Social media detoxification among generations Y and Z in Sleman Regency, D.I. Yogyakarta Province

Darin Rania Balqis & Rahayu

Published online: October 28, 2025

Submit your article to this journal

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.20885/komunikasi.vol19.iss3.art1

View Crossmark data

Social media detoxification among generations Y and Z in Sleman Regency, D.I. Yogyakarta Province

Darin Rania Balqis[1]* & Rahayu[2]

[1] Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Email: darinrania93@gmail.com
[2] Program Studi Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Email: rahayu@ugm.ac.id
* Corresponding author

Abstract: This study aims to explore the social media detoxification practices undertaken by Generation Y and Z in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, through an exploratory survey of 153 respondents. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Franks et al., Soliman & Rinta-Kahila, and Nguyen, this study examines the motivations, challenges, benefits, and strategies associated with detox behavior. Findings suggest that detox practices from both generations are driven by internal motivations, particularly due to stress and excessive use. However, Generation Z experiences more substantial emotional and social challenges, such as FOMO and social judgment. Interestingly, even though Generation Z detoxes more frequently, Generation Y tends to do so for a longer duration. This research also found that both generations generally detox temporarily, especially from Instagram, by deleting the application or deactivating the account. This study contributes to the research on digital detox in Indonesia by providing a comparative analysis across generations and integrating several theoretical approaches.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi praktik detoksifikasi media sosial Generasi Y dan Z di Kabupaten Sleman, Yogyakarta, melalui survei eksploratif terhadap 153 responden. Dengan menggunakan kerangka teori Franks dkk., Soliman & Rinta-Kahila, dan Nguyen, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi motivasi, tantangan, manfaat, dan strategi di balik perilaku detoks. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa praktik detoks dari kedua generasi didorong oleh motivasi internal, terutama karena stres dan penggunaan berlebihan, tetapi Generasi Z mengalami tantangan emosional dan sosial yang lebih kuat, seperti FOMO dan penilaian sosial. Menariknya, meskipun Generasi Z lebih sering melakukan detoks, Generasi Y cenderung melakukannya dalam durasi yang lebih lama. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa kedua generasi umumnya melakukan detoks sementara, terutama dari Instagram dengan menghapus aplikasi atau menonaktifkan akun. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada penelitian tentang detoks digital di Indonesia dengan memberikan analisis komparatif lintas generasi dan integrasi beberapa pendekatan teoritis.

INTRODUCTION

The internet has become an inseparable part of human life. Even though it brought many benefits, its overuse has triggered various problems such as addiction. In Indonesia, internet addiction cases have increased fivefold in the last four years (Ata, 2020). In the "Internet Addictions" guidebook, it is explained that someone could be considered addicted if they spend more than 35 hours per week on the internet or social media (Young & de Abreu, 2011).

According to data from *Badan Pusat Statistik* (BPS), Indonesia's Central Agency of Statistics, in 2022, the 19-24 age group became the largest internet user group in Indonesia, followed by the 5-12 age group. As the largest group of internet users, they have become the most vulnerable to the negative impact. Moreover, teenagers and children are often unable to distinguish between good and evil in cyberspace due to their emotional instability (Aprilia et al., 2020).

The dangers of the internet and social media have pushed various parties to resist the media. Through the dystopian perspective, as mentioned by Foucault in the concept of "digital panopticon", social media is viewed as a form of surveillance and social control (Gandy Jr., 2021). One form of resistance to the impact is social media detoxification, defined as a conscious effort to limit or stop the use of social media for the sake of mental health and well-being. Miksch and Schulz (2018) identified four primary motives that drive individuals to undergo detoxification: "self-controlling, increasing performance, improving wellbeing," and "maintaining relationships."

