

Digital Literacy: How Generation Z's Made a Choice Decision Based on Celebrities' Opinions in Social Media

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Abstrak

Born in an era of technological advancement, Generation Z is closely connected to and familiar with the digital world. Information spreads rapidly in the digital age, originating from various sources, including opinions expressed by celebrities. These opinions can easily gain widespread attention through the use of social media. However, it's important to note that such information is sometimes biased and lacks a factual basis. This can lead to a significant influence on users' decision-making processes, as they may rely on celebrity opinions. In this study, we aim to analyze how Generation Z responds to celebrity opinions when making information-related decisions. We will use the DigCom 2.0 framework, focusing on digital literacy components. We will employ a qualitative descriptive method, providing a clear description of how individuals make information-related decisions based on celebrity opinions, with the subject research being Library Science Student at UIN Sunan Kalijaga. The findings indicate that information disseminated by celebrities is often regarded as opinion rather than fully trusted information. It is essential to verify such information. The level of trust depends on various factors, including the celebrity's image, background, achievements, and expertise in the subject matter. Favoritism by celebrities toward specific groups can introduce bias into the information, making it necessary to avoid unquestioned trust. Whether a celebrity is an idol or an ordinary person is not the primary factor in making information-related decisions. Instead, trust in digital capabilities plays a crucial role in decision-making compared to information provided by celebrities who may not have expertise in a particular field. Our study emphasizes the importance of information and data literacy in digital content, encompassing the search process, filtering, evaluation, and information management. These are fundamental aspects of making informed decisions based on celebrity opinions.

Kata Kunci: Celebrity Opinions; Digital Literacy; Generation Z

A. Introduction

The rapid adoption of social media in various circles is one form of technological development in Indonesia. According to data from (Digital 2022: Indonesia — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, n.d.), it was recorded that in January 2023, there were 167 million social media users in Indonesia, which is equivalent to 60.4% of the total population in the country. The most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia are YouTube with 139 million users, Facebook with 119.9 million users, TikTok with 109.9 million users, and Instagram with 89.15 million users. According to that, the highest number of social media users falls within the age range of 18 years and older, totaling 153.7 million users or 79.5% of the total population. Additionally, 78.5% of all internet users use at least one social media platform, with 46.8% of social media users being women and 53.2% being men. On average, people in Indonesia spend 3 hours and 18 minutes on social media every day, contributing to a total of 7 hours and 42 minutes spent on the internet (Digital 2022: Indonesia — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, n.d.)

According to (Cross, 2013) social media is a term that describes various technologies used to connect people in collaborative efforts, exchange information, and interact through web-based content. Social media has two main aspects: large and small platforms, which are established and still in development, serving as technology providers with features that users can utilize. User needs encompass individuals and organizations with different purposes for using social media (Gill Appel.Pdf, n.d.). Social media serves as a critical communication medium for information dissemination and use in the current generation (Tsao et al., 2021). It is an interactive channel and source of information (Andi Akifah 2020.Pdf, n.d.), a platform for entrepreneurship to promote and market products and services, as well as for establishing collaborations between individuals and agencies (Abdul Samad 2020.Pdf, n.d.). Furthermore, it facilitates communication and the dissemination of academic information in the field of education (Nurly 2018.Pdf, n.d.).

A survey conducted by KataData and the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kementerian Komunikasi Dan Informatika, n.d.) stated that in 2020, 76% of Indonesian people used social media as the most widely used medium for information dissemination, and in 2021, the number was 73%. Social media has the ability to fragment and polarize its users (Devie 2018.Pdf, n.d.), recording search data, likes, comments, and topics of interest to users (Apa Itu Algoritma Media Sosial? | DISKOMINFO KOTA BOGOR, n.d.). The dissemination of information on social media is very fast, diverse, and free, as information can be shared by any party. Similarly, the recipients of information are not limited to researchers or the academic community; information has become a part of the daily lives of almost everyone (Chowdhury & Chowdhury, 2011).

