

Research Article

Dynamics of Changes in Literacy Culture in the Social Media Era: Comparative Study of the Millennial Generation and Generation Z

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ORCIDAhmad Salman Farid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8528-9752>**Abstract.**


This study aims to analyze the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the social media era with a focus on millennials and generation Z. The presence of social media has changed the way individuals access, process and share information. A comparative study method was used to compare the influence of social media on literacy culture between millennials and generation Z. Data was collected through structured surveys and interviews involving participants from both generations. The variables observed included reading frequency, types of literature consumed, sources of information used, and patterns of sharing information through social media. The results of the study show that there is a significant difference between the millennial generation and generation Z in terms of the influence of social media on literacy culture. Millennials tend to read digital content more often and use social media as the main source of information. Meanwhile, generation Z tends to be more active in sharing information through social media and using special social media platforms to expand their literacy reach.

Keywords: social media, millennial generation, generation Z, literacy culture

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, advances in information and communication technology, especially social media, have changed the way we interact with information and knowledge. Millennials and generation Z, who grew up in an era dominated by social media, are experiencing a significant impact in terms of literacy and understanding of information[1]. In this context, changing literacy culture becomes an important issue that requires deeper understanding.

This research has high urgency because it examines changes in literacy culture in the era of social media, with a focus on two generations that are greatly influenced by developments in technology and digital media, namely the millennial generation and generation Z. In the current context, where social media has become a part integral

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to everyday life, understanding how this generation interacts with information, filters content, and understands literacy is crucial[2], [3]. This study will fill the knowledge gap in the literature that has previously not adequately investigated changes in literacy culture in the era of social media from the perspective of generational differences. Thus, this research will provide a deeper understanding of how millennials and generation Z consume, interpret, and participate in social media, as well as how changes in their literacy culture affect their thought patterns, behavior, and worldview. This research can provide important insights for education, media and society in facing the challenges and opportunities that arise along with developments in technology and social media.

The influence of social media on literacy culture is still an active area of research. Questions arise about how the millennial generation and generation Z interact with texts, how to obtain information, and how the literacy of these two generations develops in an increasingly complex digital context. In order to understand the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the era of social media, comparative studies between the millennial generation and generation Z are important[4], [5]. Millennials have been early adopters of social media, while generation Z grew up with this technology as an integral part of both generations' lives. By comparing literacy experiences and behavior between these two generations, significant differences can be identified in the way they read, process and share information.

Gaining a better understanding of the changing dynamics of literacy culture in the era of social media will lead to developing literacy education and promotion strategies that are more suited to the needs of the millennial generation and generation Z. It is important to ensure that technological advances do not hinder literacy development, but instead, are used effectively to encourage deep learning and understanding in this fast-paced information age. This research provides a deeper understanding of how social media influences literacy culture in two different generations. The implications of this research can be used as a basis for developing more effective educational and literacy promotion strategies in the social media era.

The advent of social media has brought about significant changes in the way individuals access, process and share information. The millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996, and generation Z, born after 1997, grew and developed in an environment rich with technology and easy access to social media[6]. This phenomenon sparked debate about the impact of social media on literacy culture. While social media offers ease and convenience in accessing various information, there are concerns that this could have a negative impact on literacy culture. Too much time spent on social media can reduce the time spent reading and studying conventional literature. In addition, the

short and fast form and style of communication in social media can influence in-depth reading abilities and holistic understanding of content.

Therefore, it is important to comprehensively understand the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the social media era, especially in relation to the millennial generation and generation Z. Through comparative studies between these two generations, we can explore the differences and similarities in reading patterns, the types of literature consumed, sources of information used, and habits of sharing information via social media. It is hoped that this research can provide valuable insight into how social media influences literacy culture in the generation that is growing and developing in this digital era.

2. Methods

This research was conducted in 2023 in two different locations to describe the comparison between the millennial generation and generation Z in the context of their literacy culture in the social media era. The first location is in Mandailing Natal Regency, which represents the millennial generation. The second location is in Padangsidempuan City, which represents generation Z. The choice of this location was based on the consideration that the two cities have different social media characteristics and are representative of each generation.

