

Zillennials, Social Media and Artificial Intelligence: A Survey on West Java's Digital Natives

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Abstract - Today's rapid digital and artificial intelligence development has a significant impact on the lives of generation Z, also known as Zillennials. This study is part of the research initiative taken by the Indonesian Association of Communications Scholars of West Java Region (ISKI Jabar), and aims to identify and map trends in the usage of social media and artificial intelligence among the region's Zillennials. The survey was conducted on 515 respondents aged 12-27 years, covering aspects of device utilization, intensity of internet and social media use, and perceptions of AI. Based on the study's findings, West Java Zillennials had a high level of device ownership and internet usage intensity, reaching 93% with an average daily duration of 5-6 hours. Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have emerged as the primary social media platforms for Generation Z, substituting Facebook's previous supremacy. The integration of AI, particularly Google Assistant and ChatGPT, is increasingly becoming prevalent in everyday life, mostly employed to assist with work and academic assignments, as well as for information retrieval. Although most Zillennials display excitement towards the utilization of AI, their technical comprehension of AI classifications and functionalities remains restricted. The findings have significant implications for understanding the influence of technology on the lives of Zillennials. They also emphasize the importance of enhancing media literacy skills to properly embrace the digital and artificial intelligence era.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Generation Z; Social Media; Survey; Zillennials

Introduction

Social media has become an essential aspect of the lives of most individuals worldwide, including Indonesia, due to the rapid advancements in technology over the past few decades. By 2023, more than 75% of Indonesians are active social media users (Yonatan, 2023). Each year, it is anticipated that the percentage will increase steadily. It is unsurprising that the nation has been designated "The Capital Cities of Social Media" on account of its exceptionally high volume of online traffic (Bollier, 2014; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2019).

In the study of social media, Generation Z - also known as Zillennials - is an inseparable entity. As a generation born between 1996 and 2011 (Jayani, 2021), individuals of this generation have been born and raised during a period of immense technological advancement. Generation Z, also known as Zillennials, inherently possess superior adaptability and technological proficiency in comparison to preceding generations due to these circumstances (Chang & Chang, 2023; Karim, 2019). It is natural that Zillennials continue to constitute the largest demographic of social media consumers on a global scale (Childers & Boatwright, 2021).

As a result of their extensive use of social media, Zillennials have developed distinctive and genuine behaviors. While social media was initially designed as a means of communication, a considerable portion of Generation Z now utilizes it to obtain the most recent news, establish their digital persona, and seek for entertainment (Y. A. Ahmed et al., 2019; Cooks-Campbell, 2022; Fadhila et al., 2023). Not only social media, but also the rate of technological advancement that continues to occur brings Generation Z's lives so close to artificial intelligence (AI). Many Zillennials have quickly integrated AI technology into their daily life. Zillennials' enthusiasm for AI is growing rapidly since the technological innovation is thought to give instant and precise information that will boost their productivity (Hennen et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023).

The generation Z population in Indonesia exhibits a significant presence as avid users of social media platforms. To be more precise, this prevailing population is found in the province of West Java, which also happens to be the most populous province in Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). This makes West Java have the highest internet penetration rate in the country (APJII, 2023). The high internet penetration rate demonstrates that the region's young productive-age people rely heavily on the internet, including social media and artificial intelligence.

In relation with the aforementioned phenomenon, the swift progression of technology ensures that research on trends in the utilization of social media and AI remains perpetually dynamic, potentially generating new knowledge at an equally fast pace (Kross et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2023). To date, the trend of social media usage has been the subject of extensive research and discussion in a number of prior studies (Childers & Boatwright, 2021; Gulzar et al., 2021; Hui Zuo & Tongyue Wang, 2019; Muris et al., 2023). However, due to the ongoing dynamics in the social media and AI landscapes, it is an essential subject for further study, both in terms of consumption patterns and the trend's scope (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Ardi & Putri, 2020; Karim, 2019; Kurniasanti et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2018). Furthermore, according to a literature review conducted by researchers, studies on the use of social media and AI technology in the Indonesian context are still understudied, despite the fact that West Java Province has the highest penetration rate of social media and internet users in the country.

For this reason, this study plays a significant role because it focuses on mapping the trend of social media utilization, especially for Zillennials in West Java Province. Put simply, this study focuses on two problem formulations: 1) the consumption patterns of social media usage among Zillennials in West Java, and 2) the consumption patterns of AI usage in West Java. The findings of this study has the potential to benefit a variety of connected sectors, including government, media, and commerce, which require mapping of technology usage trends among the generation Z demographic. Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for future social media research in other demographic areas.