The dissemination of a significant amount of information on social media without control over the acquired information can potentially lead to information overload. This can happen due to users' fear of missing out (FOMO) regarding information on social media (Bawden 2020.Pdf, n.d.). The absence of information filtering can result in the widespread spread of misinformation. Cases of spreading incorrect information that frequently occur on social media take various forms, including the use of biased and ambiguous headline information, video editing, photo manipulation, posting captions that influence opinions, and even cases involving crimes such as spreading hoaxes, manipulating data, and forgery.

Celebrities are among the key figures in information dissemination on social media who receive significant attention from the public. According to (Shimp, 2003), celebrities encompass individuals from the fields of entertainment, sports, or acting, known to the public due to their outstanding achievements. Celebrities are individuals recognized by the wider community for their exceptional abilities in their respective fields, making the information they share and the words they convey highly persuasive to the public (Shamil Ramadhan, 2021). Ordinary celebrities employ compelling narratives to engage with audiences through social media (Fatima 2020.Pdf, n.d.). Celebrities are considered public figures who garner more attention than the average person due to their societal prominence. The opinions they express can be readily embraced by social media users, regardless of their nature, and this can also be influenced by the image that celebrities have cultivated in the media. Facts can be manipulated, and falsities can become accepted as facts, contingent upon the presenter's intent.

Generation Z (Gen Z) possesses the characteristic of being a generation born and raised in the digital era, making them very familiar with the use and function of social media. They are accustomed to communicating through platforms such as the internet, Facebook, and Twitter (Caraka Putra and Nindya, 2017.Pdf, n.d.) Gen Z consists of individuals born into an instant culture, seeking quick success without substantial effort (Caraka Putra and Nindya, 2017.Pdf, n.d.). This tendency can also be attributed to the high intensity of technology and internet usage, which encourages Gen Z to seek rapid and immediate gratification.

Digital literacy skills are among the essential skills needed in the current era of information technology. Digital literacy refers to the ability to comprehend and utilize information gathered from various sources (Gilster, 1997). This digital literacy encompasses three core abilities: proficiency in using technology, interpreting and comprehending digital content, and evaluating its credibility; conducting research; and communicating effectively using appropriate tools (Fiska, 2022). These skills are crucial for Generation Z as many of their activities rely on the internet, requiring them to have the competence to use information technology effectively. In this context, Generation Z must possess the skills to search, filter, evaluate, and utilize

information acquired from social media, while also developing critical thinking skills when assessing information.

Library Science students at UIN Sunan Kalijaga are part of the academic community, which also functions as a learning community in the field of libraries and information. As students in the library science program, you are exposed to a wide range of materials related to information, including information literacy. Therefore, it is expected that students in the library science program already possess knowledge and skills in digital literacy. Moreover, a significant portion of the active students in this program belongs to Generation Z, for whom information and technology are essential needs. As a result, their interaction with information technology, particularly through social media, is highly pronounced.

Students in the library science program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga are an intriguing group for research, especially concerning their digital literacy and how it influences their decision-making based on celebrity opinions on social media. This research is crucial because these students belong to Generation Z, who frequently engage with social media. Therefore, understanding their level of digital literacy is essential in helping them evaluate information based on celebrity opinions expressed through social media.

B. Methods

This research employs a qualitative research method with a case study approach. This approach focuses on conducting in-depth investigations to comprehend the aspects, components, and relationships within specific individuals or groups. The framework of this approach aligns with a post-positivist perspective model, which has implications for identifying issues and delineating the scope of problems within community social activities, represented as symbolic symptoms and explained descriptively (Basrowi & Suwandi, 2008 n.d.). The subjects of this research are students from the library science program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, selected through purposive sampling. The criteria for informants in this study are as follows:

1. Active student of the library science study program at UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta
2. Aged 15-26 years belonging to generation z
3. Device Users
4. Using social media platforms
5. Have passed the information literacy course

Based on these criteria, the researchers collected data through interviews with 22 informants whom the researchers considered suitable to participate. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured and in-depth techniques to gain further insights from the informants. After collecting all the data, the researchers

carried out data analysis, including data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

