

**THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL ERA ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF
GENERATION Z****Syari Fitrah Rayaginansih^{1*}, Siti Cahyati², Irfan Fahriza³**^{1,2,3}Universitas Ma'soem

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Abstract: Generation Z, born in the digital age, has a high dependence on technology and social media. This has a significant impact on their mental health. This study examines the positive and negative impacts of technology and social media use on Generation Z, as well as strategies for maintaining mental health in the digital age. Literature studies were used to collect and analyze information from various sources. The results showed that excessive use of technology and social media can lead to increased anxiety, stress, cyberbullying, and other mental health problems. However, technology can also provide social support, access to mental health information, and opportunities for self-expression. Strategies such as "digital detox" can help reduce the negative impacts of technology and social media. This study highlights the importance of understanding the impact of technology on the mental health of Generation Z and developing strategies to maintain a balanced life in the digital age.

Keywords: Mental Health; Digital Age; Generation Z; Digital Detox

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is a generation born in the period from 1997 to 2012 also known as the internet generation (I-gen). This is driven by the rapid digitalization in various areas of life accompanied by the emergence of various platform Social Media (Chanra, 2024). Generation Z grows and develops in the dynamic digital era, so they have a tendency to get used to information technology from an early age, which makes the life of Generation Z significantly integrated with the use of technology (Fitriyadi et al., 2023).

In a survey conducted by the Association of Internet Service Providers Indonesia (APJII) in 2024. In the results of the Indonesia internet penetration survey, there has been an increase in Indonesia's internet usage in the last five years, where since 2018 internet penetration in Indonesia has reached 64.8%, then in 2020 it rose to 73.7%, in 2022 to 77.01%, in 2023 to 78.19%, until in 2024 it touched 79.5%. When calculated based on age, the majority of users are Gen Z (1997-2012) as much as 34.40%, then the millennial generation (1981-1996) as much as 30.62%, then Gen X (1965-1980) as much as 18.98%, post Gen Z (born in less than 2023) as much as 9.17%, then baby boomers (1946 – 1964) as much as 6.58% and pre boomers (born in 1945) as much as 0.24%.

Generation Z as the highest user of the internet based on the APJII survey is proof that they are a generation that grew up with technology that is fully socially and globally connected. This provides characteristics that include the ability to operate technological devices, communicate through social media, and access information quickly and efficiently (Arrahmi Thahir et al., 2023). The rapidly increasing presence of technology and social media will affect the way they interact with others.

Technology mastery skills and social connections in Generation Z can be an unfavorable side for them, the impact of excessive use of technology and social media will bring Generation Z to dependence, negative impact on their physical health and even on their mental. According to Twenge (2018), high exposure to social media can provide high social pressure, which affects increased levels of anxiety and stress. This is in line with a study conducted by the Institute Public de Sondage d'Opinion Secteur (IPSOS) where generation Z is said to experience higher levels of stress than other generations out of 23,274 respondents as many as 43% of generation Z experience stress to the point of impacting daily life. This percentage is higher than 37% of millennials, 32% of generation X, and 22% of baby boomers who are experiencing the same thing.

According to Karl Menninger (in Arrahmi Thahir et al., 2023) Individuals are said to have good mental health if they are able to show intelligence, tolerance for others, and have a happy attitude to life. World Health Organization (WHO) added that being healthy is a prosperous physical, mental, and social state and not solely the absence of weakness or disease. The high risk of Generation Z in the era of digitalization in facing mental health challenges in the era of digitalization, makes mental health issues and policies in the use of digital media a matter that deserves attention.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a literature study (Library Research) is a research method used in research to collect, understand, and study, theories from various literature related to related research (Sujarweni, 2014). Meanwhile, according to Sugiyono (2013) Literature studies are theoretical studies, references and scientific literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Research Related to the Impact of Technology on Mental Health