Theoretical Framework

Regarding the study's core subject, the authors employ Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) as a basis to investigate how Zillennials in West Java use social media and AI in their daily lives. 1973 saw the popularization of this theory by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumer, and Michael Gurevitch, which deviates from the fundamental principles of media consumption. Since then, it has been widely embraced by media studies researchers across the globe.

Katz et al. (1973) posit that individuals do not engage in passive media consumption; rather, they actively participate in the process of media selection, taking into consideration their objectives, incentives, and requirements. This theory is founded upon five assumptions as follows: (1) Media consumers are proactive entities that select media in accordance with their intentions and objectives; (2) Every individual's media consumption is driven by a specific motivation; (3) Every individual has certain expectations regarding the media they select; (4) Social and psychological factors exert an

influence on individual media selection decisions; and (5) Media contend with alternative modes of communication for the attention of each individual.

Ever since its inception, this theory has been focused with conventional media mass communication. Nevertheless, this theory has experienced several adaptations and improvements in tandem with the progressions of time and technology that have introduced novel modes of communication (Dimmick et al., 2004; Ruggiero, 2000). Furthermore, with the advent of social media as a global phenomenon, novel behavioral patterns have emerged concerning the selection and utilization of media by users (Abrahamson, 1998; Dicken-Garcia, 1998; Perse & Dunn, 1998).

Based on its principles and assumptions, UGT is thought to be perfect and efficient in recognizing individual motivation and behavior in media use, as well as how the chosen medium might bring satisfaction (Pelletier et al., 2020). In practice, this theory is often utilized to investigate the digital marketing landscape (Malthouse et al., 2013) and social media trends (Ruggiero, 2000).

Furthermore, the study of digital media has now encompassed artificial intelligence (AI), in addition to social media. AI, being one of the century's most innovative technological discoveries, has had a profound impact on the dynamics of digital media usage trends (Ibrahim et al., 2023). AI technology is considered to be capable of providing ideal services in the form of instant and accurate information providers, which has prompted many individuals to begin using AI as a virtual assistant in their daily lives, such as to assist with scheduling and non-physical task completion (Hennen et al., 2023).

The UGT continues to be a widely employed theory in the field of media effects research. UGT is more essential than ever due to the proliferation of new media, as this viewpoint is particularly useful for elucidating why individuals adopt new mediums (Whiting & Williams, 2013). New media's ability to provide users more power and choice has created new opportunities for UGT study as well as new gratifications, particularly with regard to social media (Hossain, 2019).

In other words, UGT offers a useful lens through which the reasons behind media consumption can be analyzed, especially in the digital age, when social media and AI are becoming more widespread. It provides insights into how and why individuals engage with various platforms, laying the groundwork for future research and development in these domains.

Generation Z as Digital Natives

Digital natives are a group of people who were born and raised during a period of rapid technological advancement, resulting in superior technological abilities compared to prior generations (Prensky, 2001). As per the provided definition, digital natives constitute a cohort of individuals born between 1996 and 2011 who are classified as members of generation Z or Zillennials (Jayani, 2021).

Digital natives inherently possess unique attributes due to the disparities in these circumstances, one of which is the habit of presenting oneself in an authentic and organic manner on social media platforms (Childers & Boatwright, 2021). The condition encourages digital natives to prefer social media over print media as their primary source of information. Broadly speaking, social media has managed to accommodate the various needs of digital natives or Zillennials-which in turn affects the way they think and behave (Chang & Chang, 2023).

Through their habitual engagement with social media platforms, digital natives assume the dual role of media consumers and producers (Smith et al., 2020). In the context of digital natives, social media platforms have evolved to serve additional functions beyond information provision. They now enable self-actualization, foster digital connections, enable the sharing of personal interests, and support the daily learning process (Cooks-Campbell, 2022; Fadhila et al., 2023; Kusumawardhani & Sari, 2021; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

The diverse objectives and incentives that Zillennials exhibit when using social media subsequently give rise to the possibility of emerging behavioral patterns that are progressively more fluid. As a result, the objective of this study was to delineate the social media usage patterns of digital native Zillennials.

