkey plushie attached to the zipper. She is an active social media user on Instagram.

Figure 3.14. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 11
Participant 12 – Eren

Figure 3.15. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 12

Eren is a fourteen years old male junior-year high school student. He is going to a public school in Trabzon, Türkiye. He is interested in traveling and uses his bag for school and as his backpack for his necessities. He is also in his school’s basketball team. Therefore he carries his sports equipment according to his practice schedule. He is an active social media user on Instagram.
Yusuf is an eighteen years old male senior-year high school student. He is going to a private school in Muğla, Türkiye. He carries two separate bags to school since he visits the gym and basketball practice after school. Therefore, he takes both of his bags to school every day. Yusuf is active on three social media platforms: Snapchat, Tiktok and Instagram.
Participant 14 – Berkay

Figure 3.17. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 14

Berkay is a sixteen years old male sophomore-year high school student. He is going to a private school in İzmir, Türkiye. He uses his bag both in school and after-class gym activities. He modified his bag with a bracelet attached to the front pocket zipper and carries a koala plushie that was gifted by his girlfriend. Berkay is active on three social media platforms: Snapchat, Tiktok and Instagram.
Participant 15 – Enes

Enes is a fifteen years old male freshman-year high school student. He is going to a private school in Ankara, Türkiye. Enes has been using his bag for three years. He uses his bag for both school and after-class activities such as going to gym. He mentioned his bag is enough for carrying the books and sport necessities at the same time. Enes is active on three social media platforms: Snapchat, Youtube and Instagram.
Fatma is an eighteen years old female senior-year high school student. She is going to a public school in İstanbul, Türkiye. She uses her school bag while moving to other cities as well. This is an important factor in her life since they move across the town frequently due to her father’s job. She also uses her bag for after-class activities such as private lessons on the weekend. Fatma is active on two social media platforms: Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 17 – Damla

Figure 3.20. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 17

Damla is a fifteen years old female sophomore-year high school student. She is going to a private school in İstanbul, Türkiye. She has been using this bag for two years. She uses her bag for both school and social activities. She decorates the blank surface on the front of her school bag, but she at times removes them when she gets bored. Therefore, even though she provided insightful information in the interview regarding how she modifies her school bag, the photograph she sent did not have any modifications. Damla is active on two social media platforms: Tiktok and Instagram.
Participant 18 – Onur

Onur is a seventeen years old male junior-year high school student. He is going to a public school in Bursa, Türkiye. He has been using his bag for a year. He uses his bag for his volleyball practices as well as his school. Onur is active on three social media platforms: Tiktok, Youtube and Instagram.

Figure 3.21. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 18
Participant 19 – Mert

Figure 3.22. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 19

Mert is a seventeen years old male junior-year high school student. He is going to a private school in Aydın, Türkiye. He has been using his bag for two years. He has a reversible bag with blue and green colors on each side. He switches between colors as he wishes. His school uniform has a dominant green color; therefore, he uses the green side for school and switches it to blue if he is doing any after-class activities. Mert is active on three social media platforms: Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram.
Participant 20 – Can

Figure 3.23. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 20

Can is a sixteen years old male sophomore-year high school student. He is going to a public school in Eskişehir, Türkiye. He uses his bag in school and for afterclass activities such as table tennis. He stated that he does not like the appearance of a bag that is overstuffed, so he carries only the essentials. Can is active on two social media platforms: Tiktok and Instagram.
Participant 21 – Lara

Figure 3.24. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 21

Lara is a fourteen years old female freshman-year high school student. She is going to a private school in Ankara, Türkiye. She uses her school bag in different ways of carrying such as over the shoulder or as a backpack. She uses her bag to after-class activities as well. She modified her bag with a patch including an alien illustration on the upper part of her bag; a rose and a donut pin on the upper part of the zipper; a panda and a polaroid camera on the bottom part of the zipper. She changes the pins location according to the achieved goals. Lara is active on two social media platforms: Tiktok and Instagram.
Participant 22 - Sıla - Pilot Group

Figure 3.25. Photo taken and submitted to research by Participant 22

Sıla is a fifteen years old female freshman-year high school student. She is going to a public school in Konya, Türkiye. She is going to after-class activities such as tutors for mathematics and physics. She uses the same bag for both her school and other courses. Sıla is active on three social media platforms: Twitter, Tiktok and Instagram.
Ali is an eighteen years old male senior-year high school student. He is going to a public school in Burdur, Türkiye. He attends to after-class activities such as theatre and book club. He uses his bag to all these activities. He mentioned he used to have modifications on his bag, however he faced negative comments from his peers in school. Therefore he does not use such decorations on his bag anymore. Ali is active on two social media platforms: Snapchat and Instagram.
In conclusion, a total of 23 high school students from various grade levels and gender identities participated in the research. Participants were all fully involved in traditional face-to-face education and all used school bags in their regular school life. The participants represented a variety of grades of students in high school. Four of them were freshman-year, four of them were sophomore-year, five of them were junior-year and four of them were senior-year students. Twelve of them were going to public and eleven of them were going to private schools. Each of the 23 participants maintained an average of three accounts on different social media sites. Instagram was the most popular social media site among the participants, and it played a vital role in their social connections and identity development. In addition to the interviews, participants were requested to provide images of their school bags, which were used to create a visual record of their experiences.

Table 3.1 Demographic about gender and grades of the participants’
3.6 Data Collection

John W. Creswell (2013) asserts that qualitative research is a versatile and adaptable method that permits a variety of data-collecting and processing techniques. In this study online data-collecting tools were used. Due to the absence of face-to-face connection in online research, researchers must be more careful and precise when communicating with participants (Salmons, 2010). Without visual and verbal cues, it is easy for misunderstandings to occur, which can have a negative impact on the accuracy and credibility of the research findings. Janet Salmons (2010) emphasizes the need to ensure that online research is clear and truthful. She classifies the four modes of synchronous communication as text-based, videoconferencing or video calling, multichannel meetings, and immersive 3-D environments.

Table 3.2 Synchronous Communication Types for Online Interviews (Salmons, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Text-Based</strong></th>
<th><strong>Videoconference or Video Call</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate through the exchange of text, emoticons, and photographs.</td>
<td>• Use voice and video to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connect through smartphone, computer, or phone.</td>
<td>• Connect with a videoconferencing room, computer, or mobile device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multichannel Meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Immersive 3-D Environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate via text, voice, video, and/or shared apps.</td>
<td>• Communicate through audio or text and visual exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connect using a computer or a mobile device.</td>
<td>• Connect using a computer or a mobile device.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of this study, during the online interviews, text-based and videoconference communication types were used. Both the pilot and final participants were interviewed through Zoom Meetings and were recorded so. As in
text-based documentation, all participants were asked to send a self-taken photograph of their school bag with the simple brief:

*Can you send a picture of your school bag from the front and the details you would like to highlight?*

This strategy adheres to Creswell's (2014) suggestion that numerous data sources be used to acquire a more thorough picture of the topic under investigation. By adding visual data, it is possible to get a deeper knowledge of the users' experiences and maintenance practices.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 23 high school students who were all familiar with the online conference tool, Zoom for this study. The duration of each interview was intended to be between 15 and 30 minutes. Before starting the interviews, I sent each participant an informed consent form (Appendix B and C) and gave them the opportunity to address any concerns. I asked open-ended questions during the interviews so that participants could share their unique experiences and perspectives. The questions were formulated based on the themes that arose from the social media harvesting and the literature review and were modified based on the responses of each participant.

Given that all participants were high school students, they were all familiar with Zoom, and there were no significant technical issues during the interviews. I discovered that conducting interviews through Zoom allowed for greater scheduling flexibility and made it simpler to connect with participants from various geographic locations. However, I had to be mindful of potential distractions and privacy concerns in the residential environments of the participants.

In addition to observing the tangible modifications to the bags, I observed that some participants expressed themselves through the contents of their bags. Some participants' bags featured stickers or pins representing their beloved bands, television shows, or political beliefs. Some also carried characteristic keychains or gifts with sentimental value. Through the use of open-ended questions, I encouraged
them to describe each modification's story. By allowing participants to visually display their school bags and their contents, I was able to acquire a deeper understanding of how this age group uses school bags as a form of self-expression.