No.	Writer		Title			Result
1	Astrid Azahra, Kalfin, and Rizki Hidayana (2024)	Sulistya Apriva	Online Games and Generation Z Mental Health: A Case Study on Adolescent Boys at SMK MAN 5 Tasikmalaya			The high intensity of online game media use among respondents has various negative psychological impacts such as decreased academic achievement, increased emotional disturbances, and social

No.	Writer	Title	Result
			isolation.
2	Lily Sardiani, Daulay, Mardianto, and Muhammad Irwan Padli Nasution (2023)	Healthy Literacy to Maintain Children's Mental Health in the Digital Era	The development of a healthy literacy culture can be an alternative in efforts to prevent the negative impact of the media and the internet, based on the results of literacy research is seen as the basis for participating in the digital age, with the ability to use digital media effectively.
3	Jessica Wulandari, Nadjwa Khairunnisa, Siti Yolandari, Tanjung Maulio Ar ro'uufu, and Robby Subagja (2024)	The Effect of Cyberbullying on Mental Health in Adolescents	In the results of the study conducted it was found that the increasing use of media and technology provides a negative side to its users, especially in adolescent users, instability in the management of adolescent emotions in using social media can trigger bullying in social media or cyberbullying. Cyberbullying that occurs can have an impact on mental health disorders such as causing fear, depression, excessive anxiety, feelings of insecurity, sadness, and high stress in the victim.
4	Yenti Arsini, Hannisa Azzahra, Khairan Syahputra Tarigan, Irfan Azhari (2023)	The Influence of Social Media on Adolescent Mental Health	The findings of the study show that there is a significant relationship between social media use and adolescent mental health. The use of social media can make it easier for teenagers to access

No.	Writer	Title	Result
			information and make it easier in various activities such as learning, communicating, seeking information and seeking entertainment, however, the use of social media requires self-control, emotional regulation, and a healthy mindset to reduce the tendency to negative impacts.
5	Melani Nur Cahya, Widia Ningsih, and Ayu Lestari (2023)	The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Psychological Well-Being: A Review of the Effects of Social Media Use on Adolescent Anxiety and Depression	The results show that excessive social media use, exposure to cyberbullying and frequent social comparisons on social media can contribute to increased anxiety and depression in adolescents.

Mental Health

American Psychology Association (APA) defines mental health as a state in which there is a successful self-adjustment in the individual with psychological, emotional, behavioral and social stability (Afriliana & Primadesi, 2024). WHO states that mental health is a prosperous condition where individuals are able to realize their potential, are able to overcome life pressures, work productively and are able to contribute to their communities.

Mental health itself is scientifically a science that talks about mental and soul care, so that the realization of harmony between soul functions is the core of mental health itself. Mental comes from the Latin word *mentis* which means soul while hygiene comes from the Greek word *Hugine* which means science of health, thus it can be interpreted that mental health science (mental hygiene) is a science that talks about human mental life as a complex psychophysical.

The characteristics of individuals with a healthy mental state are shown by mental efficiency where there are no neurotic emotional disorders, integration between thoughts and behaviors, able to provide reasonable emotional responses, and have a good self-concept. Maslow and Mittelman (in Kartono, 2000) Describe a mentally healthy person as follows:

1. Have a sense of security
2. Have insight and be able to provide rational self-assessment
3. Have the right spontaneity and emotionality

4. Able to control fantasy and wishful thinking so that it remains connected to reality.
5. Have the right life goals with a reasonable and realistic nature
6. Have the awareness to achieve needs in groups and individuals.

Technology and Social Media: Two Sides of the Currency for Mental Health

Literally the use of technology and social media has two sides of the impact on its users, in short the positive impact of the use of this technology is:

1. Social support

With the advancement of media and technology, this can be a means to connect with the social environment without time limits, making communication in sharing experiences and emotional support that can support mental health carried out at any time without hindrance.

2. Access mental health information

Easy access to information and resources that can support mental health such as self-help or online support platforms is the result of the development of technology and social media in the digital era. Easy access to information and professional help related to mental health can be an aid for healthy mental development at large.