Material and Methodology

In this quantitative investigation, the authors mapped the social media and AI usage patterns of Zillennials in West Java. We employed a single-variable survey method. The single-variable survey method is a common technique used in social research to describe a single variable within a particular

population. Quantitative technique of this nature can be employed to determine or map a certain characteristic, behavior, or attribute within a population (Mavron & Phillips, 2023). This description is consistent with the study's research objectives, which are to map the social media and AI usage patterns of Generation Z in West Java.

A survey was administered to a sample of 515 Zillennials residing in West Java for the purposes of this study. The entire population of West Java Zillennials is about 13,500,000 (Santika, 2023). With a 95% level of confidence and a 5% margin of error, the sample was selected using a simple random sampling procedure based on calculations in Krejcie & Morgan, (1970). As a result, the formula's calculation requires that a minimum sample size of 385 is necessary. After distributing questionnaires for one month, we successfully collected responses from 515 research respondents.

Data was gathered via an online survey disseminated through several social media platforms, messaging programs, and the official ISKI Jabar website. The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. This analysis involved presenting the data in the form of tables, bar charts, and other graphs to facilitate comprehension. This study adheres to research ethics by obtaining respondents' consent before filling out the survey and ensuring the confidentiality of respondents' information and all respondents. The data will be utilized solely for the specific purpose of this study.

Result and Discussion

Social Media Usage Intensity Among West Java Zillennials

In response to a questionnaire query regarding the intensity of social media use, 93% of the 515 West Java Zillennials surveyed indicated that they access social media platforms on a daily basis, which places them in the category of high intensity users. As evidenced by their responses, social media has become an indispensable component of their daily existence.

Also, a significant majority of 62% spend over six hours per day browsing social media platforms. An additional 23% of respondents indicated that their daily social media usage falls within the range of three to four hours.

Prevalent Social Media Platforms among the Zillennials

The vast variety of social media platforms available today entails consumers to choose social media based on their requirements or interests. In this survey, 97% of West Java Zillennials chose Instagram as their preferred social networking site. They consider that Instagram not only accommodates their needs to communicate, but also the visual-based features on Instagram has evolved into a source of entertainment and channeling the respondents' interests.

A total of 88% of respondents named TikTok as their preferred platform. Of the total, 50% use TikTok on a daily basis. They choose TikTok because its short-form video style allows them to acquire the most recent information in a pleasant and exciting way. Twitter, now known as X, comes third in the category of favorite social media for millennials, with a 64% share. Although this number is far behind Instagram and TikTok, it is still significantly higher than Facebook's 36%. The comparison demonstrates a shift in the trend of social media usage, since Facebook was frequently ranked as the most popular social media platform in the preceding decade.

Furthermore, Generation Z continues to opt for WhatsApp as their preferred messaging channel, in addition to these three aforementioned social media networks. Approximately 98% of Generation Z individuals choose WhatsApp as their primary online communication platform, encompassing nearly all of the surveyed participants. YouTube is the preferred platform for Zillennials when it comes to watching long-form videos and live streaming videos. Concisely, the survey findings pertaining to this category are visually shown in the following infographic.



Figure 1. Prevalent Social Media Platforms among the West Java Zillennials
Source: Research Data, 2023

Purpose of Using Social Media

Undoubtedly, the intricacy of the functionalities possessed by each social media platform provides convenience for every user. However, Zillennials employ social media for a variety of primary purposes as illustrated in the following diagram.

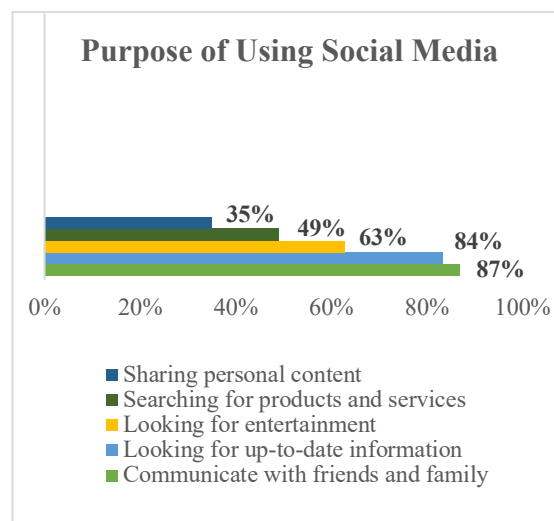


Figure 2. Purpose of West Java Zillennials in Using Social Media
Source: Research Data, 2023

In general, the data illustrates a range of trends in social media usage, with a particular focus on Zillennials. As shown in the figure above, the primary motivations for Zillennials' use of social media continue to be information gathering and communication, with each accounting for more than 80% of the total. Other types of purposes, such as using social media for amusement, searching for products and services, and sharing personal content, also represent a considerable share. These numbers demonstrate that social media has been rather successful in meeting the needs of its users.