However, some participants were initially reticent to display their bags on camera or discuss their personal modifications. They frequently prefaced their responses with phrases like "I hope I provided the correct answers" or "I am not positive if this is what you are looking for." This may be due to their lack of experience participating in research studies as well as a general reluctance to share intimate information with strangers. Nonetheless, as the interviews progressed, many participants became more at ease with sharing and were able to provide insightful responses to my inquiries.

I also listened attentively to each participant and asked follow-up questions to obtain a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives. Overall, the interviews provided rich and nuanced data on how high school students exhibit their individuality through the modification of their school bags on social media-producing content. The interview data were subsequently transcribed, classified, and analyzed to identify common themes and patterns among the participants.

Despite these initial concerns, the interviews generally proceeded efficiently, and the participants were able to discuss their experiences and opinions regarding school bags.

3.6.1 Pilot Studies

This section provides an overview of the pilot studies undertaken before the main research project. This study's main research question is how internet-native youth construct and communicate their relationships with material objects on social media platforms, specifically their school bags. In order to address this question, semi-structured online interviews with 23 high school students were conducted. The purpose of the pilot studies was to evaluate the feasibility of the study design, test interview questions and skills, and so enhance the quality of the research data. The
pilot investigations enabled me to identify possible problems and limits with the interview structure and make the required modifications.

For the pilot research, 2 were selected. In order to refine the study topics and data-gathering methods, semi-structured interviews were carried out. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain information on three primary aspects: the use of the school bag, any modifications made to the bag and their significance, and the effects of social media on the relationship to the bag. After reviewing the findings of the pilot study, the questions and data-collecting instruments were enhanced and refined. The insights gathered from the pilot studies served to inform and shape the major research study and are, therefore, an essential component of the research process.

3.6.2 Interviews

The aim of this research is to acquire in-depth information on the ways in which school bags are used and are related to the construction of self by the internet-native generation. Therefore, after obtaining informed consent from each participant, semi-structured interviews were conducted online to delve deeper into the participants' experiences and perceptions related to the study. The interview methodology consisted of three sections designed to provide an in-depth grasp of each participant's perspective.

Participants were first asked to describe their school bags as an icebreaker. This was an open-ended question to see how they approached their bag and to reveal what was important to them about their bag. Additionally, participants were also asked to elaborate on the practical arrangements and routines surrounding their school bags' usage. This included information about if they use their bags outside class and when and how they bought their bags. By providing this level of detail about their school bags, participants were able to offer insight into the role that their bags play in their daily lives and how they perceive their bags as an extension and expression of themselves, their selfhood.
In addition, participants were invited to explain the alterations they made to their bags and the reasons behind these adjustments. Using Sartre's (1943) three major methods of claiming ownership of a commodity, namely using it, creating or modifying it, and understanding the process of manufacturing it, the research focused on modifications made to express oneself through the bag. In addition to exploring the physical appearance and modifications made to their school bags, the study also delved into the participants' use of social media. This was a crucial aspect of the research, as social media has become an integral part of daily life for many young people and provides a platform for self-expression and individuality formation.

Participants also discussed their experiences with online interactions when customizing their school bags during the interviews. Numerous participants reported that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok inspired them to personalize their bags. They were encouraged to share how other users' bag modifications inspired them and how they used online communities to share their own creations. Participants also mentioned the difficulties associated with online interactions, such as coping with negative comments and feeling pressured to conform to certain trends. Some stated they were so concerned they had not found the courage to share certain content. During the interviews, the online aspect of school bag customization was a significant topic of conversation. It provided valuable insight into how Generation Z uses social media to express themselves and communicate with others.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed, allowing for detailed data analysis. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for a flexible approach to exploring unexpected ideas and themes while still providing a framework for consistency in the data collection process.
3.7 Data Analysis

After conducting semi-structured interviews with 23 high school students on the topic of school bag modifications, the data was recorded and transcribed for detailed analysis. Once the transcriptions were completed, the data was reviewed to identify emerging themes and patterns. Relevant quotes were highlighted and grouped together based on common themes. From these insights, I created a visualization board to display the data clearly and organised Appendix D. Each participant was assigned a unique color code to distinguish their responses and ideas better. This approach allowed me to easily see the density of responses and themes that required further investigation.

After the initial categorization, I went through each category and sub-category to ensure that each quote was accurately placed. This process helped me to identify additional themes and patterns in the data that were not initially apparent. Overall, creating this board allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the data and develop insights that would be the base of the analysis process.

Multiple stages comprised the analysis procedure, beginning with a close review of the transcripts to identify any emerging codes and themes. These codes and themes were then categorized to facilitate further investigation. The data was organized into three major categories: practical arrangements, motivation to change, and social media interactions. Within these topics, various themes emerged, which will be explained in the 4th chapter.

After establishing the categories and themes, the data were further analyzed to identify patterns or connections among them. It was discovered, for instance, that many participants desired to personalize their school packs to distinguish out and express their individuality, but that practical factors such as durability and functionality also played a significant role in their decisions. In addition, many participants discussed the impact of social media on their ideas regarding school bag modification, with some indicating that online images and posts inspired them.
Ultimately, the data analysis process provided valuable insights into how Generation Z interacts with materiality and the relationships they create with their school bags. This study sheds light on the motivations and behaviors of this demographic group and lays the groundwork for future research in this area by identifying key themes and patterns in the data.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights gained from this research, a number of limitations should be addressed.

Firstly, using snowball sampling for participant recruitment may have resulted in a biased sample more representative of a specific cultural pattern or social network. Thus, the findings may not apply to other populations or contexts. Participants may have been more likely to share similar values and beliefs, limiting the generalizability of the results.

Secondly, to add value to the study, the lifestyle diversity of the participants posed a challenge when analyzing the data. The unique experiences of each participant may have resulted in data that is not completely representative of the population as a whole.

In addition, it is essential to note that in the early phases of the study, the data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it challenging to have direct contact and casual conversations with the participants. This may have limited the profundity of insights gained and the ability to observe subjects in their natural environments.

In addition, while the participants were asked to submit photographs of their school packs and modifications, the quality and degree of detail of these images varied, which may have affected the accuracy of the data collected.
In conclusion, the limitations of this study show the necessity for more research to properly understand the link between materiality and Generation Z in the digital age. Future research might expand upon the foundation laid by this study by using sample techniques that are both more varied and representative, as well as by integrating more in-depth participant observations and dialogues that are less formal.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is organised into three sections to explain these aspects. The first section, "Bags as Daily Companions", represents how participants utilize their school bags for practical purposes. In essence, these purposes might appear simple as carrying and storing their school and extra-curricular material; however, they prove to be essential ‘companions’ in accomplishing requirements of their daily routine by making possible the carrying out of practices and organising them.

The second section, “Styling the Bag - Styling Self”, explores the relationship between modifications of bags, so modification of materiality and construction and expression of aspects of self. In this study, modification is taken in broad terms to contain small interventions such as adding patches, pins, and other ornaments and modifying the straps and compartments to make the bag more suited to their varied purposes. It was revealed that with such modifications, participants make the bags belong to themselves as well as ‘making’ themselves, constructing selfhood that is very much in touch with the materiality of this personal item. Through these modifications and interactions with their bags, participants, on the one hand, express aspects of themselves, their character traits, their attitude to life, and their interests. On the other hand, they construct themselves as these modifications reveal aspects of self-support, peer or familial support, ways of forming and sustaining relationships and organising and solidifying life goals. Moreover, they reproduce practices and form sub-groups around bag modifications, as in the example of sports teams socialising and building relationships around sharing and borrowing badges and pins as a self-perpetuating practice.

The third part of the study, “I am Perceived Therefore I am”, examines the effect of social media on materiality, practices and aspects of self. While the primary focus
of this study is the relationship between materiality and self, it was found that participants' familiarity with digital platforms was beneficial for investigating digital literacy in design. This section explores what happens as participants passively scroll through social media, absorbing content or more actively as they take photos of their bags or create content related to or involving them and post them on social media. It is revealed that participants have very fluid relationships between the materiality of the bags and the immaterial social media content. Content in social media gets talked about in everyday life or supports a relationship in everyday life. Participants were found to build a repertoire of bags and aspirations about their bags and form ways of relating to others and sustaining relationships through creating and taking in social media content.