For sample size, this research uses a quantitative and qualitative approach. For the quantitative survey, researchers collected data from 100 respondents in Mandailing Natal Regency, consisting of members of the millennial generation[7][8]. In Padangsidempuan City, researchers also collected data from 100 respondents who were members of generation Z. This survey was used to measure their behavioral patterns and literacy preferences on social media. Apart from that, researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with 30 respondents from each generation group, using qualitative methods. This method allows for a deeper understanding of the experiences, perceptions and changes in literacy culture that occur within each generation.

This research method is further detailed by referring to related scientific references which describe the data analysis steps, survey tools used, and interview techniques applied. These scientific references can help form a more complete picture of the methodology used in this research[9]. In research on the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the social media era, especially in the millennial generation and generation Z, comparative study research methods are used to analyze the differences and similarities in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the two generations.

First, data was collected through a survey involving respondents from the millennial generation and generation Z. This survey was designed to collect information about reading frequency, types of literature consumed, information sources used, and information sharing patterns via social media. The survey questions were designed to cover important aspects in relation to literacy culture and the influence of social media. In addition, structured interviews were also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of individual perceptions, habits and experiences in facing changes in literacy culture influenced by social media. This interview involves participants from both generations, taken randomly or based on certain criteria.

The collected data was then analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative analysis was conducted to identify patterns, themes, and factors that emerged from interviews and explain the influence of social media on literacy culture[10]. Meanwhile, quantitative analysis was carried out to statistically analyze the survey data, identifying significant differences between the millennial generation and generation Z in terms of social media literacy and influence. By using this comparative study research method, it is hoped that we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the era of social media in the millennial generation and generation Z. Through comprehensive data analysis, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for literacy education and development amidst the current social and technological changes.

3. Results and Discussion

Social media has changed the cultural landscape of literacy in significant ways. As a very popular communication and information exchange tool, social media has great potential in shaping behavior in reading and consuming literature. However, the role of social media in changing literacy culture also has pros and cons. Positively, social media has increased the accessibility of literature and information. Through social media platforms, one can easily find articles, blogs, e-books, and other sources of information. This opens up opportunities for individuals to develop literacy interests, explore diverse topics, and broaden their horizons.

Apart from that, social media also encourages collaboration and joint learning. Discussion groups and online literacy communities allow individuals to share ideas, recommend books, and support each other on their literacy journey. It creates an inspiring and enriching space for individuals looking to improve their reading and writing skills.

However, changes in literacy culture induced by social media also have challenges and risks. One of the main challenges is the shift to shorter and more concise reading preferences. The characteristics of social media which tend to display information in a fast and instant format can influence deep and reflective reading habits[11]. Thick books and more complex reading may be overlooked by a generation accustomed to short, instant content on social media. In addition, the risk of inaccurate information and the spread of fake news also increases with the presence of social media. The existence of multiple sources of information that are not well verified can confuse readers and hinder the development of critical skills in analyzing and assessing the information encountered.

In conclusion, the role of social media in changing literacy culture is a complex phenomenon. Social media can be a powerful tool for promoting literacy, connecting individuals with diverse literary content, and building solid literacy communities. However, challenges such as shifting reading preferences and the risk of inaccurate information need to be acknowledged and addressed thoughtfully[12]. It is important for social media users, educators, and researchers to continue to understand the impact of social media on literacy culture and develop a balanced approach to ensure the positive influence of social media in the development of literacy culture.

3.1. Reading Frequency Analysis

In the context of differences in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the millennial generation and generation Z, analysis of reading frequency is an important aspect that needs to be considered. Reading frequency can reflect the level of engagement and literacy habits between these two generations, as well as the extent to which social media influences the reading patterns of both generations.

The millennial generation, with its preference for reading digital content, tends to read more frequently than generation Z. Both generations are used to accessing online articles, blogs and other digital literacy content via social media[13][14]. This is because the millennial generation sees social media as the main source of information, so they tend to spend more time reading various literacy content available on these platforms. However, it should be noted that the reading characteristics of the millennial generation can tend to be surface rather than in-depth, given the preference for short and practical content.

