

# **MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION FOR YOUNG GENERATIONS**

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# **MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION FOR YOUNG GENERATIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest internet penetration and usage rate in the world. Uniquely, the internet penetration is still dominated by the young generations. One segment of the young generations that is so familiar with the use of the internet is known as millennial generation. The young millennial generation often uses the internet to interact, do business, and access information on various social media. The young millennial generation is allegedly very vulnerable to the negative effects brought from the use of the internet. Therefore, education, socialization, and training are needed as the efforts to make the millennial generation become a media literate generation. The media literate generation is a generation that is wise, responsible, and understands the various positive and negative impacts of the use of social media. For this reason, media literacy education for the young millennial generation is needed in order to create a positive social relationship between society and social media. This condition will be a positive trigger for national life in the digital age.

**Key Words: Education, Media Literacy, Young Millennial Generation**

## **A. Introduction**

Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest internet penetration and usage rate in the world. The number of internet users in Indonesia increases significantly each year along with the easy access to internet facilities. We can see this from the survey data on Penetration and Behavior of Indonesian Internet Users in 2017 done by Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia) (APJII, 2017) in collaboration with Teknopreneur. The survey results showed that "the penetration of internet user in Indonesia has increased to 143.26 million people or around 54.68% of the 262 million inhabitants of Indonesia. The penetration of internet users is still dominated by young generations who are students as much as 75.50% (ages 13-18 years) and 74.23% (ages 19-34 years)."

The data gives an idea of how large internet users are among the young millennial generation. The young millennial generation usually uses the internet to interact, do business, and access information on various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc. However, the interactions and information on various social media are often poisoned by hoaxes, slanders, hate speech, bullying, black campaigns, etc. This certainly has negative impacts on the young millennial generation in using social media.

Usually the young millennial generation exposed to these negative impacts is those who are not social media literate.

For this reason, efforts need to be made for the young millennial generation to increase their knowledge, understanding, and awareness of social media through media literacy education. The media literacy education can shape the critical capacity of young millennial generation in using social media. Thus, the young millennial generation is expected to become a media literate generation that has the ability and critical awareness to sort out, choose, filter, select, and assess various issues or messages contained on social media. However, to instill understanding of media literacy in the young millennial generation is not an instant process. This effort needs to be made consistently and training also needs to be conducted continuously so that the young millennial generation has a mature understanding.

Based on the above problems, in this paper the writer formulates the main problem namely how the efforts of media literacy education for the young millennial generation are. Based on the formulation of the problem, the purpose of this paper is to describe how media literacy education for the young millennial generation is.

## **B. Media Literacy**

Most of the world's population is currently using a variety of new media that can facilitate and expand the reach of social communication. One of the new media that is widely used by the young millennial generation is social media. The use of social media cannot be separated from the current millennial generation. However, its use certainly requires an understanding of the substance, content of messages, and the impact of social media. This understanding is called as media literacy.

Broader media literacy covers a variety of existing media both print media, electronic media, and social media. However, in today's digital era, media literacy is more likely to use social media intensively. Therefore, it can be interpreted that media literacy based on social media is more suitable called as digital literacy.

Stefany et al. (2017, p. 16) interpreted media literacy as the ability of digital media users to critically and creatively filter the information that circulate in various media. A similar view was expressed by Jane Tallim (in Sukasih et al., 2015, p. 163) who defined media literacy as the ability to sift through and analyze the messages that inform, entertain, and sell to us every day. It's the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media.

The purpose of social media literacy is to provide a number of mindsets and skills that can be used by someone to analyze a message delivered on a social media including knowing

who is responsible for the contents of the message. Thus, media literacy has an important role in increasing the reasoning power, critical power, and analytical power of the young millennial generation about various contents, messages, and information available on various social media. The implication is that media literacy can strengthen the responsibility of young millennial generation regarding the contents, messages, and information available on various social media.

Media literacy can make the young millennial generation to be careful in using social media by considering the purpose of the discourse or narrative that will be built through media messages. Media literacy can help the young millennial generation be able to judge which media is true and credible in various aspects, including who is responsible for the content of media messages.