3. Opportunities to express yourself

At this time, people, especially generation Z, have a tendency to use social media as a place to express themselves, the majority of them use social media as a medium to express themselves and find other people who have similar interests.

Technology and social media have become an integral part of modern life, both of which provide various benefits in facilitating activities such as access to information, extensive social connectivity, and opportunities to study and work more flexibly. However, excessive and inappropriate use of technology and media will bring its own challenges to life. Many challenges have emerged as a result of the use of media and technology in this digital era such as cyberbullying, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), increased anxiety and stress, as well as body image issues, and even other challenges such as changes in sleep patterns and social isolation can arise which will then affect daily life.

Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior carried out by a group or individual physically or verbally, in recent years with the advancement of oppression technology through social media and technology has become rampant, this oppression is known as cyberbullying (Smith et al., 2008). Cyberbullying is an act carried out with the aim of ridiculing, insulting or intimidating others through internet media or digital technology (Gohal et al., 2023). Prolonged bullying can have a negative impact on the victim such as psychological trauma that can trigger increased anxiety and stress, social isolation where the victim tends to withdraw from association and is afraid of facing further bullying, decreased academic performance, to the tendency to self-harm to attempts to end life.

In the digital era with the speed and ease of obtaining information brings behavioral changes to individuals, at this time individuals have a tendency to always follow and want to know what is happening and even many of them experience anxiety about being left behind in the information circulating, this phenomenon is known as fear missing out (FOMO) (Bajwa et al., 2023). FOMO occurs in individuals who use social media excessively with the desire to always connect with others, this can bring psychological disorders, the

individual's tendency to compare himself socially can trigger feelings of inferiority as well as feelings of inadequacy which will eventually lead to anxiety and depression.

Maintaining Mental Health in the Digital Era

Globally the average person in 2020 spends almost seven hours per day using technological devices, many people tend to make their phones the first thing they look for in the morning and the last thing they put down at night (Vialle et al., 2023). This raises anxiety in some users about the dangers of excessive use of technology that can affect physical, psychological and social well-being.

As an effort to minimize the impact of excessive use of technology, many popular media and research use strategies Digital Detox to improve well-being and balance the benefits of using technology (Coyne & Woodruff, 2023). The meaning of digital detox is assumed to be an effort to reduce the consumption or use of digital media devices (Nguyen, 2022), detox measures also involve limiting the use of the device in certain places such as the bedroom, or limiting the intensity of media use (Gray, 2023). In academic literature, digital detox is defined as selective and temporary disconnection in the use of digital technology such as smartphone, computers, and tablets (Mhone, 2023). Digital detox itself is not a magic solution to all mental health problems, but this strategy can be an important step to reduce stress, improve well-being, and restore life balance.

This section presents the result of the study, discussion, and the finding. The result of the study provides the data of the study. The discussion section analyzes, compares, contrasts the data with the relevant result of the other studies. The finding section serves novelty in the form of generalization, concept, theory, formulation, principle, and postulate. The discussion result and findings of the study need to be strengthened by an illustration in the form of table or figure (graphic, diagram, chart, photo, example). Results and discussion are at 70% of the article.

CONCLUSION

Generation Z grows and develops in a dynamic digital era, so they have a tendency to get used to information technology from an early age, which makes the life of Generation Z significantly integrated with the use of technology. However, high exposure to social media can provide high social pressure, which affects increased levels of anxiety and stress.

The use of social media and technology in daily life has a two-sided impact on its users, social support, access to mental health information and the opportunity to express themselves is one of the positive impacts in the use of technology and media. Meanwhile, the tendency to increase anxiety and stress, cyberbullying, body image issues, and social isolation are challenges and negative impacts that will occur as a result of excessive use of technology and media. Digital detox or the act of reducing or temporarily stopping the use of digital devices such as computers, tablets and smartphones is one of the strategies in an effort to reduce the negative impact of the use of technology and media.

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