During the interviews, it was obvious that bags were inevitably treated as fashion items. Their colour and style frequently emerged as considerations, as students expressed their individuality and personal taste through their school bags. Revisiting Georg Simmel’s ideas in his book *Fashion* (1957), participants used school bags to create uniformity within their social practices and fashion materials. For example, some participants reported that they coordinated the colour and material of their bags with their school uniform or clothing and how they felt more confident and powerful while carrying a bag that showed their particular style. When the data was analysed through this perspective, it appeared that students considered the following factors: popularity, uniformity, and compatibility with their preferences and interests. Participants gave examples of using their school bags to create uniformity in their wardrobe or overall style. They mentioned how they tried to match their lifestyle aesthetic to their school bags, such as using colors that match their sports equipment. Moreover, they mentioned how they distinguish themselves from their peers with bold materials and colors. For instance, one participant mentioned she sees her bag as a fashion item since it has leather straps. She found leather material out of the norm and expressed how her bag stood up in her class.

In this study, however, rather than considering school bags as fashion accessories, I focus on more in-depth relationships that were formed with the bag and the self. Bags
play a vital role in facilitating daily life and are a crucial component in organizing daily routines. They become so integral to our lives that they form close ties to our selfhood in terms of expressions of identity, constructing motives and supporting interpersonal relationships.

4.1 Practical Arrangements Around School Bags: Bags as Daily Companions

“I enjoy how this bag can accompany me throughout the day.”

Özge (9th Participant)

School bags are humble companions that are used in the accomplishment of daily practices and organisation of everyday life; students carry them on their shoulders or back, store their material related to school or extracurricular activities, they open and close them many times during the day, take out and put stuff back in again. They are used and are present with their very materiality and what their materiality limits or enables. Revisiting Elizabeth Shove (2012, p. 124), the human and the object must cooperate and work together to create a "hybrid arrangement” to complete a common daily task. This section discusses these ‘hybrid arrangements’ between high school students and their school bags, where both objects and subjects part-take.

Under practical arrangements of a school bag, how participants use their school bags as companions will be examined along with the orchestration of their everyday life routines. This orchestration will be illustrated with examples of participants carrying two separate bags, alternating bags according to day schedule, and everyday challenges or tensions about their school bags and related practices.

4.1.1 Physicality of Practices

This section will examine the practicality of the practices around school bags. The analysis will focus on three aspects: (1) how people use school bags in their daily
lives; (2) the specific physical settings where school bags are used; and (3) the bodily activities involved in carrying and using school bags. The first subtopic examines how internet-native high school students incorporate the school bag into their daily life practices, which falls under Reckwitz’s (2002) description of practice theory elements of their use. This includes how they carry the bag, what they store inside, and how they access its contents. The second subtopic examines the physical places where the school bag is used. This includes the contexts where the bag is used, such as the classroom, hallways, and lockers, or even in the natural environment of their location and how the bag is used in each of these settings. The third subtopic considers the body; the human body and its direct physical relationship to the bag. This includes the physical movements involved in carrying and accessing the bag and the gestures and body language associated with using the bag in social settings.

**The Physicality of the Bag and Accomplishment of Practices**

Onur explained how his school bag needs to be able to carry the load of his daily schedule as follows:

“*My bag looks like a mountaineering bag! Sometimes people even ask me where I am headed to with that large a bag. I put pretty heavy items in it since I also take it to my volleyball practices. That's why I needed a bag designed specifically for carrying heavy items.*”

Figure 4.1. School bag of Participant 18 (Onur)
Onur keeps explaining his other extracurricular activity and the qualities of his bag that enables him to accommodate these activities as follows:

“I am also quite involved in school, having served as the president of our school newspaper club. As I am carrying a lot of notebooks and other items, having a large bag comes in handy.”

In these explanations, Onur mainly focuses on the practicality of the activities he is involved in and evaluates his bag in terms of its suitability to undertake the requirements brought about by these, such as carrying heavy necessities and storing extra paperwork. Arguably his bag enables him to accomplish these practices, literally by bearing the weight of heavy sports gear and offering the volumetric capacity to accommodate extra paperwork.

**The Environment That the Bag is Used in**

My interviews revealed that the environment that the bags are used in, such as, the facilities of the school or the weather conditions of the city, are elements that shape the practices and the bags. For example, Emre explained the tension between locker space and the materiality of the bag as follows:

“My bag is about to explode. The books barely fit inside. And since I am a senior […] there is no locker in the classroom. So, we have to put the books of all the courses on that day.”

Emre said the absence of personal storage at his school caused him to worry that the weight of his bag could cause it to tear. With everyday attempts to pack everything into the bag without overstretching it, a person-object connection is formed.

Özge provided another example of the environment's impact on her school bag:

“It was also important that it was waterproof. Because it rains a lot where I live. I don’t want my books to get wet, and rain would make my soggy bag heavier.”
It is apparent from this statement that, the bag itself must be protected so that it can fulfill its purpose to the fullest extent. This way the bag will protect the books and still be light and long-lived.

As Reckwits (2002) details environment is an element that shapes practices and materials. And we can see participants were concerned about protecting the school bag as well as their belongings, given that the bag will be an essential element of their daily routines.

**The Physical Relationship of the Bag to the Body**

School bags have a close relationship to one’s body, as they are carried around by the participants throughout the day, so it creates bodily relations as well. Some prefer to carry them on their backs with one or both straps, while others choose to hang them over their shoulders.

For example, Özge highlighted that she looks for physical traits that ensures that the bag is more fitted to her body as follows:

“*I pay attention to the sleeves being thicker. The thicker it is, the more comfortable it is. It doesn't hurt my shoulder while carrying it.*”

Fatma expressed that the way the bag is carried, and how it is positioned on one's body stands for her social place as a grown-up person. Her explanation was as follows:

“*It was the beginning of my adolescence, therefore I envied the bags worn by adults.[...]so I could wear it over one shoulder.*”

In conclusion, the bodily activities that are involved in using a school bag are an integral part of the overall practice surrounding the object. As per Reckwitz's (2002) practice theory, bodily activities play a critical role in shaping the ways in which we engage with the objects around us.
4.1.2 Orchestration of Materiality Around Practices and Composure of Daily Lives

This study revealed that next to storing and carrying study-related material, the personal daily schedule of participants meant that school bags were part of a nexus of practices, including extracurricular activities and formal schooling. Being companions in activities other than the school, such as sports, recreation, book reading clubs, private classes or personal interests, school bags are shaped according to these individual connections. Accordingly, most participants expressed that the practical organisation of daily life informs their school bags. Participants had various challenges throughout the day; thus, they described their schoolbags by their individual schedules. Some participants were on a sports team, some were in a student club, one was relocating to new places frequently, and others had after-class tutoring. It is typical for students to participate in extracurricular activities, and their bags often accompany them to these practices. Participants in the study are already adept at identifying and anticipating potential challenges in their daily lives, and a bag is an adaptable companion for various purposes, locations, and habits.

It was revealed that participants were orchestrating a repertoire of bags that matched the requirements of the practice and daily schedule. Quite a few participants used two or more separate bags throughout the day for distinct purposes. They differentiated between these bags by comparing which bag was more recently bought, which was larger, and which had functional compartments regarding the task.

For example, Yağmur, takes both of her bags when leaving the house.

“I usually leave the house with two bags anyway.”

Moreover, she explains that she has a school bag for her in-class necessities and another bag for her sports practice.
Yusuf had a similar explanation to Yağmur. He was carrying a small duffel bag to his basketball practice and a backpack for his school. He suggested:

“Every three days of the week, I go to basketball practice. I’m bringing both my duffel bag and my school bag there. The gym bag includes three large compartments and two little compartments. When I’m carrying a lot of new clothes, perfumes, deodorants, and other items, I need a larger bag, so I bought that one.”

Figure 4.2. School bag of Participant 13 (Yusuf)

Some participants did not carry multiple bags but alternated their bags according to the practice in question. For example, Elif had out-of-school activities for which she still contributed to their education; therefore, she had two different-sized bags. They explained this as follows:

“But if I am only going to take only a notebook or something, I have a small bag, and I take it with me. It is more practical.”

Merve also had two separate bags she used daily in school. However, her reasoning for using different bags was to avoid shortening the lifetime of the new bag. This brings us to a discussion of "ownership" when classifying school bags according to whether they are new or used. As mentioned in Chapter 2.2., Elizabeth Shove (2012) claims that to claim ownership of possession needs to be orchestrated with everyday
practices. In this respect, Merve's concern regarding the school bag's age is essential to the ownership operation. Merve explains her fear as follows:

“Because I am so afraid it is going to get old soon. Therefore I am taking my old bag with me. I have such a simple two-compartment black bag. It's a little smaller than that, but I use it, so it does not get old.”