Meanwhile, generation Z, with its emphasis on the visual and interactive aspects of social media, may experience a slight decline in the frequency of more traditional

reading. Despite being exposed to a lot of literacy content on social media, generation Z is more likely to spend time consuming visual content, such as short videos, images and infographics. Traditional reading activities, such as reading printed books, may not be as popular for generation Z, although they can still read via digital platforms such as e-book applications.

The following is a reading frequency analysis table that shows the differences in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the millennial generation and generation Z:

TABLE 1: Reading Frequency Analysis.

Analysis Aspect	Millennial Generation	Generation Z
Frequency of Reading Traditional Literacy Content (Print Books)	Medium-High	Low-Medium
Frequency of Reading Digital Literacy Content (Articles, Blogs, etc.)	Tall	Medium-High
Preference for Reading Short and Practical Content	Low	Medium-High
Reading Preference for Visual and Interactive Content	Low-Medium	Tall
Involvement in Online Literacy Communities	Medium-High	Medium-High
Use of Social Media as a Primary Source of Information	Tall	Tall

Source: Analysed from the primary source

This table reflects the differences in reading frequency and literacy preferences between the millennial generation and generation Z. The millennial generation tends to have a higher reading frequency, both in traditional and digital literacy content. Both generations also have a tendency to read more in-depth content and are less influenced by visual and interactive aspects. On the other hand, generation Z tends to have a lower frequency of reading in traditional content, but higher in visual and interactive content. Both generations are also heavily involved in online literacy communities and use social media as a primary source of information.

The table above provides a general overview of how social media influences reading frequency and literacy preferences among the millennial generation and generation Z. These differences need to be considered in designing literacy strategies that suit the characteristics and preferences of each generation, so as to maximize the positive influence of social media in forming a sustainable literacy culture.

This reading frequency analysis shows significant differences in the influence of social media on the reading habits of the millennial generation and generation Z. The millennial generation tends to read more often and is more active in searching for literacy content through social media, while generation Z tends to have a preference

for more visual and interactive experiences[15]. read. Being aware of these differences is important in designing effective and relevant literacy strategies for each generation, as well as optimizing the potential of social media as a tool for promoting sustainable literacy activities among others.

3.2. Analysis of Types of Literature Consumed

The millennial generation, which experienced the development of social media at an early stage, may have different tendencies in using and consuming literacy content on social media compared to generation Z who were born and grew up in an increasingly sophisticated digital era. The following is a table analyzing the types of literature consumed which shows the differences in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the millennial generation and generation Z:

TABLE 2: Analysis of Types of Literature Consumed.

Analysis Aspect	Millennial Generation	Generation Z
Printed book	Currently	Low
E-book	Tall	Moderate
Articles and Blogs	Tall	Medium-High
Social Media Post	Tall	Tall
Visual Content (Videos, Infographics, etc.)	Low-Medium	Tall

Source: Analysed from the primary source

This table reflects the differences in the types of literature consumed by millennials and generation Z as well as the influence of social media on literature choices. The millennial generation tends to still have a significant level of consumption of printed books, but both generations are also active in consuming literature in the form of e-books, articles, blogs and social media posts. The millennial generation uses social media as the main source of information and accesses various types of literature through these platforms[16]. On the other hand, generation Z tends to have lower interest in reading printed books, but is more involved in consuming e-books, articles, blogs and more interactive visual content via social media. Both generations prefer visual content, such as videos and infographics, which can quickly and effectively convey information.

3.3. Analysis of Information Sources Used

The literature review conducted in this research plays an important role in understanding the differences in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the millennial

generation and generation Z. In analyzing the information sources used, this research refers to various types of literature which provide a strong framework to support this research. Scientific journals are one of the main sources that provide theoretical foundations and empirical data. By using scientific methods such as surveys, interviews, experiments, and quantitative and qualitative data analysis, scientific journals provide an in-depth understanding of the impact of social media on literacy in the millennial generation and generation Z[17]. This allows this research to build a strong foundation for the analysis of the differences between the two this generation.