The #DigitalDetoxDay campaign, created by a production company in England, has become a notable example of a global movement that promotes detoxification practices (Scrivo, 2020). This movement is conducted by doing a digital detox for one whole day every September. This Campaign, which started in 2020, continues to this day, with participants reaching more than 650 million social media users worldwide.
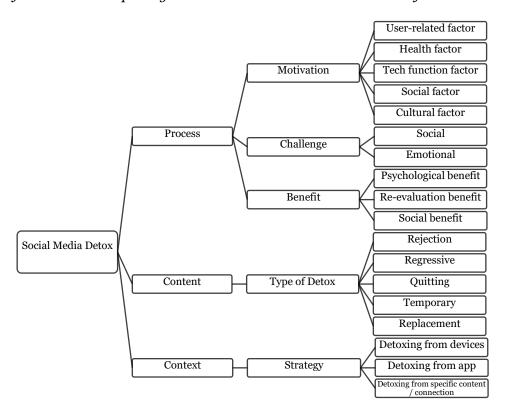
In the academic realm, the phenomenon of detoxification has garnered the attention of many experts. The researcher uses the keyword "social media detox" in the Google Scholar search engine. The analysis reveals a significant increase in research studies discussing social media detoxification between 2016 and 2020. Previous research related to the detoxification phenomenon is dominated by the discussion on someone's motivation in doing detox (Jeong et al., 2019; Keßler, 2020; Maier et al., 2015), the impacts of detox (Liao, 2019; Turel et al., 2018), as well as detox strategies and practices (Nguyen, 2021; Rohmah, 2020). Previous research also utilises various methods, from experimental (Przybylski et al., 2021; Vally & D'Souza, 2019), survey (El-Khoury et al., 2021; Fu & Li, 2022; Keßler, 2020), in-depth interview (Kristiawan & Rakhmad, 2021; Nguyen, 2021; Rohmah, 2020), to literature studies (Franks et al., 2023; Soliman & Rinta-Kahila, 2020).

The majority of research related to the detox phenomena as explained above is still dominated by the Context of Western countries. Meanwhile, research in Indonesia remains limited, both in terms of quantity and depth of theoretical approach. This research aims to fill this gap by describing and comparing the social media detoxification practices conducted by Generation Y and Z in Sleman Regency, while mapping their typology. Sleman is chosen because it is considered a regency with the number one digital literacy and digital economic potential in Indonesia in 2022 (Annur, 2023). This regency is also

located in D.I. Yogyakarta, a province that ranked 8th out of 10 in the Best Student Cities in ASEAN (Suryo, 2023). Reflecting on this status and achievement, the researcher assumes that the higher someone's level of education and digital literacy is, the higher their awareness will be in terms of using social media responsibly. This, in turn, may increase their chances of reducing the negative impacts of social media (including through detoxification).

This research has three theoretical bases: Franks and colleagues' (2023) theory, which discusses motivation, challenges, and the benefits of detox; Soliman and Rinta-Kahila's (2020) theory related to detox typology; and Nguyen's (2021) theory, which explains the types of detox strategies or technicalities. From these three theories, the researcher divides social media detoxification into three aspects: process (motivation, challenges, benefits), content (type of detox), and context (technical strategy).

Figure 1

Conceptual framework to explain generation Y and Z social media detoxification

Source: processed by the researcher from Franks et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2021; Soliman & Rinta-Kahila, 2020

METHOD

This research follows the positivist paradigm, employing an exploratory survey approach. The researched population includes all Generation Y and Z.

To decide the sample, the researcher established a primary criterion, which consists of 1) active users or those who have used social media, 2) users between the ages of 18-41 years old, and 3) domiciled in

the Sleman regency, D.I. Yogyakarta Province. Users over 18 years old are chosen based on the definition of maturity by Indonesia's Supreme Court Decision (*Putusan MA RI)* (No. 477/K/Sip./1976). The samples are counted using the Cochran formula (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021). Based on the formula calculation result, the number of samples is 96.04, which is then rounded up to 96 people (minimal). The researcher uses the quota sampling technique to collect the samples. The predetermined number of minimal samples is divided into two equal groups because there are two generations to be compared.

The data is collected through a Google Form questionnaire distributed over 10 days (May 9-19, 2023) via social media, social networking groups, and Twitter accounts. The total number of respondents gathered is 153 people: 79 from Generation Y (26-41 years old), and 74 from Generation Z (18-25 years old). The majority of respondents are female (103 people). The primary data is obtained from the 35-question questionnaire, while the secondary data is from books and academic literature.