It can be understood from this statement that the difference between the new bag and the used one is not only the age difference but also the size and practicality. However, the school bag's condition influences her decision by allowing her to consider the value of the location and which bag to bring along. If it is just a routine day at school, she will bring her small and worn-out bag, as opposed to the days when she has after-school activities and wears her new bag.

To conclude this section, I want to get back to the opening quote taken from participant 9, Özge, where she claimed for her bag:

“I enjoy how this bag can accompany me throughout the day.”

Based on the examples in this section, it can be argued that bags are companions of daily lives. They enable the participants to accomplish practices and organise their daily lives. By being accompanied by the right type of bag for the right activity, participants orchestrate a range of materiality around their daily life practices. It can be seen from the above examples that in addition to carrying essentials, backpacks function as organized tools that accompany students in organizing their everyday lives and accomplishing their routines. School bags serve a practical purpose for students, allowing them to carry essential items and equipment to school and back. However, they also serve as companions in their everyday lives and struggles.
4.2 Styling the Bag - Styling Self: Modifications of Materiality and Construction of Self

This section focuses on modifications of bags and examines more closely what happens when participants modify their bags. It follows their stories of modification beyond that of personalisation and deciphers the meanings of altering materiality. We will see that as bags are modified, selfhood is made in expressions of self, building relationships, and setting life goals. Thorstein Veblen (1899) claims in his book ‘The Theory of the Leisure Class’ that, people in a society with common meanings, tend to use material objects in order to express themselves. This concept is particularly evident in the case of school bags, which serve as a practical item for students to carry their books and supplies, but also offer a canvas for self-expression through customization and modification. In this context, Sartre's (1943) approach to object ownership, particularly the strategy of personalization, is relevant to understanding how students use school bags as a means of self-expression. Participants who modify their bags can claim ownership over the consumed thing and turn it into their possession.

As mentioned in Chapter 2.2, according to Elizabeth Shove’s (2012) perspective, the participants' school bags became a hybrid in their daily routines with modifications in means and appearance. In this case, from the participants’ photographed school bags (Chapter 3.3.1), modifications on school bags can be defined as pinning badges, hanging key chains, painting the bag itself, and attaching accessories with memories and like. These modifications can be spontaneous do-it-yourself projects, hand-made gifts from others or store-bought objects from local or online.

In this section, how participants relate to material modifications will be examined.

4.2.1 Bag as a Display of Self

This section investigates the ways in which school bags can be used as a means of self-expression. Russell Belk's (2013) definition of the extended self in materials and
humans has been used as a referral point during the analysis of participants. According to his viewpoint, accumulating our goods provides us with a sense of the past, defines who we are right now, explains where we have been, and hints at where we are going in the future. Moreover, in this case, the participant's modifications serve as tangible proof that enables their peers to peek into their personality.

Sometimes participants believe that they express personality traits through certain modifications. As an example, Elif explains as follows:

“I hung a Gryffindor badge on my bag. Those who know me always say I give Gryffindor vibes since I am very affectionate and talkative. I wanted those who saw it not to be afraid to come and talk once they see my bag.”

![Figure 4.3. Pins and badges on the school bag of Participant 5 (Elif)](image)

She explains in her statement that she wants to make such an impression on her peers that they feel comfortable approaching her, and she claims that she believes her bag reflects her personality. She tries to reflect the warm and lively characteristics of her personality with a well-recognised figurine. It is both a way of expressing her personality and establishing her affectionate and talkative role in her peer group.

Elif also remarked that she wants her peers to acknowledge that she leads a busy life. She thinks if a bag could be used for a variety of purposes, it would connote the intensity of her schedule. She explains this as follows:
“I normally like multi-pocketed bags more. You can put something to every gap as if to show others that you are versatile. They might say, “Wow, this girl is pretty busy in her life”.

Whereas Damla explains how her style expresses herself as follows:

“...because that is exactly my style. For example, I normally dress simply and appropriately. That is why I looked for simple bags, for example. I always looked for simple and minimalistic designs while browsing the shops or searching the internet. That is why the designs I was interested in were always simple.”

These two participants were confident about the impression they gave and wanted to express themselves in two ways with their school bags. While one wants others to think she is busy with a multi-pocketed bag, the other participant chose a simple and plain design. Both wanted to be serious with their peers and identified themselves with their own design choices and means. Özge, on the other hand, who wanted their school bag to represent their identity, used various modifications. She explained:

“Of course, for example, the movies and series I watch... I love buying pins related to them. There are also the lyrics of my favorite songs—anything I find beautiful in general. I look at it, and if I think it looks good, I steal it like a goblin and put it in my bag. I love it. It looks like me, myself. I think I can express myself more.”

Some of the participants discussed how they would assess themselves from the third eye's perspective if they only glanced at their bag. They went on to discuss what aspects of their identity they are expressing inside these statements. In addition, they conveyed a sense of how they would want others to approach them. This shift in perspective with others also demonstrates the effect the bag has on the individual's identity assertion.

Berkay was concerned yet confident about the impression the bag left on his peers. He translocated himself with others and explained how his style would draw attention. He also gave a possible example of a dialogue starter:
“For example, even if I see someone with this bag and I do not know them, I would go and talk. Where did you get it? How to use it, I would ask. I would find this person interesting and amazing.”

Yağmur gave a similar example to Berkay and critically approached personality expressions on bags. Moreover, she gave an insight into her own approach to judging others by their fashion—such as under what conditions she would communicate with them or find them not interesting at all. She argued:

“I think people who wear basic outfits are usually boring and plain. However, when I see someone who decorates their bags with a music band or anything interesting, I talk to them immediately. Those people seem more positive to me. Like if they carry cute accessories on their bags.”

Figure 4.4. School bag of Participant 2 (Yağmur)

Yağmur furthers her explanation with which modification elements she uses to express her personality. She considers her bag as an empty canvas and decorates it with things that are important to her. She explains this as follows:

“Or I wear pins or bandanas and such. Well, I hang things that are important to me in my bag, even though some may find it ugly and simple.”
In addition, it may appear like she matched the bag's ugly appearance to her bland look, which can be referred to as her school bag as an extended version of herself and owning the title as her own.

Özge was also concerned about what her peers might think of her bag. She notes that the modifications to the bag allow her to express herself, yet she also considers what others think of her and herself. She goes on to say:

“But since it is purple, I would say this person took their time with it; they must be fun to be around.”

Some participants addressed how they express themselves to gain appreciation from the ones they respect. Instead of expressing their all true positions in life, they wanted to portray a more grown, manly or serious aspect of themselves.

For instance, Azra was worried about her style being too childish compared to her peers. She changed her style to look more grown-up even though she was still a teenager. Azra explained and supported her argument with the following:

“I did not want to draw attention with colorful clothes and bags since I am a grown-up person now.”

Whereas Yusuf compared his gender roles to those of his peers. He desired to match the style of other male adolescents. According to his statement, he analyzes individuals to develop this insight and expects others to judge him similarly. He explained as follows:

“Boys usually do not care about their outfits. I mostly wear almost the same things. They are all simple.”

In light of these statements, school bags are being used as personal displays for participants. They could express aspects of themselves, identity, character, and attitude, such as being lively, boring, and talkative, through modifications to school bags. In this respect, participants considered their school bags as with Russel Belk’s (1988) definitive approach, extensions to their selves.
4.2.2 Bag as A Spiritual Token: Construction of Self

This section of the findings will focus on modifications that reflect the morale and spiritual support aspects of the bag modifications, hence elaborating on how the materiality of the bag supports immaterial aspects of selfhood.

As mentioned in the 2.2 chapter of this study, Daniel Miller (2010) claims that commodities are tokens that can be used in one's daily life and in making sense of the world around them. Miller (1984, p. 81) defined this re-valuing consumption process as “creative appropriation”.

It was revealed that participants sustain a link between their spirituality and the materiality of their modifications. Sometimes this is about their mental strength and support; sometimes, it is more directly linked to their mood and sometimes more connected to their personal motivation, such as their life goals and ambitions.