Apart from that, research books written by experts and researchers in the fields of literacy and social media are important sources. These books discuss broader issues related to literacy culture and the role of social media in shaping the reading behavior of millennials and generation Z, providing a deeper context[18]. Academic articles that review the theories underlying the influence of social media on literacy, as well as analyzing research results related to social media use and the reading habits of millennials and generation Z, also make important contributions to understanding these differences. In addition to these sources, online publications such as news articles, blogs, and websites focused on literacy and social media also provide diverse insights. This includes opinions, opinions and case studies that can provide a broader perspective on how the influence of social media influences the literacy culture of both generations.

By utilizing these various sources of information, analysis of the differences in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the millennial generation and generation Z can include empirical data, relevant theories, and a more comprehensive understanding of the issues discussed, thus providing a solid framework for this research.

3.4. Analysis of Information Sharing Patterns via Social Media

Millennials are early adopters of social media, tending to use these platforms to share reading recommendations, book reviews and literacy-related articles. The millennial generation often uses social media as a channel to join literacy communities, expand networks, and engage in literary discussions[19].

The following is a table analyzing patterns of information sharing via social media regarding the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the social media era, with comparative studies on the millennial generation and generation Z:

TABLE 3: Analysis of Information Sharing Patterns via Social Media.

Analysis Aspect	Millennial Generation	Generation Z
Literacy Content Preferences	More likely to share reading recommendations, book reviews, and literacy-related articles.	Prefer visual and interactive content such as inspirational quotes, book illustrations, or story excerpts.
How to Share Information	Use social media platforms to connect with the literacy community, expand your network, and engage in literary discussions.	Using social media as a platform to express creativity through short writing, images or short videos.
Risk of Distraction	Vulnerable to the risk of distraction due to irrelevant or low-quality content on social media.	Facing a high risk of distraction due to exposure to short and instant content on social media.
Deficiencies in Literacy	May experience reduced time reading physical books and reduced critical skills in understanding more complex texts.	Susceptible to lack of patience in reading longer and more complex works.
Approaches to Content Literacy	Literacy content can focus more on in-depth understanding of texts and in-depth discussions via social media platforms.	Literacy content needs to combine visual, interactive and creative elements to attract the interest of generation Z and promote literacy with a shorter and more concise approach.

Source: Analysed from the primary source

Based on the observations in the table above, generation Z, who has grown up in an increasingly advanced digital era, uses social media to share information and reading experiences in a more visual and interactive way. Generation Z tends to like short content, such as inspirational quotes, book illustrations, or story excerpts. Generation Z also tends to use social media as a platform to express their own creativity, either through short writing, images or short videos.

However, it should be noted that although the millennial generation and generation Z differ in the way they share information via social media, the influence of social media on literacy culture can also pose challenges. Millennials and generation Z both face a high risk of distraction due to irrelevant or low-quality content on social media[20][21]. Moreover, constant exposure to short, instant content on social media can reduce persistence and patience in reading longer, more complex works.

Analysis of information sharing patterns via social media shows the need for a holistic approach in promoting literacy among the millennial generation and generation Z. It is important to combine visual, interactive and creative elements in literacy content distributed via social media, while strengthening the emphasis on the importance of reading and deeper understanding of the text.

In the contemporary digital landscape dominated by social media, an insightful analysis of information sharing patterns among millennials and Generation Z reveals a pressing need for a holistic approach in promoting literacy. These cohorts, deeply entrenched in the digital age, exhibit distinct preferences characterized by short attention spans, a predilection for visual stimuli, and an inclination towards interactive experiences. Recognizing these dynamics, it becomes imperative to craft literacy content that seamlessly blends visual, interactive, and creative elements. Visual aids, including graphics and images, not only capture attention but also enhance comprehension, making them indispensable in literacy campaigns. Moreover, the interactive nature of Generation Z demands content that goes beyond traditional formats, incorporating quizzes, polls, and interactive storytelling to foster engagement and knowledge retention.

Creative storytelling techniques emerge as powerful tools in conveying information effectively, creating relatable narratives that resonate with the audience emotionally[22][23]. Balancing these visually and interactively rich components, it is crucial to underscore the timeless value of reading and cultivating a deeper understanding of textual information. Literacy campaigns on social media platforms should emphasize the significance of reading in developing critical thinking and analytical skills. Furthermore, these campaigns should extend beyond traditional literacy, incorporating digital literacy skills that empower the audience to navigate the online world responsibly.