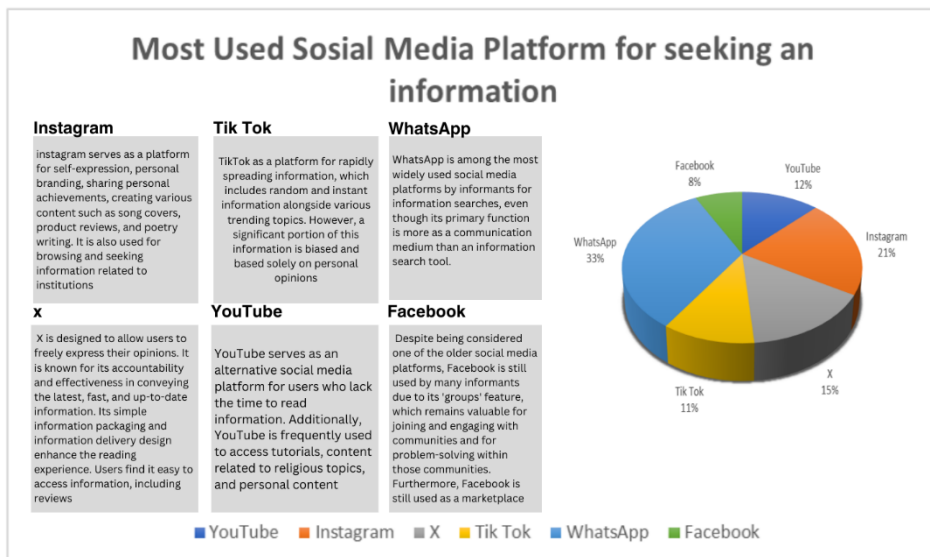
C. Results and Discussion

1. Ability in Information and Data Literacy

a. Browsing, Searching and filtering data, information and digital content

Social media is one of the widely used platforms to meet information needs. According to the results of interviews conducted by the researchers, 14 out of 22 informants use Instagram as one of the most frequently used applications. This is followed by social media X, Tik Tok, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Instagram serves as a platform for self-expression, personal branding, sharing personal achievements, creating various content such as song covers, product reviews, and poetry writing. It is also used for browsing and seeking information related to institutions. Social media X is designed to allow users to freely express their opinions. It is known for its accountability and effectiveness in conveying the latest, fast, and up-to-date information. Its simple information packaging and information delivery design enhance the reading experience. Users find it easy to access information, including reviews.

The application presents TikTok as a platform for rapidly spreading information, which includes random and instant information alongside various trending topics. However, a significant portion of this information is biased and based solely on personal opinions. YouTube serves as an alternative social media platform for users who lack the time to read information. Additionally, YouTube is frequently used to access tutorials, content related to religious topics, and personal content. Despite being considered one of the older social media platforms, Facebook is still used by many informants due to its 'groups' feature, which remains valuable for joining and engaging with communities and for problem-solving within those communities. Furthermore, Facebook is still used as a marketplace. WhatsApp is among the most widely used social media platforms by informants for information searches, even though its primary function is more as a communication medium than an information search tool.



In the process of searching and browsing for information on social media, informants frequently conduct searches directly using certain keywords or utilize hashtags. This aligns with what one of the respondents stated: 'I directly search in the search bar using keywords that match the information I want or use hashtags' (Interview on October 13, 2023). Furthermore, when the social media algorithm is established, informants often no longer need to use the search bar, as social media already presents the desired information. This algorithm is created through liking, commenting, and saving information on social media, resulting in similar or related information conveniently appearing on the homepage or main page, as explained by another informant: '*Social media forms an algorithm based on my needs and preferences. So, usually, I don't even have to search for the information; it's already available on my home screen. If I require more detailed information, I can always use keywords in the search bar*' (Interview on October 12, 2023).

b. Evaluating data, information and digital content

The informant accesses social media accounts that have been verified with a blue tick, possess numerous followers, likes, and comments. The daily posting activity of an account also influences the information selection process for Gen Z. Accounts chosen typically produce information quickly. The celebrities trusted to provide information are those who have relevance to the statements they make, are experts in their respective fields, provide information backed by references or sources, possess educational backgrounds aligned with the subject matter, employ easily digestible and persuasive delivery methods, and convey information in a relatable manner.