In some cases, modifying the bag was closely linked to personal motivation, such as a desire to stand out or to express individuality. The act of modifying their bag was a way of expressing their values, beliefs, and passions and was, therefore, a profoundly personal and meaningful experience. For instance, Lara provided an alternate perspective on how to use the bag as an emotionally satisfying token. Using the bag's zipper as a divider, she would consider her bag a board for her life goals. The diagonal zipper of the bag separates the bag's front into an upper and lower half. She assigns the symbols of her objectives to the lower portion of the zipper and moves them to the top side of the zipper as she achieves each goal. These objectives may refer to her hobbies, shopping wish list, or academic achievements.

“There was a diagonal zipper right in front of my bag. Like a lifeline, the zipper separated the bag. I pinned my life goals under the zipper part of the bag. For example, there were theatrical faces, such as happy and sad masks. When my first theatre show came out, I took the pin and placed it on the upper side of the zipper. There are cat and dog pins at the top that look just like my pets. For instance, at the bottom, I have a skateboard pin. I'll take that pin to the top the day I learn how to
skate. I'm organizing my accomplishments. It feels fantastic to move a pin to the upper part and accomplish something.”

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Figure 4.5. School bag of Participant 21 (Lara)

Yusuf illustrates how she sometimes needs to update her bag's modifications to change her emotional mood. She emphasizes the stillness of the bag and urges us to make changes in order to feel relieved. She explains as follows:

“I often change what is on my bag. If I get bored or feel sickened by it, I need to change the accessories immediately.”
Considering the statements made by these participants, it is apparent that bag modifications may have internal purposes and expressional values. For example, Elif explained in section 4.3.1 that she uses her bag as a way to communicate with her peers; however, once the conversation was furthered, the accessories became personally satisfying commodities. As mentioned in previous chapters, Daniel Miller (1984) explained this value exchange with the dynamic between creative appropriation and alienation.

Participants commonly used their bags to keep themselves spiritually and emotionally supported and cared for by modifying their bags with items gifted by loved ones. For instance, Özge explained why she carries the accessories in her bag by saying:

“I feel like it brings me luck to keep them with me, like a tiny totem. I believe in so.”

Similarly, Elif gains power from the materiality of the bag. The modifications she made to her school bag give her strength in her daily life. She encourages herself by saving tiny tokens of affection from her loved ones so she can feel their support. She feels that the modifications to her backpack provide her with good fortune and clarity during swimming practices. She goes into depth as follows:

“I hung the bandana my teacher, Ms Ceren, bought there. Or there is a key chain that my friend gave me, her name is written on it. I hung it on my bag too. Then there was the frog my mother gave me; I hung it in my bag. It's like becoming a totem to me.

[...]

I believe it brings me good luck. Because these are the things gifted by the people I love, value and care about. I feel like the gifts let me keep their strength with me. After all, I need strength mentally while training.”
Figure 4.6. Frog plushie from the school bag of Participant 5 (Elif)

In some cases, bag modification is more closely linked to one's mood and is linked to an approach to life at a deeper level. Bag modification may be a kind of self-care, as the process of personalizing the bag can provide the user with a feeling of comfort and familiarity. Furthermore, the modifications made to the school bag may represent the owner's approach to life and ideals. For instance, Damla had a different motivation when altering modifications than the above statements.

Participants can tangibly express their creativity and individuality by modifying their school bags. Pacing patches, pins, or other decorations can be soothing, helping students focus their thoughts and emotions on the activity at hand. Seeing the ultimate outcome of their work may inspire students with a sense of success and pride, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence. Moreover, by modifying their bags, kids can develop a sense of ownership over their possessions, strengthening their attachment to their bags and enhancing their sense of self.
4.2.3 Bags for Making and Nurturing Relationships

This section explains how participants use the modifications on the bags to build and sustain their relationships. It was found that modifying bags can mobilize certain groups to create their own practices and ways of relating, and sometimes it was more personal and kept dear ones closer to themselves.

Elif stated that she saves the memories of her loved ones close to her and even exchanges them as tokens in the future. She mentioned that she is a member of her school's swimming team, which often travels to other cities. They trade badges, pins, and stuffed animals when interacting with other teams. And upon reuniting in another city, they would exchange their own pieces.

She described how she and her peers created a method of communication and identification based on a material token. She continues her explanation by pointing out that other swimming groups around the nation have the same understanding of communication and have collectively developed an exchange culture in reaction to these modifications. As she describes, this cultural connection through material objects encouraged her to form new intimate relationships. She explains in detail as follows:

“We go to a city, and my teammates and the opposing team sit as a group. We decorate our bags altogether. Everyone takes out their badges, and we display them on a table; we even exchange them. It is an activity for us. I have grown very close to a few people….

For instance, I had a boyfriend who also had a monkey pattern on his bag, and a monkey was hanging on the side of his bag. We exchanged my frog with his monkey. Then when we met again in another city, we got our original ones back. This way, our accessories also travel around the country; I like this idea.”

The participant's example illustrates how exchanging badges and other decorative items can foster a sense of community based on shared aesthetics and interests. As
shown by the participant's account of exchanging their frog badge for a monkey plushy with her friend, the act of exchanging items can foster a sense of connection and shared experiences. This exchange also serves as a way to carry the memories and experiences associated with the badge, thereby enhancing its personal significance.

Figure 4.7. School bag of Participant 21 (Berkay)

Berkay matched the personality of a plush toy with that of the person who bought it. He would carry the plush toy, which was gifted by his girlfriend, with him daily by hanging it like a keychain to his school bag. He explained this as:

“My girlfriend gifted it to me. This way, I can carry her memory with me.”

Gathered from these insights, bag modifications can be seen as tools that build and sustain relationships by forming a group around the activity, developing its own practice, and by reproducing a way of sharing and bonding.

4.2.4 Aspirations About the Bag

Not all participants completed their goals in modifying their school bags. Some had vision boards or ideas of what they could make. Not every participant was satisfied with the modifications they made to their school bags. Some participants created
vision boards or ideated their designs. They shared their aspirations and the time and effort devoted to researching their dream bag and modifications. There were examples of how people would interact with things, alter them, and select materials to express themselves. They elaborated on these examples by emphasizing the benefits of openly expressing their opinions. Although these hopes were not fulfilled at the time, they were able to provide a peek at how these bags were used.

Melis provided an example of how she would paint on her tote bag if she had one. She wanted to express the concept of freedom with her sketches. Moreover, she gave an example of an artist who inspires her as follows:

“I want to sketch some stuff on tote bags. Since they do not have zippers, they would be easy to draw on after all. If I had to draw something today, it would be more dream-based sketches. It could be kites, balloons, etc. I thought it would represent freedom. Freedom of such thoughts. Or it would be nature scenery. I also love Van Gogh; it could have been one of his paintings.”

Whereas Participant 8 mentioned her do-it-yourself project as a future plan with her bag. Even though they are similar designs on the market, she explained how she wants to create them on her own with effort:

“I see them when I am shopping; there are a lot of badges. I actually want to make them myself. They can be made from bottle caps; people put them together and glue them. But since I do not know what I want to do with it, I have not done anything like that yet. If I do, I think I will do something colorful by creating a Pinterest board.”

In this case, both participants mentioned they had not decided or thought through what to modify. However, they have an idea of what it may be and refer to other individuals' arts or projects. Therefore, for this section, even though these participants could not express themselves with tangible modifications, they were influenced by other people. They wanted their future projects to resemble the
concepts they wanted to embody, such as being free-minded, artsy or aesthetic enough to be on a mood board.

4.3 “I am Perceived Therefore I am”: Social Media Representation of Self

This section will explore the relationships among bags, social media, and individuals. It was reviewed in section 2.3 that in Cyberspace - a term adopted from William Gibson's (1997) science fiction book - social and physical boundaries are eliminated, and individuals connect through mass media channels regardless of time and distance. Nonetheless, since internet-based realities continue being populated with human identities, they still act as in real life, only with an opportunity to rehearse their selected self-presentation (Huang J et al., 2021). MacKinnon (1995) modified the phrase of Descartes (1637), “I think, therefore I am”, as “I am perceived, therefore I am”, to encompass the effect of this identity rehearsal. In this section, I explore the dimensions of representations of bags on social media platforms in terms of their relationship to the self.