There are several important elements in media literacy that can shape the young millennial generation to be literate towards social media. This was expressed by Silverblatt et al. (2014, pp. 4-6) who stated that there are several elements of media literacy, namely:

1. Media literacy promotes the critical thinking skills that enable people to make independent choices with regard to: 1) which media programming to select; and 2) how to interpret the information that they receive through the channels of mass communication.
2. Understanding the process of mass communication.
3. An awareness of the impact of the media on individuals and society.
4. The development of strategies with which to analyze and discuss media messages.
5. An awareness of media content as a “text” that provides insight into our contemporary culture and ourselves.
6. The cultivation of an enhanced enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of media content.
7. In the case of media communicators: the ability to produce effective and responsible media messages.

Related to the elements in media literacy, the writer places more emphasis on issues of understanding the ethics, values, moral responsibility, and the law in using media. This is important so that the young millennial generation can apply ethics in using social media, so that they have a moral responsibility to interact on social media. In addition, an understanding of the rule of law in using social media is also important in order to shape the legal awareness of young millennial generation and also to prevent them from unlawful acts and actions on social media that can be ensnared by the ITE Law and the Criminal Code.

Besides the elements of media literacy, the young millennial generation must also have competence in interacting and communicating on social media. Kurnia, et al. (2018, pp. 7-8)

emphasized the importance of individual competence in media literacy. He divided individual competencies into three categories as follows:

1) Technical Skills

Technical skill is the ability to access and operate media. Technical skills include several criteria, namely:

- a. The ability to use computer and internet (computer and internet skills).
- b. The ability to use media actively (balanced and active use of media).
- c. The ability to use advanced internet (advanced internet use).

2) Critical Understanding

Critical understanding is the ability to analyze and evaluate media content comprehensively. Critical understanding includes several criteria, namely:

- a. The ability to understand media content and function (understanding media content and its functioning).
- b. Having knowledge about media and media regulation (knowledge about media and media regulation).
- c. User behavior in using media (user behavior).

3) Communicative Abilities

Communicative ability is the ability to socialize and participate through media and produce media content. Communicative abilities include several criteria, namely:

- a. The ability to communicate and build social relations through media (social relations).
- b. The ability to participate with the community through media (citizen participation).
- c. The ability to produce and create media content (content creation).

Those are some of the competencies in media literacy that the young millennial generation must have in order to use social media wisely. Of course, these various elements and competencies require training and education in order to make smart and wise young millennial generation in using social media.

### **C. The Young Millennial Generation**

Absher and Amidjaya (in Lalo, 2018, p. 72) stated that "millennial generation ranges from 1982 to 2002 and experiences google generation, net generation, generation Z, echo boomers, and dumbest generation." Meanwhile a more complete view was expressed by Baureh (2018, p. 342) who stated that:

"Millennial is a term that refers to a period. This term was first coined by two historians and also American writers, William Strauss and Neill Howe in several of their books. Millennial is a labeling for a group of people who were born, lived, grew, and developed during the development of science and technology, namely those who were born between 1980 and 2000. In addition to the term or labeling of "millennial", it is also known several terms of periods of a person's life, namely baby boomers, generation x, generation z. Millennial generation (generation y) is between generation x and generation z."

Based on the above views, it can be understood that the young millennial generation is one of the terms in the period of generation development in human civilization. The young millennial generation was born, grew, and developed from 1980 to 2000. From the period of birth and development, it can be seen that the young millennial generation will fill various strategic positions in the life of the nation and state. This generation was also born, grew, and developed with the rapid development of science and technology. Digital technology, internet, or social media is an inseparable part of the young millennial generation.

The special characteristics of the young millennial generation as stated by Tapscott (in Lalo, 2018, p. 72) include: "likes freedom, likes to personalize, relies on instant information, likes to learn and work with an innovative environment, actively collaborates and hyper technology." Meanwhile, based on the study of Boston Consulting Group and the Berkley University (in Baureh, 2018, p. 342), it was stated that

"the characteristics of millennial generation are people born in 1980-2000, tech savvy, prefer cellphones over television, social media used as a means of communication or information center, conventional reading interest is declining, and Google search as a family."

Therefore, based on those characteristics, it can be said that the young millennial generation is very close to today's technological sophistication. The young millennial generation who interacts more often on social media is certainly very vulnerable to the negative impacts brought from the use of this technology. For this reason, education, socialization, or training is needed so that the young millennial generation who has digital native characteristics is able to use technology wisely, especially in using social media. One effort can be done by providing media literacy education, so that the younger generation will be media literate.