Zillennials' Dependence on Social Media

In addition to inquiries on the extent of social media use, the survey also encompassed inquiries regarding respondents' reliance on social media. Consequently, 60% of the participants said that they encounter challenges while attempting to exclude social media from their everyday routines.

Remarkably, 1 out of every 5 participants belonging to the Zillennial generation utilizes social media continuously on an hourly basis.

This percentage is followed by 21% who believe it is highly difficult to stay off social media in their daily life. The percentages found indicate that the majority of West Java Zillennials believe they heavily rely on social media.

West Java's Zillennials Preferred Artificial Intelligence

AI technology, like social media, also undergoes rapid development. Presently, there exists a multitude of AI variants, each boasting a plethora of exceptional attributes. Nevertheless, Generation Z in West Java continues to prefer ChatGPT as their top choice for AI assistance in both work and daily tasks. Aside from ChatGPT, other AI technologies such as Google Assistant, Siri, Chatbot, and Bing AI, commonly referred to as Copilot, have also become prevalent among the Zillennial population in West Java.

Purpose of Using Artificial Intelligence

Following the identification of the preferred types of artificial intelligence (AI) among Generation Z, the survey looked into the primary reasons behind their adoption of AI-based technology. Consequently, over 75% of participants in the poll indicated that their primary objective of utilizing AI is to assist with tasks and obtain precise and immediate information.

Furthermore, a small percentage of the participants indicated that they employ AI for the purpose of interacting with automated systems (25%) and for assistance with shopping and scheduling management (16%). This can be observed in the subsequent illustration.

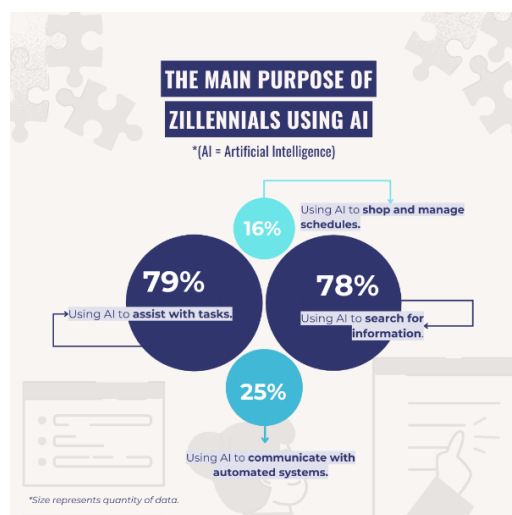


Figure 3. Purpose of Using Artificial Intelligence
Source: Research Data, 2023

Zillennials Dependence on Artificial Intelligence

The survey analyzed Generation Z's acceptance and utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, in addition to their engagement with social media. In response to the AI-related survey queries, 92% of all respondents indicated that they already have an adequate knowledge of the subject. 63% of this group expressed optimism and enthusiasm regarding the present state of AI development and do not view AI as a threat that requires immediate caution.

Then, although the majority of West Java Zillennials are aware of contemporary AI breakthroughs, their reliance on AI remains relatively low, at 23%. Meanwhile, another 77% indicated they have no problem in staying off AI from their daily routines. These percentages show that the intensity of AI use among West Java Zillennials remains in the middle to lower degree of dependence.

The Significance of Media Literacy in Embracing the Era of Digitalization and AI

The survey results indicate that Generation Z, also known as the Zillennials, possess a substantial capacity to become overly reliant on social media and artificial intelligence. While some individuals

believe they still have some control over their degree of dependence on social media and AI, the level of dependence has the capacity to escalate as more advanced features are developed to cater to their diverse requirements. In order to mitigate these risks, the survey also inquired about the Zillennials' perspectives on the significance of media literacy skills in the age of digital technology.

Consequently, 90% of all participants concurred that possessing a strong understanding of media literacy during the digital age can mitigate risks linked to the advancement of social media and artificial intelligence. Regarding the subject of whether media literacy should be taught formally at both high school and university levels, 86% of respondents believed that it is necessary for media literacy to be embedded in the curriculum of primary, secondary, and even higher education.