4.3.1 Styling Self Through Mirror and Screen

In this section, how participants express their selective personality on social media with their school bag as a material object will be investigated. Social media enables individuals to display many facets of their personality and present themselves to the world originally and creatively by using well-curated sharing methods. Since Gen Z are identity nomads (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; 4), they gave examples of how they got influenced by other social media creators when posting and expressing themselves.

İrem illustrated her way of cultivating and producing taste through social media with two different examples: first, how she found her ideal bag, and second, how she posted her bag on social media as content. Her first explanation was:
“I had seen similar bags on Instagram before. There is a teacher in my school that I love, it was on her Insta. I saw it in a jewelry boutique, too, something very similar. I bought it right away.”

When browsing for a bag, it appears that she researched social media. Even when she encountered similar bags, she continued to wait. However, after seeing her beloved teacher with the bag, she purchased one for her own.

İrem furthered her explanation of being influenced by mentioning a content creator. For this instance, she discussed the ways of posting her school bag on social media. She explained:

“There is an influencer, Hailey Sani, I follow her, I have similar clothes like hers in my closet. She always posts "what I wore today" videos.”

She perceives a connection between herself and the content producer due to their shared stylistic preferences. In addition, she evaluates how Hailey Sani posts about her daily attire and outfit.

Elif, on the other hand, evaluates her inner circle regarding their social media styling posts. She recognizes others as part of a collective culture since she is a swimming team member. She describes how they can track the modifications made to their bag through their social media posts:

“I check the people I follow on social media accounts to find unique outfits. If I find something I like, I immediately ask them questions. “Where did you get it? Drop the website.” I message them right away. If anyone wants the shopping link for my accessories, I send it without hesitation. Because our tastes in design are the same, after all, we are all swimmers.”

Some participants bought their school bags after seeing them on one of their friend’s social media. Merve said that she is influenced by someone whom she idolizes. She mentioned a hardworking college student she knows who has the same backpack. In addition, she compared her day-to-day practices and conditions with those of the
Bag's owner to make practical arrangements for the bag. She exemplified this as follows:

“I first came across it while scrolling through Instagram. A girl I know who is hardworking and I admire had it. She was going to college, so she had less things to carry, but it looked pretty good. I thought my stuff would fit too.”

Figure 4.8. The stickers Participant 6 (Merve) found on social media

Whereas Enes mentioned that he follows content creators with similar tastes in fashion to his. Therefore, he already feels a connection with their posts. He gave a simple example as follows:

“I found these on the internet, they were on Instagram. But I also saw it on my friends' profile; I bought all of them when I found it.”

As some of the participants mentioned, they can find the material objects they want as they are scrolling through their phones. This is comparable to window shopping on a street lined with retailers.

Özge provided an example of a social media influencer who likes sharing her tips on modifying bags. She stated that the content creators’ posts inspired her to consider modifications and explained as follows:
“I saw one time on the internet that a person added straps to the bottom of the bag. She made that handle herself, it's pretty handy. She (@blogilates) designs sports equipment herself. It was she who added a yoga mat holder to this bag. I really enjoy watching her content and creating something my own.”

Berkay provided an example of how social media helped him increase his bag-searching options. He described a school bag he once spotted in a store display and his efforts to find it on social media marketplaces.

“I saw a bag that looked like a dinosaur. It had a hood that was shaped like a dinosaur head. I wanted to buy it a lot, but it was very expensive. I saw it here in a mall. Then I came across it on Instagram. Since I loved it so much, I did my research. But it wasn't on sale there either.”

Damla searches for badges and stickers using the social media accounts of her peers. She reflected her interest and effort in her friends' social media posts.

Based on these statements, it appears that by scrolling through social media, participants develop their style and expand their repertoire as a storefront. These participants provided examples of content creators in their inner circle or with whom they feel connected. They can develop communications and analyze each other's self-presentation updates. They examined their style based on social media posts and applied the findings to their strategy.

4.3.2 Online Identity Wars

In social media, users are encouraged to share bits and pieces of their identity through various posts, whether a photo of their new outfit or a video of them using a particular product. However, this act of sharing raises questions about ownership and control over posted content. On the one hand, some users try to gatekeep the source of the material object by covering it up or obscuring it in their posts. In contrast, others choose to expose the source to give credit to the original creators or highlight their brand. This tension between covering up and exposing the source reflects a larger
societal conflict over the ownership and control of material objects and their associated meanings.

Merve described how she appreciated buying online from the convenience of her own home. In addition, she noted that social media allows her to research the product she desires. She described her process as follows:

“Especially in summer, I get too lazy to go out to buy something myself. I follow people that have similar tastes to mine, and I buy what they have. I'm looking at TikTok the same way. Some are doing gatekeeping so that we do not find the same thing as if that badge was made only for them. They lie and tell stuff like, “it was a gift; a friend of mine bought it”. But of course, I find it when I do my proper research. Once I buy it, I post the shopping link on top of it. If you want, take it.”

It appears from Merve's statement that there are discussions surrounding the ownership of material objects. She described how someone might hide the item's source in order to keep it special to them. According to Simmel's Fashion (1957), the mentioned content creators attempt to distinguish themselves while being cohesive with their peers. However, Merve perceives this behavior as lying and expresses displeasure with it.

### 4.3.3 Using Materiality in Social Media Relationships

This part reveals the ways in which sharing content related to bag modifications can sustain and nourish relationships. According to Alexandra Vitelar (2019), social media is the perfect instrument for personal branding. It provides its users a platform where they can engage with their audience on personal and emotional levels while being physically away from them. Moreover, social media encourages users to document their life and relations and how they prefer to project (Turkle, 1999). Using tangible objects can evoke memories and emotions associated with them, creating a more profound connection between creators and their followers.
Berkay uses social media to express his relationship with his girlfriend. He explains that hanging a plush toy her girlfriend gifted him off his bag is a way to nurture his relationship. Combined with the inclusion of social media, a complex arrangement of bag modification and posting, it is a way of nurturing one has loved ones. He explains as follows:

“My girlfriend is at another school, so I posted the photo of the plushie [that she gave to me] and tagged my girlfriend for fun. It is like she is the plush itself, and she is always right next to me. She loves it when I publish this sort of content and gets very happy."

Mert shared a similar example of how he updates the modifications to his bag on social media. He was gifted a badge with an animated character printed with a sidekick. As a matched pair, his friend kept the badge with the sidekick and gave Mert the one with the main character. He explained how he shared this interaction as follows:

“I posted a photo of my friends’ gift in my bag. I had the badge with Lightning McQueen from the animation the Cars. And he had the matching one, Mater, on his badge. I took a photo of it and tagged him before posting it on social media. He did the same with him, we kind of communicated through those.”

These two participants used the advantages of social media, which eliminates distance while interacting, to communicate with their peers. During this practice, they both engaged with material objects they own and to which they have connections. Furthermore, while posting, they both assigned identities to these material items.

4.3.4 Using Materiality in Social Media Content

This part exemplifies how sharing content related to bag modification can create content for daily life and trigger social relationships. Some participants were confident about expressing themselves on social media with material objects. Using
school bags in their social media material, creators may demonstrate their individuality and establish an emotional connection with their audience. In addition, they got favorable interactions due to sharing their selective identity on social media. Mert uses his reversible backpack to change styles in a fast way. He explained a video content of him showing this practice and received positive feedback from his peers as follows:

“Once, I posted my two-sided bag on Instagram. I acted as if I was changing my outfit in less than a second. My friends had a good laugh watching it. While doing it, even one girl told me I looked like Clark Kent, Superman. I enjoyed the comments on that one! I created this scenario the moment I bought the bag. It was planned the moment I got my hands on it.”

Figure 4.9. School bag of Participant 19 (Mert)

Mert appreciated the interaction he received from his peers and expressed his excitement by giving a superhero comparison example. From his explanation, it appears that the bag's practicality triggered his consideration of social media. Thus, he had this aspiration once he saw the bag.
He can also give an example of how he uses a badge on his bag in order to attract the attention of his friends he has emotional feelings about. He explained this as follows:

“I have a Metallica badge on my bag. I had this girl I liked, she sometimes commented on it or asked me to borrow it. So, when I want her to text me, I share the badge by placing some Metallica track in the background.”

From this statement, it seems that Participant 16 engages with this material object to remind himself of the female counterpart she is interested. Instead of directly getting in contact, he created a way of communicating through the badge, and a pattern of practice was created out of this interaction.