Judging from his educational background or current pursuits, it becomes evident if he is an expert in the field. Additionally, *observing whether his previous content primarily conveys information or is more focused on entertainment helps determine his credibility, especially if he has a track record of consistently sharing information* (interview on October 13, 2023).

The rapid and extensive dissemination of information on social media has highlighted the necessity of applying critical thinking, analyzing information, and comparing it with existing data. This is crucial to prevent users from being misled by incorrect information, especially when it is conveyed by celebrities or well-known figures who may have an influence on their audience. According to the interviews conducted by the researchers, informants have strategies for recognizing biased, one-sided, or incorrect information conveyed by celebrities. They tend to believe information more readily when it is presented by someone who is an expert in their respective field, even if that person is a celebrity. Nevertheless, informants do not always accept statements at face value. As one informant stated, *'We need to compare the statement with other sources to gain a broader perspective and determine the most accurate point. We must exercise caution because even experts can be wrong'* (interview on October 12, 2023).

In addition to exploring information from various perspectives, many informants also rely on netizen comments as a basis for consideration, as one informant noted, *'We take into account the opinions of the masses'* (interview on October 12, 2023). Furthermore, the informants conduct direct cross-checks with multiple sources of information, seek comparisons with identical information but presented by different individuals, search for additional information on Google, use the statement as a discussion topic during social gatherings, and read the information in its entirety. If they find the celebrity's information to be accurate, the informants will share it on their respective social media platforms, within family groups, among friends, colleagues, or with individuals who genuinely require the content. Occasionally, informants may choose to keep the information to themselves.

The presence of celebrities on social media, expressing opinions on various matters, elicits diverse responses. People are easily influenced, particularly when it comes to celebrities with a strong background in religion and politics. Another factor that instills trust in a celebrity's statement among informants is the celebrity's track record, image, or personality, along with the delivery style. However, it's not uncommon for informants to remain unaffected by statements issued by celebrities. This happens when the informant believes that the conveyed message is incorrect and inconsistent with their lifestyle, rendering the celebrity's opinion inconsequential. Some also argue that these celebrities make mere assumptions, as they don't provide concrete evidence. Moreover, when celebrities offer opinions or statements that don't align with their area of expertise, they are perceived as social climbers.

c. Managing data, information and digital content

When it comes to organizing, storing, and retrieving information and content in a digital environment, various social media platforms offer features for saving, such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. Users can save content by creating folders based on the content or information they want to store. However, in practice, most informants do not follow a specific strategy. They often save, take screenshots, repost, or 'like' content to influence the platform's algorithm. As one respondent explained, *'I save or take screenshots if the information is interesting, or simply like it to improve content recommendations'*

2. Communication and collaboration

a. Interacting through digital technologies

Responding to a celebrity's opinion on social media can be done in various ways, one of which is by engaging with other netizens. According to the interviews conducted, most of the Gen Z students majoring in library science do not typically engage directly with other netizens on social media, either through comments or direct messages. Instead, they choose to be silent readers, acting as observers to the opinions expressed by celebrities. This may indicate that their interactions with information seekers on social media are not very conspicuous. However, a different response emerges when there are signs of less rationality in trending information and a genuine interest in following the issue. In such cases, interactions occur, although they are usually limited in scale and involve friends known on social media. The various features provided on social media, such as the comments section and direct messages, are the most commonly used for communication.