Data analysis is conducted using Stata 16 and Google Spreadsheet Pivot by implementing the crosstab technique and descriptive data analysis. The crosstab technique is utilised to compare two sample groups and identify whether there are similarities or differences. Meanwhile, descriptive data analysis is used to illustrate the characteristics of the data sample.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Generation Y and Z Social Media Use and Detoxification Experience

The analysis results show that Instagram is the most widely used platform by Generation Y (96.2%) and Z (95.95%). However, interestingly, Instagram is also becoming the most detoxed platform by these groups (Generation Y, 72.09%, and Generation Z, 69.49%). A similar paradox was found in research conducted by Lunia (2024). Nearly all participants admitted to using Instagram daily. However, around 70 percent reported feelings of discomfort and depression due to their use.

This finding aligns with several studies that have stated how Instagram can negatively impact users' mental health (Ceballos et al., 2018; Griffiths et al., 2018; Schmuck et al., 2019). One of the reasons is that its photo or video-based content could trigger social comparison and user anxiety (Abrams, 2021; Sherlock & Wagstaff, 2019). Instagram is designed to be addictive, with its visuals and features activating brain neurons that contribute to compulsive feelings, potentially triggering anxiety and depression (Freedom, 2023). Furthermore, the influencer and micro-celebrity culture seems to exacerbate this problem. They compete to portray "perfect" lives on Instagram, which can create unrealistic expectations and fuel viewers' fear of missing out or FOMO (Ananda et al., 2023; Herawati et al., 2022).

Unlike Instagram, no detox has been conducted by Generation Y on YouTube, despite it being the second most popular platform for the generation (77,22%). Similarly, for Generation Z, only 20.34% of them conducted detox on Twitter, their second most popular social media platform, after Instagram (79.73%). This could mean that the respondents may feel more benefits from using YouTube or Twitter, hence the lack of detox. Jurnet (2024) states that, unlike other SNS that focus on building relationships between users (relationship-centric), YouTube is more focused on content-viewing (content-centric). This content-centric model can generate various types of satisfaction, such as informational satisfaction (from

informational content) and hedonic satisfaction (from entertainment content). This suggests that YouTube's primary goal is not to create social comparisons, but rather to consume specific types of content. It is also interesting to note that Generation Z has conducted more detox than Generation Y, even though most Generation Z respondents come from secondary education (high school/ equivalent). In contrast, Generation Y comes from higher education (S1/S2/S3). This differs from the "Money" company's research findings, which conclude that Generation Z is less interested in detoxification compared to Generation Y (Digital Information World, 2021).

Upon further inspection, several factors may underlie the above facts, such as the increase in mental health awareness among Generation Z, as reported by the American Psychological Association (APA) (Fadli, 2022). This increase may be attributed to the increased openness of information and the spread of public campaigns or trends aimed at improving the public's awareness of the importance of mental health. The second factor is that most Generation Z are university students. DI Yogyakarta, with Sleman as its center, boasts numerous higher education institutions, which may have strengthened students' critical thinking. In such a situation, the detoxification culture has become an integral part of the youth's lifestyle. In addition, the high acculturation rate, resulting from the large number of transmigrations, may have also contributed to the rise of mental health awareness. D.I. Yogyakarta is also known as a province with the highest level of reading interest (*Tingkat Kegemaran Membaca* (TGM)) in Indonesia, surpassing the national average (Yulianti, 2023), and boasting a high digital literacy rate (Annur, 2023). All of these factors may have contributed to the increase in awareness and measures to safeguard mental health, such as through detoxification practices. Furthermore, a majority of respondents who have never detoxed come from Generation Y. This is because they do not feel the need to detox, because of work-related reasons, or because they consider social media as a source of entertainment and information. Such reasonings make sense, considering how the majority of Generation Y respondents work as private company employees, business owners, or housewives. These three jobs tend to require regular use of social media (for instance, to sell things, or to seek information and entertainment).

From the crosstab analysis between ages, social media usage duration, and the history of detox, it is found that Generation Y is dominated by "typical user" (using social media 1-2 hours/day), meanwhile Generation Z tends to be a "heavy user" (using social media 2-4 hours/day). However, the analysis results indicate that the usage duration did not always correlate with the desire to detox.

