

Changes and Interactions of Social Sensitivity of Generation Z Students in the Digital Era

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ABSTRAK

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dinamika kepekaan sosial mahasiswa Generasi Z di era digital, khususnya dalam konteks lingkungan kampus. Mahasiswa Generasi Z, yang lahir antara pertengahan 1990-an hingga awal 2010-an, tumbuh dalam era teknologi informasi yang pesat, yang mempengaruhi cara mereka berinteraksi, berkomunikasi, dan menyikapi isu-isu sosial. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan melakukan observasi dan wawancara secara mendalam dengan mahasiswa dari berbagai jurusan di beberapa universitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepekaan sosial mahasiswa Generasi Z cenderung tinggi, didorong oleh akses yang mudah terhadap informasi dan *platform* media sosial. Mereka lebih aktif dalam gerakan sosial, namun juga menghadapi tantangan seperti disinformasi dan *cyberbullying*. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya pengembangan pendidikan karakter dan literasi digital untuk meningkatkan kepekaan sosial mahasiswa, sehingga mereka dapat berkontribusi lebih efektif dalam masyarakat.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the dynamics of social sensitivity of Generation Z students in the digital era, especially in the context of the campus environment. Digital era, especially in the context of the campus environment. Generation Z students, who born between the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, grew up in an era of rapid era of rapid information technology, which affects the way they interact, communicate, and address social issues. The method used in this method used in this research is qualitative by conducting observations and in-depth interviews with in-depth observations and interviews with students from various majors in several universities. The results the results showed that the social sensitivity of Generation Z students tended to be high, driven by easy access to information and social media platforms. Social media platforms. They are more active in social movements, but also face challenges such as challenges such as disinformation and cyberbullying. This research underscores the importance of developing character education and digital literacy to increase social digital literacy to increase students' social sensitivity, so that they can contributemore effectively to society. contribute more effectively to society.

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1. INTRODUCTION

When a person is born, that person becomes a member of a society or group. The time period that includes the years that define this community group is important for generational grouping (Delahoyde, 2009). It states that generations are born in a given period of time who have the same thoughts and behaviors, the same judgment of values and attitudes through common experiences that they share under the influence of social, cultural and historical events (Ercömart, 2018). Individuals who were born and grew up in a certain period and are in the same age group, in the process of socialization, with the same network of relationships (family, friends, etc.), the same teachings (education, technology, etc.), the same experiences, form the same characteristic traits and turn them into behavioral patterns, they can be considered representatives of the same generation. They are acceptable (Yıldırımaltıp and Güvenç, 2020). Since generations are influenced by the structural characteristics of the period in which they live, it is possible for their members to have something similar.

Each generation has its own characteristics, values, views, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors, thoughts, prejudices, weaknesses, and strengths. The generation gap is defined by age groups in the literature. Classification of generations (Twenge, 2013; Reeves and Oh, 2008; Crumpacker and Crumpacker, 2007; Haeberle et.al, 2009; Keleş 2011; Kyles, 2005; Lancaster and Stillman, 2002; Senbir, 2004; Yelkikalan ve Altın, 2010; Türk, 2013) 1925-1945: Silent Generation (traditionalist), 1946-1964: Baby Boomers, 1965-1979: Generation X 1980-1999: Generation Y, 2000- +: Generation Z. The silent generation is raised with values that prioritize important judgments such as loyalty and taking on tasks in groups (Delahoyde, 2009). Their knowledge, stability, and confidence have made them managers in key positions in their jobs (Zemke, 2013). The baby boom generation is loyal to their work, has a positive attitude towards their coworkers, and has a close and caring attitude in interpersonal interactions (Daloğlu, 2013). Even if they are not in contact with technology, they are eager to learn and use technology because of their ambitious and competitive attitude (Delahoyde, 2009). The ideas of the baby boom generation such as equality between men and women and sensitivity to racism have been transferred to the present (Strauss and Howe, 1991). Generation X is considered a generation that is in rapid social change, financial, family and social insecurity, and unclear traditions. It is stated that, in addition to being skilled in using technology and problem-solving in the workplace, they are also highly competitive and open to innovation and diversity (Smola and Sutton, 2002).