4.3.5 Social Media as a Rehearsal Stage

In this section, participants' social media expressions will be discussed. Social media has significantly altered the methods in which we interact with one another, communicate with one another, and express ourselves. As social media is a "rehearsal stage" (Ditchfield, 2022), how these social media posts encourage interactions will be investigated.

Some participants who were influenced by the style in which other social media content creators portrayed themselves wanted to adopt similar expressions. Damla was interested in creating video material comparable to that which she had seen on social media. However, despite using social media as a rehearsal stage, she gave out of concern about what others might perceive her as. She described her experience as thus:

“Sometimes I want to record “What is in my bag” videos similar to this, but it does not work out the way I want, so I get embarrassed. I recorded it once after that, but I did not like it at all. I deleted them all. Because I took the video without applying nail polish, even though it's not my face, it is my profile, so I did not want them to talk behind my back. And when I find a video like this, I lock my eyes to my phone and watch it. I'm wondering what is going on.”
This statement suggests that although she enjoyed watching similar social media material, she needed help to fulfill her ambition of making one. She was concerned that her nails' lack of aesthetic ability would affect her personality on social media.

Participants use social media as a practice for presenting their selected selves to others from the perspective of these statements. They can modify their identity, hide 'unwanted' aspects of themselves, and develop new relationships through social media. Social media provides an environment for individuals to explore and express themselves in ways that may not be feasible in real life (Vitelar, 2019). Examples include experimenting with unique personalities, developing social skills, and discovering different communities. Whether generating and sharing content, participating in online conversations, or interacting with like-minded individuals, social media has become a virtual rehearsal space for individuals to explore different facets of their personalities and discover their position in the world.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study elaborated on the ways in which the internet native generation interacts with their school bags as a practical object in their everyday life and as extensions of aspects of self, as well as investigating how they construct and reproduce relationships, practices and materialities by sharing content on their bags on social media platforms. By addressing the following primary research question, the study intends to contribute to the knowledge base of design researchers and practitioners:

*How does the internet native generation construct relations with material objects in their everyday life and reproduce this relation on social media platforms?*

Through the analysis of data collected from a sample of internet-native high school students, as well as a review of relevant literature, it was found that social media plays a crucial role in shaping the way that the internet-native generation constructs and expresses their relationships with material objects, such as school bags. The study highlights the significance of everyday practices, adaptability, modification, and digital fluency in this process. Therefore by investigating the research questions, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for designers, researchers, and practitioners seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which the internet-native generation interacts with physical objects and social media platforms.

This chapter reflects on the literature to discuss this research's significant conclusions and contributions. Three main themes have been identified by analysing online conversations, visual content, and social media harvesting.

The first key concept that emerged was the orchestration of their school bags around practices, which explores the interdependence of people's practices around material objects and how these practices shape the object's meaning. Examples given in Chapter 4 showed that students orchestrate a number of bags and their different
material qualities, such as compartments and size, to accomplish their daily life practices to construct themselves as the individual they want to be. This fundamental concept revealed that the school bag is a constant companion throughout their daily activities, from carrying it to opening and closing it to using it to meet their daily challenges.

The practical arrangements and interactions with school bags demonstrate how material objects are intertwined with daily practices and how they shape our perceptions and relationships with the objects. This idea aligns with Reckwitz's (2002) perspective of social practice theory that material objects are integral to practices and cannot be separated from them. Similarly, Elizabeth Shove's (2002) approach suggests that to claim ownership of materials needs to be orchestrated with everyday practices, which this study's practical arrangements can exemplify.

Moreover, the environment in which the bag is used affects the material and how it is carried and used, whether it be a school with no locked closets or a rainy city. In opening, carrying, and decorating their bags, students build a personal relationship with this basic object, transforming it into a friend that symbolizes their personality and uniqueness. Thus, school bags are not merely functional items but rather integral components of the student experience.

Overall, this part of the analysis contributes to a better understanding of the complex relationship between high school students and their school bags. It sheds light on the significance of material objects in shaping daily practices and interactions, particularly how the orchestration of materiality around school bags can reflect and communicate value, linking these relations to social practice theory.

The study's second finding was the role of school bags in the expression of the individuality and personal style of Gen Z participants. They were observed to modify their school bags by adding accessories such as pins, patches, and stickers that reflect their interests, hobbies, and personalities. The study revealed that the modifications made to school bags by Gen Z participants were not merely superficial. However, it were a way for them to express their individuality and personal style in a deeper and
more meaningful way. By adding pins, patches, and stickers that reflected their interests, hobbies, and personalities, the students could create a unique identity for themselves, which they could proudly display to the world. Moreover, this act of modification and personalization helped the participants gain a sense of self-motivation and self-expression, as they could create something that was indeed their own.

In addition, the modifications made to school bags also had a deeper psychological impact on the participants. The findings of this study demonstrate that school bags have transformed from mere practical items to become an extension of the self and identity of internet-native high school students. This can be seen as a reflection of the concept of the "extended self" described by Belk (2013), where a material object, in this case, the school bag, serves as an extension of the individual's self. For instance, the students used their school bags to set life goals and to remind themselves of their aspirations and dreams. By decorating their school bags with pins and stickers that represented their goals and dreams, the participants were able to keep themselves motivated and focused on their future aspirations.

In addition to self-expression, the school bag and the modifications also play a role in the social relationships of Gen Z. They use it to keep, sustain, and nurture their relationships with friends and peers. Participants were using the gifts of their loved ones as a tool for collaboration, strengthening their connections with others and creating a sense of community. These findings have implications for designers and marketers who seek to better understand this demographic group's motivations and preferences concerning material objects.

The third main concept the analysis revealed was the significant role of social media in shaping high school students' aspirations and repertoire about school bags and other material objects. It was found that social media platforms help internet native participants create a personalized repertoire of school bags and modifications, which is essential for their self-expression and individuality. These platforms offer new social practices that have emerged within the digital culture of Gen Z and allow them
to reproduce their relationship with material objects in an immaterial realm. It was seen that by curating their online presence and sharing their school bag modifications, Gen Z students could showcase their individuality to a wider audience made of both their friends and their followers. This not only helps them gain recognition and validation but also contributes to the formation of their aspirations and desires for material objects. In essence, social media serves as a virtual space where Gen Z students can experiment with their identity and material culture and create a sense of belonging to a community that shares similar values and interests.

In conclusion, from the second main theme of the analysis, it was founded that the modifications made to school bags by Generation Z participants were a way for them to express their individuality and personality in a deeper approach. The school bags became an extension of their individualities, accompanying the development of self-motivation, self-expression, and achievement of life goals.

The analysis of the findings further underscores the profound impact of social media on the relationship between high school students and their school bags. It goes beyond just a means of sharing images or experiences; social media platforms have become integral to reproducing internet native participants' connection with material objects in an immaterial realm.

In the digital culture of Gen Z, social media platforms offer new social practices that shape their perceptions of material objects, including school bags. Through these platforms, internet native students curate a personalized repertoire of school bags and modifications, creating a virtual repertoire that reflects their unique tastes, interests, and identities. They can share images of their school bag modifications, showcase their creativity and individuality, and seek validation from peers and followers. Moreover, from the analysis, it was noted that by following the new updates on social media posts about school bag modifications, participants could keep up with their friends’ achievements or life changes.

The virtual social media space allows Gen Z students to experiment with different styles, trends, and aesthetics and to create their own digital persona that aligns with
their desired image. They can engage in conversations, exchange ideas, explore new possibilities for school bag modifications, and draw inspiration from their online community. Social media platforms also serve as a platform for Gen Z students to set goals, aspirations, and desires related to material objects. They may aspire to own a particular do-it-yourself project or a subculture they can express with bag modifications, and social media acts as a conduit for manifesting and sharing these aspirations with others.

In conclusion, the findings of this research provide significant insights into the function that material things and social media platforms have in the lives of Generation Z. This is accomplished by stressing the significance of school bags as both functional objects and symbols of personal expression. The study on how the internet native generation relates to their school bag as a material object in their daily life and communicates these relations on social media platforms is valuable to the literature on industrial design. The research provides insights into the unique needs and preferences of this demographic when it comes to designing everyday objects that accompany humans. By emphasizing the importance of modification, versatility, and uniformity in design, the study reveals the design elements most important to internet natives.