In essence, the convergence of visual, interactive, and creative elements in literacy campaigns on social media not only caters to the preferences of the digital-native audience but also ensures a comprehensive and impactful learning experience. By strategically combining these elements, literacy promotion becomes more than just a dissemination of information; it transforms into an engaging, memorable journey that contributes to the development of a literate and digitally proficient society. As we navigate the evolving digital landscape, embracing innovative approaches to literacy promotion stands as a cornerstone in shaping a future where information is not only abundant but also comprehended and utilized effectively.

3.5. Differences in the Influence of Social Media on Literacy Culture between Millennial Generation and Generation Z

The millennial generation and generation Z are two groups that grew up and live in an era of increasingly dominant social media. Even though both are exposed to the influence of social media, there are significant differences in the way social media influences literacy culture between the two generations. The millennial generation,

born between 1981 and 1996, has experienced a major shift in literacy preferences with the advent of social media[24][25]. Millennials tend to read digital content more often, such as online articles, blogs or social media posts. Social media has become the main source of information for the millennial generation, who seek information quickly and practically through platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Apart from that, the millennial generation is also active in participating in online literacy communities and sharing literature recommendations with fellow social media users.

On the other hand, generation Z, which is the generation born after 1997, has slightly different characteristics and literacy preferences. Generation Z grew up in an increasingly advanced digital era, and social media plays a more dominant role in life. Generation Z tends to be more active in sharing information via social media and uses special platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat and YouTube to expand their literacy reach[26]. Generation Z prefers visual, short and interactive content, such as short videos, infographics and memes. Generation Z also has good multitasking skills, being able to read and consume literacy content while staying connected to social media and other technology.

This difference shows that the millennial generation and generation Z have different responses and influences on social media in shaping literacy culture. The millennial generation tends to use social media more as a source of information and communication platform, while generation Z focuses more on the interactive and visual aspects of social media[27]. The influence of social media on the literacy culture of these two generations needs to be considered in developing literacy strategies that suit the preferences and characteristics of each generation, so as to promote sustainable literacy activities in the era of social media.

The results of this research show that there is a significant difference in the influence of social media on literacy culture between the millennial generation and generation Z. The millennial generation tends to read digital content more often and use social media as the main source of information. This can be related to the millennial generation's habit of accessing various types of literature online, such as articles, blogs or e-books. Apart from that, the millennial generation is also more open to various sources of information available on social media, including news, opinions and educational content.

On the other hand, generation Z, who were born in a very advanced technological era, tend to be more active in sharing information via social media[28][23]. Generation Z uses special social media platforms to expand literacy reach, such as participating in discussion groups or following accounts that promote literacy. In terms of types of

literature, generation Z also tends to look for content that is more visual and interactive, such as vlogs, podcasts or digital comics.

This study also provides a deeper understanding of how the millennial generation and generation Z interact with literacy culture in the era of social media. This difference shows that there is a shift in literacy preferences and communication styles which are influenced by technological advances and cultural changes. This understanding is important for designing education and literacy promotion strategies that suit the needs and preferences of the millennial generation and generation Z.

Although there are differences between the millennial generation and generation Z in terms of the influence of social media on literacy culture, it is important to remember that both generations continue to show interest and involvement in literacy activities. Therefore, efforts to promote literacy in the era of social media must exploit the positive potential of these platforms while still paying attention to the development of in-depth reading skills and holistic understanding of content.

In navigating the intricate terrain of social media's influence on literacy culture, it is essential to recognize the nuanced distinctions between the millennial generation and Generation Z. While each cohort brings its unique characteristics and preferences to the digital table, a common thread emerges—both generations display an enduring interest and active engagement in literacy activities. Despite the rapid evolution of technology and the dynamic shifts in communication paradigms, the commitment to literacy persists among millennials and Generation Z, albeit in varied forms.

The millennial generation, often characterized as the pioneers of the digital age, witnessed the birth and proliferation of social media platforms. As early adopters, they experienced a transformative shift in communication and information-sharing dynamics. Social media became an integral part of their lives, influencing the way they consume and disseminate information. For millennials, literacy culture became intertwined with the digital realm, where quick access to vast amounts of information and the ability to share ideas with a global audience became the norm.