Generation X individuals are individuals who are educated, have a desire to experience everything, are persistent, and want to know everything. Even if they complete their development and education process in their work and studies, they try to look for other options that they think will be better in a few years, not much (Ware, 2013). It is noteworthy that they are content, careful, confident, fun, aggressive, dynamic, and courageous, yet not let their guard down. Characterizations such as having high brand loyalty, being the first generation to meet gender equality, and being happy to be independent can be listed (Atabay et al, 2011). Generation Y, defined as the period after 1980 in Turkey, are the children of a technologically friendly, individual, convenient, and globalized world in which PC and GSM technology was born (Senbir, 2004). People in Generation Y are defined as a generation that loves technology very much and knows how to use technology well. For this generation, technology is a symbol of many things in their lives. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that one of the things that makes Generation Y superior to Generation X is the use of technology (Aydin and Başol, 2014). Generation Z, unlike previous generations, can be networked young people and members of various networks. It can also be said that they have developed the ability to handle more than one subject at the same time (Mengi, 2009). This generation is discovering all of these things along with new technological opportunities and the ease of communication and transportation. Because of their desire to always be online, they aim to maintain a connection on their phone or computer in the background even when they are sleeping. When they wake up in the morning, the first thing they do is check the connections that are happening in the background (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008). Since this generation has not yet transitioned to the world of work, its characteristics in this field cannot be explained.

While the same generation is united with the same culture and values, different generations can be separated from each other and generational differences can arise (Atak, 2016). Characteristic traits such as age, education level, gender, socio-economic status affect the educational process, learning habits, social roles, expectations, and development of society. Different characteristic structures change a person's value priorities (Schwartz, 2005: 15). Throughout their lives, individuals are influenced by their parents, and then by their socialization and by others in the circle of friends they consider important in their lives, by certain

experiences, by their education, by their customs and traditions, by the culture in which they belong, and by other processes (Schermerhon, 1996: 136).

Social sensitivity is also defined as the action of individuals to react quickly and appropriately to social situations in the surrounding environment. Social sensitivity requires further development to reduce selfishness and develop a sense of empathy for others around them. Attitudes of social sensitivity can be classified, such as sharing with others, being willing to help others in need, the courage to apologize when making mistakes, and respecting others who have different circumstances (Putri & Yanzi, 2020). Therefore, social sensitivity must be developed, especially in responding to social problems that occur in the campus environment. From this perspective, Generation Z has witnessed all the digital advancements experienced by other generations since birth (Tosun, 2022: 25). Global events and situations experienced during the process of social change can create many effects.

Social problems are better known as a problem that exists, grows, or develops among students where the problem is considered less or not in accordance with existing social values and related to student behavior. Many factors encourage students today to engage in bad social phenomena. According to Rahim (2006), student involvement in various social phenomena starts from several factors, including factors in the students themselves from the aspect of personal development, the dysfunction of family institutions and also the influence of peers. Social problems that usually exist in the student environment are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression due to academic pressure, financial problems, environmental changes, social isolation, discrimination, intolerance, sexual violence, bullying, drugs, environmental issues and difficulties in finding ways to get involved in social activities or student organizations that suit their interests and values. Zainal and Sharani (2004) stated that the influence of the negative environment on campus is also the peak of moral collapse among students. Addressing these issues requires collaboration between students, faculty, and campus administration to create a more inclusive and supportive environment experienced by individuals or groups. Social problems certainly always exist in the surrounding environment, both from small-scale or minor problems to problems with severe categories. To deal with problems that occur in the environment, of course, good social sensitivity is needed in every human being. However, if viewed from the development of the era where we have been in a sophisticated digital era, it can be felt that this social sensitivity is questionable, especially in generation