Key Issues to be Discussed

Within this particular segment, the authors seek to elaborate on the noteworthy issues that surfaced from the survey. A primary discovery of this study indicates that social media continues to be an indispensable component of the daily lives of Generation Z individuals residing in West Java. This discovery seems to corroborate prior research indicating that social media has become an indispensable component of the lives of adolescents and young adults (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2019). The evolution of social media platforms is adapting to current trends. Gen-Z has seen a transition away from Facebook, with Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter emerging as the most prevalent social media platforms within this demographic. This reflects a global trend where Gen-Z prefers social media platforms that are more visual and interactive (Anderson & Jiang, 2018).

Another notable result is that Generation Z relies heavily on social media. Ahmed (2019) investigated a similar situation and discovered that more than 60% of Gen Z use various social media platforms many times per day, with one in every five Gen Z admitting to using social media every hour of the day. This dependence may have a negative impact on their psychological well-being. Unfortunately, social media dependence and the temptation to always be online can lead to significant issues like anxiety and depression (McDool et al., 2020). Consequently, it is critical that members of Generation Z recognize the psychological repercussions of excessive technology use and strive to maintain a healthy balance between the real and virtual worlds.

However, social media has its advantages. In the digital age, Generation Z relies increasingly on social media to connect and form relationships. This has an impact on social dynamics, transforms interaction patterns from face-to-face to virtual, and creates numerous new opportunities for expanding creativity (Chang & Chang, 2023). Hence, it is essential that we consistently observe and comprehend the manner in which young individuals engage with emerging technologies and social media, so as to aid in formulating educational and protective measures that effectively resonate with today's generation.

Generation Z in West Java is familiar with the technology and is not concerned about its presence, but they are not yet reliant on it. This shows that, while AI is rapidly being employed in a variety of settings, there is still opportunity for greater acceptance and understanding of the technology.

Furthermore, Zillennials mostly use AI applications to assist with work completion and information retrieval. It is vital to highlight, however, that AI is a platform for assistance rather than decision-making. This is consistent with the notion that AI can improve efficiency and production, but the ultimate decision should stay in the hands of humans (Hennen et al., 2023).

Then, in anticipation of and to effectively manage this technological dependence, every respondent emphasized the significance of media literacy as we enter the age of digitalization and artificial intelligence. The response demonstrates a growing awareness of the necessity of providing young people with the skills and information they need to interact effectively and safely in the digital environment. Even now in numerous Asian countries, media literacy continues to be an essential component of the academic curriculum (Tan et al., 2012; Zhong, 2020). For that reason, it is imperative that Indonesia keeps pace with the advancements, and it is indisputable that prioritizing media literacy education is crucial for enhancing human capital in the present era.

In a nutshell the study's principal findings underscore the criticality of continued monitoring and comprehension regarding the manner in which adolescents engage with emerging digital technologies. Understanding media education and literacy alone is not good enough. Preparing the next generation for the digital and AI eras must be an important focus in order to foster smarter and wiser media users.

Conclusions

The use of social media and artificial intelligence by millennials has become one of their key daily necessities. The varied features and sophisticated services offered have resulted in a trend among Zillennials to rely on these platforms for purposes other than communication, such as finding information and assisting with tasks.

Additionally, this study suggests that Zillennials' reliance on social media and AI has the potential to grow much further. One of the most impressive qualities of social media and AI is their capacity to offer information quickly and precisely. This prompts students to analyze how the growth of technology-based items has improved many parts of their lives.

Nevertheless, both social media and AI entail some risks. Excessive dependence on social media might heighten the vulnerability to psychological problems, such as anxiety and depression. Excessive dependence on AI can heighten the likelihood of decreasing creativity and cognitive capacities.

It is important to recognize that while AI possesses the capacity to deliver information promptly and accurately, its utilization should be restricted to offering support rather than making decisions. Generation Z believes that it is necessary for media literacy to be formally integrated into education in the education sector. It is recommended that forthcoming research examines the extent to which members of Generation Z, who are considered digital natives, employ artificial intelligence to assist them with academic, collegiate, and professional obligations. This is based on this study findings that those AI employing pattern have surfaced as the main reasons in using AI. Lastly, further studies can also prioritize exploring Zillennials-based communities' initiatives in advocating the necessary literacy and skills in embracing the era of social media and artificial intelligence.

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