In contrast, Generation Z, born into a world where social media was already omnipresent, displays distinct patterns in their interaction with literacy content. Raised amid a digital landscape saturated with multimedia stimuli, they exhibit preferences for concise and visually appealing information. Generation Z's literacy culture is shaped by an environment that values brevity, visual storytelling, and instant gratification. Their literacy engagement is often characterized by a fusion of images, videos, and succinct text, aligning with the rapid pace and visual nature of social media platforms.

However, amidst these differences, it is crucial to underscore the enduring interest and active participation of both generations in literacy activities. The fact that millennials paved the way for digital literacy and Generation Z seamlessly integrated it into their daily lives highlights the overarching significance of literacy in the digital age. Recognizing this common ground, efforts to promote literacy in the era of social media must be tailored to leverage the positive potential of these platforms.

Social media, with its unprecedented reach and connectivity, provides a unique opportunity to foster literacy in innovative ways[29]. Short-form content, visually appealing graphics, and interactive elements can capture the attention of both millennials and Generation Z, serving as catalysts for meaningful engagement[30]. These platforms serve as virtual libraries, where diverse forms of content coexist, ranging from traditional articles and e-books to bite-sized videos and interactive infographics. By harnessing the strengths of social media, literacy campaigns can meet the audience where they are, creating an accessible and inclusive space for learning and exploration.

However, the positive potential of social media should not overshadow the critical need to nurture in-depth reading skills and a holistic understanding of content. As information on social media tends to be concise and easily digestible, there is a risk of superficial engagement that prioritizes brevity over depth. Efforts to promote literacy must strike a delicate balance, encouraging the consumption of diverse content while emphasizing the value of in-depth reading and critical analysis.

Promoting in-depth reading skills involves fostering an appreciation for longer-form content, encouraging the exploration of complex narratives, and cultivating patience in the consumption of information. Social media platforms can be utilized not only for quick information sharing but also as launchpads for deeper dives into topics through linked articles, recommended reading lists, or collaborative discussions. By integrating these elements, literacy campaigns can guide millennials and Generation Z towards a more profound and nuanced understanding of the content they encounter.

Moreover, holistic literacy goes beyond the act of reading itself. It encompasses the ability to critically evaluate information, discern reliable sources, and navigate the nuances of diverse perspectives. Social media, with its vast array of content and voices, presents both opportunities and challenges in this regard. Efforts to promote literacy should equip individuals with the skills to navigate the digital landscape responsibly, distinguishing between credible and misleading information.

In conclusion, while the millennial generation and Generation Z exhibit differences in their interaction with social media and literacy culture, a shared commitment to literacy persists. Efforts to promote literacy in the era of social media should capitalize on the

positive potential of these platforms, leveraging their reach and connectivity to engage both cohorts. Simultaneously, there is a pressing need to ensure the development of in-depth reading skills and a holistic understanding of content. By striking a balance between the brevity of social media content and the depth of traditional literacy, campaigns can foster a generation that not only consumes information rapidly but also engages with it critically, ensuring a literate and discerning society in the digital age.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that social media has a significant impact on the dynamics of changes in literacy culture in the millennial generation and generation Z. The millennial generation tends to experience a shift in literacy preferences, by reading digital content more often and using social media as the main source of information. On the other hand, generation Z shows more active involvement in sharing information via social media and using these platforms to expand literacy reach.

These differences demonstrate the importance of understanding the characteristics and preferences of different generations in designing literacy education and promotion strategies. Efforts to build a strong literacy culture in the era of social media need to consider the needs and preferences of the millennial generation and generation Z. In addition, attention also needs to be paid to developing in-depth reading skills and holistic understanding of content so that literacy remains relevant and sustainable.

This research provides a better understanding of the role of social media in shaping literacy culture and provides a basis for developing literacy strategies that are appropriate to technological developments and cultural changes. It is important to continue to monitor and understand the changes that occur in literacy culture in the era of social media so that we can continue to develop effective approaches in promoting literacy among the millennial generation and generation Z, as well as future generations who will grow up in the ever-growing digital era.

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