The study on how the internet native generation constructs relations with their school bags as material objects and personalizes them to express their self, ambitions, dreams, and more makes a significant contribution to the design field. It reveals the importance of personalization as an essential and intrinsic aspect when it comes to school bags. Facilitating individuals to customize their school bags enables them to showcase their unique identities and preferences, fostering a profound sense of ownership and personal attachment. Furthermore, personalized school bags also play a pivotal role in promoting sustainability from a designer's perspective. Within the context of school bags, it emphasizes the importance of personalization in design, as it fosters a sustainable approach to consumption by encouraging users to acquire more personalized and owned goods. This study highlights the role of
personalization in instilling a strong sense of ownership and advancing sustainability in the domain of school bags.

This study’s findings highlight the significance of digital literacy and proficiency in the design process. Social media platforms have become essential sources of information and inspiration for designers in various fields. Within the developing digital habitus, the significance of social media harvesting must be maintained, even for everyday objects such as school bags. This is primarily due to the increased activity of Generation Z on social media platforms, which serves as a medium for self-expression. Through examining social media content, designers can acquire valuable insights into the practices surrounding a material object and the preferences of the target demographic. Including the post-use design process can serve as a valuable tool for designers. Thus, digital fluency is no longer an optional skill for designers but a crucial element in creating successful designs in the digital age. It has become a means of understanding and connecting with the user and designing products that reflect their repertoire and aspirations. The ability to navigate and utilize digital media effectively is a valuable asset for designers seeking to create innovative and relevant designs for Gen Z. Therefore, this study provides designers with valuable insights on how to design products that satisfy their hanging requirements and expectations in the digital age.

5.1 Recommendations for Further Studies

This investigation was conducted with only 23 high school students, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, the participants' lifestyles differed, which may have contributed to their varied relationships with their school bags. Future research might focus on a more specific lifestyle group to identify material relationship patterns.

In addition, employing methods such as observation or semi-structured face-to-face interviews may yield deeper and more comprehensive insights. Due to Covid-19
restrictions, the early stages of the study were conducted through online interviews, which limited the ability to record nonverbal indicators or other impressions. Future research should consider the current study's limitations and employ alternative methodologies to investigate the relationship between Generation Z and their material possessions.

The study found that social media is crucial to Gen Z's personal life. Therefore, further research on social media harvesting could provide valuable insights into this relationship between social media and materiality. Research could involve examining how participants interact with social media, the types of content they consume and create, and how this content reflects and affects their material practices. This study was limited to the availability of social media data and the extent to which participants could reflect on their social media sharing. However, a more directed study on social media and materiality relationships could yield deeper insights into this important area.

Additionally, it might be beneficial to examine how the findings of this study can be applied to other product categories, such as apparel or technology, beyond school bags. This may provide a deeper comprehension of the relationship between internet-native generations, social media, and physical objects in their daily existence.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

A. Social Media Research Announcement (Turkish)

İNTERNET ÜZERİNDEN DUYURU METNİ

B. Consent File (Turkish)

Değerli katılımcı,


- Bu çalışmaya katılımınız gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır.
- Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda, mülakat yapılarak滇den veriler toplanacaktır.
- İşminizi yazmak ya da kimliğiniz açığa çıkaran bir bilgi vermek zorunda değildir/araştırmada katılımcıların isimleri gizli tutulacaktır.
- Araştırma kapsamında toplanan veriler, sadece bilimsel amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılabilecek, araştırmanın amacı dışında da bir başka araştırmada kullanılamayacak ve gerekmesi halinde, sizin (yazılı) izniniz olmadan başkalaryla paylaşılmayacaktır.
- İstemez halinde sizden toplanan verileri inceleme hakkınız bulunmaktadır.
- Sizden toplanan veriler gizlilikle korunacak ve araştırma bitiminde arşivlenecektir veya imha edilecektir.
- Veri toplama sürecinde/süreçlerinde size rahatsızlık verebilecek herhangi bir sorun talep olmayacaktır. Yine de katılımınız sırasında herhangi bir sebepten rahatsız olursanız hissedersemiz çalışmadan isteğiniz zamanda aynılabileceksiniz. Çalışmadan ayrılanız durumunda sizden toplanan veriler çalışmadan çıkarılacaktır ve imha edilecektir.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen kendi rızaAMLı, istedigim takdirde çalışmadan ayrılabileceğimi bilerek<dd> Kişisel bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Katılımcı Ad ve Soyadı:

İmza:

Tarih:
C. Consent File for Parents (Turkish)

Değerli veliler,

Yürürlüğün tez, **Okul Çantamda Ne Var: Sosyal Kimlik, Okul Çantaları ve Sosyal Medya İlişkisi** başlıklı bir araştırma çalışması olup internet kuşağı, okul çantalarını değiştirirken yaratıldığı etikleştirmekte sosyal kimlikleri nasıl ifade etikleri ve bu süreç sosyal medya platformlarında nasıl paylaşıklarını araştırma amacı taşımaktadır. Çalışma sonucunda internet kuşağı olarak da bilinen Z nesninin sosyal medya paylaşımları ve maddi kültürün üretiminde arasındaki ilişkileri anlamak noktasında akademik literatüre katkıda bulunması hedeflemektedir.


Lütfen bu araştırmaya katılmak konusundaki tercihiniz aşağıdaki seçeneklerden size en uygun gelenin altına imzanız atarak belirtiniz ve bu formu araştırmaçiya geri gönderiniz.

A) Bu araştırmaya tamamen gönlü olarak çocuğumun katılmcı olması
   - İzin veriyorum ....
   - İzin vermiyorum ....

B) Çalışmayı istediğim zaman yanda kesip bırakabileceği biliriyorum ve verdiği bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı olarak kullanılmasını
   - Kabul ediyorum ....
   - Kabul etmiyorum ....

Veli Adi-Soyadı..............................

İmza
D. Visual board of the organized data
Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Soruları

- Okul çantasınızı anlatabilir misiniz?
  -(farklı çantalardan) Hangisini ne tür durumlarda kullanıyorsunuz?
  - Bu çantanın diğerlerinden farklı ne?
- Okulda kullandığınız çantayı çantaları gösterebilir misiniz?
- Çantayı nasıl kullanıyorsunuz?
- Çantayı ne zaman, nereden, nasıl aldınız?
- Neden yeni bir çanta aldınız?
  - Neden bu çantayı aldınız?
  - Varsa eksi çantanı değiştirmeye sebebin neydii? Nasıl bir çantayıdınız?
- Çantada yapmayı dileğiniz değişiklikler neler?
  - (Komşu ilerleyişine göre dejinirse) Yapığınız değişiklikleri gösterebilir misiniz?
  - Varsa şimdiye dek ne gibi değişikliklerde sebebin neler?
- (Csteki sorudan alınan cevaplara göre) Bu (yapılan veya yapmak istenen) değişiklikleri nasıl fark etti ve neden istediniz? Sana itham veren & örnek olan bir model oldu mu?
- Sosyal medyada bu tür (sosyal medyadan gördüğe) örnekleri ilginç çektıyor mu? Takip ediyor musun?

Verilen cevaptan medyadan veya çevreden eklenmeye göre komşumada araya eklenebilecek sorular:

- Sosyal medyada hangi platformlarda aktifsiniz?
- Sosyal medyada takipçi kitlen kendi çevren mi?
- Sosyal medyada neleri takip ediyorsunuz?
- Sosyal medyada paylaşım yapıyor musunuz?
  - Neleri paylaşıyorunuz?
F. Interview Questions (English)

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- Can you describe your school bags?
  - (If they have multiple bags) Which one do you use when?
  - What makes this school bag different from the others?
- Can you show me the school bag’s you are using?
- How do you use your school bag?
- How, when and from where did you buy your school bag?
- Why did you buy a new school bag?
  - Why did you buy this school bag?
  - (If there is) Can you describe your old bag? Why did you change it?
- How do you want to modify your school bag?
  - (If they mention they already modified it) Can you explain the modifications and their meanings to me?
  - (If they have not modified their school bag) Why haven’t you modified your school bag?
  - Why did you modify/want to modify your bag? Have you been influenced by or got inspired by anyone?
  - (If social media have influenced them) Do you enjoy and engage with content about school bag modifications on social media? Do you follow any specific accounts?

Questions that can be added in the speech according to the influence of the media in the answer given:

- On which platforms are you active on social media?
- Is your audience on social media your all-known friends?
- Who or what do you follow on social media?
- Do you post on social media?
  - What sort of content do you share on social media?