Another informant mentioned that the way interactions are conducted in response to information conveyed by celebrities varies depending on the social media platform used. One respondent explained: *'My response may differ across various social media platforms because I present different personas on each one.'* On the Facebook application, interactions involve providing comments and responses using emoticons. On the Instagram application, this is achieved by utilizing the direct message feature and responding to other people's stories. Meanwhile, TikTok has become a platform where listeners respond. Celebrity opinions on social media can serve as a topic for initiating meaningful conversations with friends, family, and colleagues.

b. Sharing through digital technologies

The dissemination of information originating from celebrities can serve as a means for communication among users, both in small and large social media contexts. This communication may take various forms, such as the Status feature on

WhatsApp, Snapgram on Instagram, retweets or reposts on Facebook posts, and direct messages (DMs) on various social media platforms. The informant explained that the presentation process comes with diverse interpretations. Some individuals present information directly as they received it, whether in the form of images, videos, or text, with or without personal affirmation or approval of the information. Others choose to repackage the information to make it more engaging, free from bias, and supported by relevant facts and evidence. They tailor the information to the specific interests of the recipient, regardless of whether it's for micro or macro-level dissemination. When information is shared on a micro level with a known friend as the recipient, it is usually presented in their own words, without alterations or additions to the original information.

c. Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies

There is a wealth of information on social media that proves to be valuable for various daily activities, including the information shared by celebrities, both for their own benefit and that of others. According to the results of interviews, many informants tend to utilize information for personal consumption, rather than sharing it with others. Nevertheless, there are also individuals who make an effort to disseminate information when they believe it's necessary for other people and aligns with real-life situations. This includes information that may provoke strong emotions and is typically shared exclusively with close friends. The dissemination of this information often involves using the story feature in several social media applications and is occasionally conveyed verbally to the intended recipients. One informant stated, *'I share it via social media, such as Instagram or WhatsApp, typically through stories so that those who require it can easily access the content.'* Another mentioned, *'I use stories, direct messages, or communicate verbally'*.

3. Netiquette

Responding to information is not limited solely to agreeing with or rejecting the information. It also involves providing a thoughtful response to the individual sharing the information, especially when the information is not in agreement. Most informants positioned themselves as silent readers, choosing to absorb the conveyed information without directly commenting on social media. Some informants viewed this response as a way to respect others' rights to express their opinions on social media and to acknowledge differences in the information shared. The most important thing for them was not to further disseminate false information provided by the celebrities. However, for some silent informants, the response they offer depends on the type of statement being conveyed and the potential impact it may have if the opinion stands unchallenged. If the information is deemed irrational and even poses a danger to the public, a more assertive response is considered necessary. This response may involve correcting the information, either through comments or by creating new content. Some informants even believe that providing negative

comments can serve as a means to encourage celebrities to be more cautious when conveying information.

Based on observations of several celebrities' social media accounts, the presence of negative comments on information conveyed by celebrities can result from the information being incorrect or the person conveying it having personal issues, even if the information itself is accurate. In some cases, these negative comments may incite the public to react similarly, especially when negative comments outnumber positive ones, despite the accuracy of the information. The digital literacy skills possessed by library science students lead to various responses in handling such situations. Some informants mentioned that they choose not to engage with these comments and avoid spreading controversy. Other informants tend to focus more on the information itself rather than on the personality of the individual sharing it. Negative comments are viewed as an opportunity to fact-check the information and are considered normal when content featuring specific information generates differences of opinion. They are also seen as evaluation material for improving the way information is disseminated to gain public acceptance on social media.

4. Managing Digital Identity

The majority of informants tend to convey accurate information in alignment with the statements made by celebrities, even in the face of numerous rumors. They do so because they believe the information provided by celebrities is reliable. Informants commonly offer clear comments, present supporting facts for the celebrity's statements, and share personal opinions. It's not unusual for informants to offer comments from various perspectives. Some informants remain indifferent when such cases arise, knowing that others will likely come to the defense of the statement's meaning. Additionally, informants may express their support through direct messages, sending supportive messages to the celebrities. Nevertheless, there are also informants who remain uninvolved in such matters but keep abreast of the latest developments in the statements made by celebrities.