#### **D. The Importance of Media Literacy Education for the Young Millennial Generation**

The young millennial generation often makes social media as a means of communication and interaction and a place to find various information in their daily lives. Therefore, media literacy skills are needed in using various social media, in order to respond positively to various information messages from social media.

Media literacy can be a means for the young millennial generation to avoid the negative impacts of media. Basically social media can be useful if used positively according to the proportion. However, media can have negative impacts if the use does not pay attention to aspects such as legal, social, cultural, security, and even religious aspects. For this reason, a

good understanding of media literacy will equip young generations to be more careful in using social media.

A poor understanding of media literacy can influence the behavior, acts, or actions of the young millennial generation on social media. For example, based on the results of research conducted by Pratiwi and Pritanova (2017, p. 23), it was stated that:

"Poor understanding of digital literacy will have a psychological effect on children and adolescents who tend to insult other people, cause jealousy towards others, cause depression, carry mood swings to negative comments, and are accustomed to speaking in impolite language."

In addition, research conducted by Darmawan and Silvana (2017) that sourced from a religious court showed that social media is the cause of the high divorce rate at a young age in Bandung. For this reason, based on these studies, it can be said that media literacy education is very important in anticipating the various negative impacts of media among the young millennial generation.

The importance of media literacy education was also expressed by the Ontario Canadian Department of Education (in Gutiérrez & Tyner, 2012, p. 34) that stated that

"Media literacy is concerned with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques. More specifically, it is education that aims to increase the students' understanding and enjoyment of how the media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organized, and how they construct reality. Media literacy also aims to provide students with the ability to create media products."

In this democracy era, media literacy education can also be a means of political education for the young millennial generation. Hasyim et al., (2018, p. 32) provided an overview of the relevance of political education to media literacy as follows:

"Education and political activities are very closely relevant to information and media. Every individual needs information in order to know the political events that occur in everyday life to ascertain whether the policies carried out by the government are appropriate or not. In addition, information is a source of reference and determines the mindset, behavior, and character of an individual in attitudes and decision making, including in politics."

Based on the above view, political education for young generations can be done through media literacy education. Media also has a significant role in providing input to political education materials to the community, especially the young generations. Media can be a channel of non-formal political education for the young generations so that they can examine various information, messages, discourses, and narratives that are being built in a media responsibly.

In this era of information disclosure, media has a very large role in spreading various information, especially those regarding various political phenomena that occur in various parts of the world. However, the information disclosure provided by the media can be a quite serious problem if it is not accompanied by the media literacy skills, especially among the young millennial generation.

The lack of media literacy skills for the young millennial generation can cause problems in society such as scattered hoaxes, slanderous news, hate speech, bullying, and black campaigns. If not taken and handled seriously, these problems can certainly cause social and legal problems in the community. In fact, if this continues, it will threaten the life of democracy and citizens' rights. Thus media literacy education becomes very important in order to produce literate young generations as the main prerequisite in building a democratic civilization in a nation and country in the digital age.

Media literacy education can develop the level of media literacy skills of young millennial generation. In this case Koltay (2011, p. 213) cited the view of the European Commission that divided the level of media literacy into:

1. feeling comfortable with all existing media.
2. having a critical approach to media as regards both quality and accuracy of content.
3. using media creatively.
4. understanding the media economy and the difference between pluralism and media ownership.
5. being aware of copyright issues which are essential for a 'culture of legality'.

Various levels of media literacy can show the level of media literacy skills media literate) possessed by the young generations. The levels also show the extent of consistency in providing media literacy education for young generations continuously. Thus media literacy education for young generations is one of the important efforts in shaping the young millennial generation that are media literate, in order to encourage the progress of the nation and state in the digital age.

## **E. Conclusion**

Media literacy education is an important thing to do for the young millennial generation. The young millennial generation is digital native that is very vulnerable to exposure to the bad effects of using various social media. The young millennial generation should be an agent of change in solving various problems in the digital society and does not become a new social problem in the digital age.



Media literacy education is very important to be done in order to shape the media literacy skills among the young millennial generation. The level of media literacy skills of the young millennial generation will determine how far the level of media literacy possessed by each individual. Thus, the existence of media literacy education for the young millennial generation can be an alternative that can be done by policy makers in order to gain positive benefits from the current development of information technology for the future life.

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