Z. Arieff and Wardah (2006) explained that the treatment of students is described as the treatment of their emotions. Generation Z is a generation born in a period of sophistication, Generation Z is also commonly referred to as digital natives where they are a generation that has known electronic media since birth, including the rapid use of the internet with all its consequences. Generation Z is a group born between 1998 and 2009 (Tapscott, 2008). Generation Z is also the technology generation. In other words, Generation Z grew up in a world that was all connected to technology from the very beginning (Mahani & Nazlinda, 2010; Tosun, 2022). In addition, Hellen (2012) revealed that Generation Z is a young generation that grows and develops with a great dependence on digital technology. Santosa (2015) said that there are several characteristics of children who are included in Generation Z, including a) have great ambitions for success; b) tend to be practical and behave instantly (speed) children in the era of generation Z like practical problem solving. They don't like to linger on a long process of looking at a problem; c) love freedom and have high self-confidence who are very fond of freedom; d) tend to like details, this generation is included in the generation that is critical in thinking and detailed in observing a problem or phenomenon (Bhakti & Safitri, 2017).

Various changes in the digital era have been felt positively in student life, one of which is in terms of information and communication. Generation Z is described as internet and technology wizards, born in the era of big data and smart technology, socializing in the digital world, social media, social media actors, always online (Özdemir, 2019). Because individuals from Generation Z are younger, they are less involved in work life than other generations (Ok, 2019). As the times progress, in terms of communication and information are felt to be getting easier, who used to have to meet in communicating, now communicating with one or a group of people will be easier by using gadgets or mobile phones. Likewise, information that used to only rely on newspapers, radio, and television. However, currently it has developed where communication and information can be accessed through gadgets. Generation Z communicates and interacts with individuals and groups on virtual platforms via the Internet. They are active subjects in the digital age (Çakir, 2024).

2. METHOD

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach that aims to gain an understanding of situations, events, roles, groups, or social interactions. Data collection techniques are carried out using observations, interviews, and documentation studies. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique from Generation Z born in 2000 and after. In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 people representing Generation Z using a semi-structured interview form. The interview questions are structured based on information obtained from literature studies conducted before the interview and several previous studies. The questions asked must be understandable and consist of questions that aim to obtain detailed information. At the beginning of the interview, socio-demographic characteristics are determined to know the generation (age group, educational status, whether they are employed or not, etc.) and then asked questions about the situation of technology use and social environmental sensitivity. In some cases, additional questions are asked to get more in-depth information. Based on the characteristics of the subject and the focus of the research, the research design uses a case study research design. Case study research involves a detailed description of the setting or individual, followed by data analysis for the theme or problem (Creswell, 2017).

The case study research design was chosen with the aim of finding out in depth about an event and activity that is happening or real-life events, which in this study is the dynamics of social sensitivity of generation Z students in the digital era. Data analysis uses descriptive to explain data on social sensitivity, which presents generation Z and the dynamics of social sensitivity through indicators and social problems that occur within the scope of students. According to Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2017), data analysis in qualitative research is carried out interactively and lasts continuously until completion or saturated data. Data analysis by reducing data, presenting data and drawing conclusions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The dynamics of social sensitivity of Generation Z students are influenced by various factors, including quick and easy access to information through technology, as well as the values embraced by this generation. They grew up in the digital age, where information and awareness of social issues spread rapidly. This causes them to be more open to various perspectives and global issues. This social sensitivity also reflects a change in the way of thinking about social responsibility. Generation Z students tend to think that individual actions can have a big impact, and they feel moved to contribute to creating change. This shows that formal and non-formal education have an important role in shaping their character and social values. However, challenges remain. Despite the enthusiasm of many, some students still find it difficult to organize the action effectively. In addition, the emergence of disinformation on social media can obscure facts and influence public opinion. Therefore, it is important to improve media literacy among students so that they can filter information better.

Overall, the results obtained by the researcher showed that the social sensitivity of Generation Z students has great potential to create positive change in society. With the right support, they can be significant agents of change in the face of future social challenges. Generation Z students show a high level of social awareness. Many are active in issues such as climate change, social justice, and human rights. They are often involved in online campaigns and volunteer activities. Social media is the main tool for Generation Z students to disseminate information and raise awareness.