D. Discussion

The instantaneous nature of Gen Z doesn't necessarily rule out the possibility of receiving information, especially when it comes from someone known as an expert in the field they're discussing. In such cases, this information is often deemed highly reliable. However, if the information isn't conveyed effectively, be it due to how it's presented or the source, Gen Z commonly performs simple verifications.

Additionally, the presence of celebrities on social media, conveying information through the statements they make, provides an opportunity to influence the decision-making of Gen Z regarding information, particularly when the

celebrity's information is supported by education and expertise that align with the content (Banyte et al., 2011.Pdf, n.d.), their track record, personal branding, and attractiveness (Banyte et al., 2011.Pdf, n.d.). However, this opportunity can be lost if the information conveyed appears biased and lacks demonstrable facts and evidence. This is a result of an individual's critical thinking process, which is a component of digital literacy skills (Sumiati & Wijonarko, 2020). This is consistent with research conducted by (Rochmatika & Yana, 2022), which indicates that digital literacy has a positive impact on critical thinking skills.

Improving digital literacy skills enables individuals to recognize biased and false information, making them less likely to trust information conveyed by anyone, including celebrities. This training involves the process of searching, comparing, and analyzing data to verify the accuracy of information (Sumiati & Wijonarko, 2020), and it helps in rapidly and accurately disseminating information to the intended recipients.

The process of searching for information on social media typically involves using the platform's search bar feature. Users can only influence their searches through SEO (search engine optimization), which emphasizes using specific keywords. Therefore, the ability to choose the right keywords is essential based on the required information. Search engines are designed to assist users in locating the most relevant information based on their search queries (Shenoy & Prabhu, 2016). However, social media platforms do not support advanced search methods, such as using search tools like Boolean, truncation, phrases, and proximity (4. Search Strategy - Best Practice for Literature Searching - LibGuides at IFIS, n.d.) In addition to using keywords, searches are also conducted by directly visiting the social media accounts of relevant celebrities or individuals associated with the desired information. The process of retrieving information can trigger social media algorithms to provide similar content based on user interactions, such as likes, comments, saving information, and utilizing the share feature on social media.

The dissemination of information from celebrity opinions on social media happens rapidly and can lead to information overload. To manage this, a filtering process is crucial to ensure that only reliable information is received. This process involves selecting celebrities based on their educational background, expertise, track record on social media, and personal branding to determine their credibility as information sources. Once the information is obtained, it undergoes evaluation by comparing the opinions of selected celebrities with other trusted sources, including impartial journalistic media, government-owned social media, Google search results, books, articles, and information from sources outside of social media.

Next, the filtered information from celebrities is analyzed by assessing the presence of bias, impartiality, information packaging, the use of symbols, and indications of whether the information is accurate or false. It is essential to apply a

rational approach to this analysis to make informed decisions. According to the (KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, 2018) rationality refers to logical thinking, healthy reasoning, or adherence to reason. After completing this process, individuals can make informed decisions about whether to believe or reject the information.

The action form of decision information is used for personal purposes and can also be disseminated to other people. The process of disseminating information, apart from comparing and verifying the truth of information, also considers other factors, namely objectives, determining the information recipient, information packaging, and the potential impact when the information is shared. However, often these factors are not considered, and verified information can be immediately distributed to anyone according to the preferences of the information sharer. Additionally, providing responses on social media is a way to make decisions about information, and digital literacy skills can help individuals respond wisely and appropriately to the decided information.

E. Conclusion

Gen Z library science students at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta make decisions regarding information originating from celebrities on social media through a series of processes related to their digital literacy skills. This process begins with searching for information, achieved by performing simple searches in the search bar, using hashtags, or engaging with algorithms on social media by liking, commenting, sharing, and saving information content from specific celebrities. They also explore accounts related to the discussed issue, both from individuals and specific organizations. Subsequently, they engage in an information filtering process to prevent information overload, ensuring that only selected information is used for the comparative analysis with other sources of information. A critical thinking analysis is then conducted to establish trustworthiness and to evaluate the information. This involves an analysis of whether the conveyed information exhibits bias, partiality, or indications of falsehood.

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