Analysis of the Influence and Impact of social media on Gen-Z Literacy Activities

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This article examines related to find out social media platforms influence both literacy development and the everyday lives of Generation Z in Indonesia. In this digital genertaion and this modern era, viral application such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have become deeply embedded in the daily routines and learning habits of young people. While such media enhance access to knowledge and encourage creativity, with the frequent use of social media, there is increasing concern in society to erode traditional literacy skills. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, combining literature analysis with online surveys involving 100 respondents aged 18–27. Researche's statements about their findings on social media contributes positively to digital literacy and self-expression, it tends to reduce engagement in deep reading and coherent writing practices. Approximately 60% of participants favor short-form content, indicating a possible decline in attention span. Nevertheless, educational content on social media also inspires learning for some users. The researcher's findings are that that social media functions dually—supporting informal education while also distracting from conventional literacy. The government must be combining digital literacy programs and encourage mindful content consumption among students.

INTRODUCTION

In the digital generation and modern era, social media cannot be separated from everyday life and become a major part of life for Generation Z, who grew up with smartphones and constant internet access. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube shape how they communicate, learn, and spend their time. The Offers provided are provided by these viral platforms giving a chances to get an experience about study and connect. Literacy today is no longer only about reading printed books or writing essays; it also includes digital skills and understanding information. Digital

media can influence people focus and process information. For example, instead of reading deeply, people tend to scan quickly and jump between different content, which might affect critical thinking. This study explore social media affects Generation Z's literacy and daily routines. It asks whether social media improves new kinds of literacy or if it harms older, more traditional literacy skills. Understanding for educators, parents, and policymakers who want to manage or leading the gen-z for using social media in healthy and productive ways. This study focuses on impacts the literacy skills of Gen Z that influence by social media. Does it help improve their communication in new ways, or does it weaken important skills like deep reading and academic writing? Previous studies (Al-Ali, 2014; Shams & Rizaner, 2018) suggest that digital media can boost creativity and engagement but might also replace focused and long-term learning practices. Understanding these effects is important for teachers, parents, and policy makers so they can better guide young people in using digital media without harming their literacy. This research also aims to show how digital habits affect Gen Z's daily life, learning styles, and social interactions.

METHOD

Using a qualitative descriptive approach to find out social media influences the literacy and everyday behavior of Gen - Z in Indonesia. The data was using journal/article research and online surveys. This mixed approach helps ensure the findings are supported by both theoretical insights and real-life experiences.

Research Design and Context

The research was conducted online in May 2025, mainly targeting employee who are already active social media users. The study exclude focuses on identifying common patterns from participants' responses and literature findings.

Participants and Sampling

A total of 101 respondents aged 18 to 27 participated. They choosen beacuse they are matched the criteria—being part of Gen Z and regularly using platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube.

Data Collection

Primary data: An online questionnaire (via Google Forms) with both multiple-choice and open-ended questions about reading habits, content preferences, and social media usage. From the overall survey, social media is an important thing in the lives of Gen Z workers. Not only functioning as a means of entertainment and communication, social media encourage to increased literacy and insight if consumed in the right way. Young users today using platforms not just for fun, but also an alternative learning that is flexible and easily accessible. This digital literacy needs to continue to be encouraged and developed, so that the gen-Z not only become consumers of information, but also becomes producers and processors of information who are smart, critical, and responsible in the digital genertaion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Gen Z's Preference for Short and Quick Content

A survey conducted among respondents—predominantly male workers (80%) within the age range of 18 to 27 years—reveals several noteworthy trends in social media behavior and perceptions related to literacy and everyday life. This demographic, comprised of young adults who are actively engaged in the workforce, represents a digitally literate and highly connected group. The findings highlight that these young workers are highly active users of social media platforms, integrating them seamlessly into their daily routines. The most frequently used platforms are WhatsApp and Instagram, followed closely by TikTok. This suggests a strong preference for platforms that prioritize instant messaging, visual content, and real-time interaction. The popularity of these platforms reflects a digital environment where visual communication and fast-paced content sharing align with the lifestyles of young, working individuals.

Furthermore, respondents often reported using multiple platforms simultaneously, indicating a multi-channel social media usage pattern. This trend suggests that users are not limited to a single source of content or communication, but rather engage with a diverse range of platforms to fulfill different purposes—be it staying connected, accessing information, or seeking entertainment. In terms of usage duration, the majority (60%) of participants spend 1 to 2 hours daily on social media, while a smaller portion engages for more than 5 hours per day. These figures suggest that although social media has become an integral part of daily life, its usage generally remains within moderate levels for most users. The daily access reflects both habitual usage and the importance of these platforms as tools for social interaction, information consumption, and emotional coping in their professional and personal lives.

Overall, the data indicate that young workers leverage social media not just for entertainment, but also as a tool for communication, engagement, and possibly learning. The consistent usage across multiple platforms, coupled with moderate daily screen time, supports the notion that social media plays a functional, yet balanced role in the digital lives of this demographic group.