They use platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter to voice opinions and mobilize the masses. Generation Z, they learn to survive by seeing inventions that significantly affect life, such as the advent of computers, mobile phones, and the internet (Ng. et al., 2016:55). Generation Z's life is greatly influenced by technological changes. Smartphones and digital platforms are indispensable tools for them (Kılıç, 2018:61-76). Many students are involved in social movements, both local and global. They tend to support movements that focus on issues such as LGBTQ+, race, and the environment. An academic environment that supports open discussion of social issues contributes to the development of students' social sensitivity. Lectures, seminars, and group discussions are important means of shaping their views. Generation Z shows a quick response to social crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. They are involved in various solidarity activities,

such as fundraising and support for affected communities.

Discussion

The development of technology that has become all-digital makes human's inseparable from electronic goods. Digital technology is a technology that no longer uses human labor, or manual. But it tends to be an automated operating system with a computerized system or a format that can be read by a computer. The digital system is a development of the analog system. A digital system uses a sequence of numbers to represent information (Aji: 2016). Digital technology is not a new thing and comes suddenly but has been in the process since the decades of the 80s, so that until the 21st century, it is called the digital era. In this era, the use of digital technology has become a necessity, not only adults, but also teenagers, even minors already know the name Android Mobile Phone (HP). Using digital devices using Google, Yahoo, blogs, and emails, we can see a window into the world (Muhasim: 2017).

Almost most students on campus have social media accounts, not just one, but more than one social media account. This was expressed by several students, especially there are several subjects whose learning process is carried out through social media for occasional meetings. The campus also provides wifi facilities to access all information in the digital world. The provision of this wifi facility is of course to support activities in the academic and non-academic fields. Although there are still some students who do not use digital media because they do not have the "tools". In addition, based on the results of interviews with several students at several universities, there are several things that affect the ownership and use of digital media, namely the development of the times, the more the times change, the more everything in it changes. This is one of the things that makes digital media increasingly in demand and studied by generation z. The change of the era also certainly requires an improvement in the quality of human resources to create new things in facing all existing challenges and in order to compete globally in positive things. So, the preparation of the "strength" can start as early as possible. It should be emphasized that, with the emergence of new media, it will bring very rapid changes in students' lives without limits and more effectively (Nurjanah, 2014); High curiosity, every individual has his nature to always be curious. This high curiosity is what motivates students to learn new things, especially about digital media.; The environment, it is undeniable that the environment has a strong influence in any case, including the use of digital media. This is also one of the triggers for students to just have and learn about digital media. When there are peers who own or use digital media, other students will also own or use it. This tendency to imitate is the psychological basis of a student. This can also be known as learning through imitation.

Based on the results of interviews and observations that have been conducted, it was found that students have begun to have a caring attitude towards their environment, even though the student's caring attitude is only limited to a small scope. This concern is shown through the empathetic attitude felt when a close friend/classmate experiences an unwanted event, such as illness, accidents, and other disasters. Students also often do social service by inviting other friends to donate some of the funds to be channeled to victims of natural disasters that have occurred in several regions in Indonesia. The initiated social service started from the information on the social media used. This shows that social media has a positive influence in training students' social sensitivity. However, based on the results of observations, in terms of other concerns, such as the existence of garbage lying around, no one took the initiative to take the garbage to be disposed of in the trash. This seems to contrast with the results of the interviews that have been conducted. There are two possibilities in this case, first, students are forced to have social sensitivity because of the encouragement from friends around them who invite them to care. Second, students only care about everything that is the same as themselves, meaning that students do not understand that caring must be with everything, both living and inanimate things. Ignorance of inanimate objects will also have an impact on something alive, namely humans, plants, and animals. Rohima (2018) thinks that social sensitivity is a person's ability to react quickly and appropriately to certain objects or social situations around them. Social sensitivity is also related to the willingness and character that has existed in a person to empathize or read the emotions of others (Utami, 2019). So, it can be said that social sensitivity is a form of attention and concern for the situation in the surrounding environment which is carried out on one's own volition without coercion. There are several forms of social sensitivity, including sharing with others, being willing to help people in need, daring to apologize if they make mistakes, and respecting others who have different conditions. Therefore, social sensitivity can be interpreted as an action of an individual who comes from