3.2 Advantages: Enhancing Digital Skills

Many respondents, roughly two-thirds, that social media helps improve their digital literacy. All respondents (100%) admitted that they often read articles, news, or educational content from social media. This fact show that social media has potential as a source of non-formal learning that easily accessed. They mentioned learning new words, writing concise captions, interpreting visual information, and even creating their own content. These skills showing how social media can be a valuable tool for informal education and creativity, supporting previous studies on collaborative and interactive learning online.

The respondents around (80%) stated that is very helpful in increasing their insight and knowledge, as well as their literacy skills. As many as 60% of them admitted that their literacy skills have increased significantly. This proves that although social media is often criticized for its shallow content, it also contributes to increasing knowledge if used wisely. All respondents choose and stated that social media has an influence on daily life, with various forms of influence: from facilitating communication, increasing insight, helping with work, to expanding social networks. No respondents felt and stated had a negative impact. So, their perception of social media tends to be positive.

3.3 Disadvantages: Challenges with Focus and Attention

Despite some benefits, the survey also revealed several drawbacks. A large number of respondents felt that their attention has been shortened, making it harder to concentrate on textbooks or lengthy assignments. Using soical media at night also linked to sleep disturbances. These is align with research has been find out indicating that multitasking on digital devices can fragment concentration and lower academic performance.

3.4 Shifting Literacy Norms in Digital Culture

The way Generation Z understands literacy is evolving. Rather than focusing solely on traditional reading and writing, they also use images, emojis, videos, and quick interactions as part of their communication toolkit. This new form of literacy, often called "multimodal literacy," blends traditional skills with digital fluency with modern communication styles.

Table 1. Survey Result Using Google Form

No	Question	Most Frequent	Percentage
1	Gneder	Males	80%
2	Age	19 - 22 years	80%
3	Status	Worker	100%
4	Which social media platform do you use most often?	Whatsapp & Instagram	60%
5	How much time do you spend on social media each day?	1 - 2 hours	60%
6	What is your main purpose for using social media?	Entertainment	60%
7	Do you read articles, news, or educational content on social media?	Yes	100%
8	Does social media increase your insight/knowledge?	Very helpful	80%
9	Has your literacy skill improved due to social media?	Yes, significantly improved	60%

10	What is the impact of social media on your daily life?	Positive Impact	100%

The concept of literacy among Generation Z is undergoing a significant transformation, reflecting the evolving nature of communication in the digital age. Unlike previous generations that primarily emphasized traditional forms of literacy — such as reading printed texts and writing in formal, structured formats — Generation Z exhibits a broader and more dynamic understanding of what it means to be literate.

In particular, Generation Z integrates images, emojis, videos, memes, and short-form digital interactions (e.g., comments, reactions, hashtags, and voice notes) into their daily communication practices. These tools are not merely supplementary, but serve as central components of meaning-making. For instance, an emoji may convey tone or emotion that words alone cannot, while a short video clip may encapsulate a complex narrative more effectively than a written paragraph.

This expanded approach to communication is often referred to as multimodal literacy. Multimodal literacy refers to the ability to interpret, produce, and interact with meaning across a variety of modes — not just written text, but also visual, auditory, spatial, and digital modes. It reflects a blending of traditional literacy skills with digital fluency, where competence includes navigating different platforms, understanding visual symbolism, using non-verbal cues effectively, and adapting to rapidly shifting trends in digital discourse.

For Generation Z, who are digital natives, this form of literacy feels natural and intuitive. They are accustomed to decoding layered messages in memes, creating TikTok videos that combine audio, text, and choreography, or using visual storytelling in Instagram stories. Their literacy practices are participatory, fluid, and socially driven — often relying on collaborative content creation and peer interaction rather than solitary reading or writing.

This evolution poses both challenges and opportunities for educators, employers, and policymakers. On one hand, it calls for a redefinition of literacy education to include digital and media literacies as essential competencies. On the other hand, it highlights Generation Z's adaptability and creativity in navigating a fast-changing information landscape, which could be leveraged in contexts such as education, digital marketing, and civic engagement.

In summary, Generation Z's understanding of literacy is no longer confined to reading and writing in the traditional sense. It is multimodal, interactive, and deeply embedded in digital culture, signaling a shift in how communication is understood, practiced, and valued in contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

From the result of this study, social media brings a mix of benefits and challenges to Generation Z's literacy. Many Gen Z individuals are becoming more confident in expressing their ideas through digital formats, and also gaining exposure to teh latest information faster than ever before. However, this is prove it if they are spending time less than traditional reading and writing activities, which are important for developing deeper thinking skills.

The preference for short-form and visual content, like TikTok videos or Instagram reels, shows that Gen Z tends to value quick and entertaining information. This habit might reduce their ability to concentrate on longer texts or academic writing. Because of this, it's important for schools, teachers, and families to help generation Z to make healthy media habits. Educators can start by including digital literacy in lessons while also encouraging reading and writing in more traditional ways. A balanced approach will help Gen Z grow as both creative digital users and thoughtful learners.

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