within himself to feel every event that occurs around him, be it about sad events or pleasant events. In addition, there are two other types or names of social sensitivity according to Rohima (2018), namely: 1) Empathy is a reaction from attitudes, actions, or words that may be very similar to what is expected by others. This empathetic character is often the beginning of other emotional reactions, for example, empathy can generate sympathy. 2) Social Concern is a situation where a person easily feels changes to the small things that happen around him, such as acting earnestly, loyally, courageously, virtuously, and fairly without being tempted by many things to the contrary. They do the right thing out of habit. A person who has high social sensitivity will easily have a high sense of concern for others.

Based on the researcher's analysis, students will care if one of them makes a status on social media such as on Facebook, Instagram, Line, TikTok or WhatsApp that they have about sad news or happy news. This is in accordance with what was revealed by Withall (in Nurjanah, 2014) that students make social media such as Facebook, instgaram, line, TikTok or watssapp as a Social Bible or guidelines in social life that are important to find information and relate to friends, friends they have not seen for a long time, to new ones they have known. Boyd and Ellison (in Ruhban, 2013) Defines a social networking site as a network-based service that allows individuals to build a public profile with other users who share the network with them, as well as view and transfer a list of their connections and those of others in the system. Therefore, users of social networks, be it Facebook, Instagram, Line, TikTok, watssapp, and Telegram, are required to be smarter in using them in socializing, because every writing or word written on a social media can give different assessments from other users.

The results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers in the field found that students prefer to communicate virtually, many students experience feelings of loneliness and isolation (social isolation), students tend to rely more on digital devices to communicate and seek information, the dissemination of inaccurate information, students are more consumptive which can affect their behavior and priorities in living their daily lives, lack of involvement in real social activities, Stress or anxiety, Reduced empathy, and changes in social values. This change in habits that, if not addressed properly, will refer to social problems such as social sensitivity. Social sensitivity in association is very important because every student does not always live alone. Tondok (2012) revealed that forms of social sensitivity in association include sharing with others in need, being willing to help people in need, daring to apologize first if they make mistakes, not badmouthing or swearing with harsh words through social media and respecting others who have different conditions. Social sensitivity, which is often trained and applied to students in the campus environment, can foster other social attitudes such as empathy, social concern, self-awareness, and respect for others.

This means that every student can participate in feeling what is happening with the situation of others. Empathic behavior can reduce intolerance, conflict, discrimination and increase understanding, respect, and tolerance between human beings with differences in ethnicity and cultural background (Wang et al., 2003). There are seven experts or theorists who put forward the theory of empathy (Eisenberg, 1987; Hoffman, 1998 & 2000). They argue that empathy is the ability or character or part of an individual's personality in understanding the feelings and thoughts of others (involving affective and cognitive processes). The existence of social attitudes and empathy if applied in community life has the same meaning as an attitude of care. In addition, mutual respect is also part of the indicator of social sensitivity. So, instilling mutual respect in students is very important to be done, especially in the lecture process.

4. CONCLUSION

The social sensitivity of everyone in this case is a student, not formed by itself but by various stimuli given. The social environment and digital media are considered a strong "trigger" for students in the campus environment to take caring actions. In addition to digital literacy is a competency that must be mastered by every student in this era, so that every student strives to learn digital media, the use of digital media also has an impact on the formation of student social sensitivity, especially in the campus environment. Although, the level of concern has not penetrated all areas of life, namely in terms of caring for inanimate objects. Campus community synergy is also an important part of forming a sensitive attitude towards something that happens in the campus environment and even the wider environment. With good cooperation from various parties, one of the goals of the campus in shaping students' social sensitivity can be achieved optimally in all areas of life.

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