Table 1
Cross tabulation of user type, age (Gen Z), and detoxification history

User Type	Gen Z	Frequency and Percentage of those who have detoxed /are detoxing	Frequency and Percentage of those who have detoxed /are detoxing
Typical	18	14 (77.78%)	4 (22.22%)
Heavy	56	45 (80.36%)	11 (19.64%)

Source: processed by the researcher using Google Spreadsheets Pivot Table

Table 2
Cross tabulation of user type, age (Gen Y), and detoxification history

User Type	Gen Y	Frequency and Percentage of those who have detoxed /are detoxing	Frequency and Percentage of those who have detoxed /are detoxing
Typical	41	22 (53.66%)	19 (46.34%)
Heavy	38	21 (55.26%)	17 (44.74%)

Source: processed by the researcher using Google Spreadsheets Pivot Table

Unlike Generation Y, Generation Z has a higher proportion of "heavy users" compared to "typical users." The difference is also quite significant. When looking at detoxification history, 80.36% of Generation Z "heavy user" admits that they have detoxed or are currently detoxing. This difference is quite evident compared to Generation Y. This indicates that most Generation Z "heavy user" felt that their social media use is problematic (and this usage duration may be one of the causal factors).

The above findings are in line with the research done by Sherlock & Wagstaff (2018), in which they found that the frequency of Instagram use correlates with depression symptoms, low self-esteem, anxiety over physical appearance, and dissatisfaction with the body. The social comparison orientation mediates the relation between the use of Instagram and these variables. In other words, excessive use of Instagram (heavy user) could trigger a negative psychological impact and a negative perception of physical appearance (body image). This condition may be one of the factors that drives users to conduct detoxification.

The interesting thing to analyse is the detoxification duration of the two-generation groups. A majority of respondents, whether from Generation Y or Z, conduct detoxification for no more than 4 weeks (between 1 and 4 weeks), which falls under the "moderate" category. Despite this, these two groups possess an intriguing difference. More Generation Y respondents' detox in "very extreme" duration (6 months to more than 1 year) compared to Generation Z. On the other hand, more Generation Z respondents detox in "extreme" duration (1 to 6 months) compared to Generation Y. From this data, it could be concluded that even though Generation Z conducts detoxification more often than Generation Y, the detox duration that Generation Z does tends to be shorter than that of Generation Y.

Table 3

Detox duration between generation Y and generation Z

Detox Duration	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Moderate		
Less than 7 days	6 (10.17%)	7 (16.28%)
1-4 weeks	22 (37.29%)	13 (30.23%)
Total	28 (47.46%)	20 (46.51%)
Extreme		
1-3 months	19 (32.20%)	9 (20.93%)
3-6 months	4 (6.78%)	2 (4.65%)
Total	23 (38.98%)	11 (25.58%)
Very Extreme		
6-12 months	5 (8.47%)	8 (18.60%)
More than 1 year	3 (5.08%)	4 (9.30%)
Total	8 (13.55%)	12 (27.90%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

It appears that there is a significant correlation between the characteristics of Generation Z, as studied by Stillman & Stillman (2017), and their detoxification duration. According to research conducted by Putra (2020), four out of seven characteristics stand out among Generation Z in Yogyakarta, namely figital, realistic, FOMO, and competitive/driven. Although further research is needed to understand this correlation in greater depth, the researcher assumes that these four characteristics influence each other in determining the duration of Generation Z detoxification. Figital character, for instance, shows that Generation Z tends to be more connected with technology because they were born at a time when technology and the internet had become an integral part of everyday life. They do not experience the transition from physical to digital as previous generations did. Such a situation made it difficult for them to avoid technology, including social media. Strengthened by FOMO and competitiveness, detoxification by Generation Z could become a challenge in itself. On the other hand, Generation Y is often referred to as digital immigrants, those who adopted technology and use computers in adulthood. This characteristic, according to researchers, is the reason why Generation Y might find it easier to sustain longer breaks compared to Generation Z, for whom digital connectivity is an inherent part of their identity and daily functioning (Wang et al., 2013). In another study conducted by Salepaki and colleagues (2025), although not explicitly discussing the duration of detox between Gen Y and Gen Z, the research discussed detox as one way to achieve a healthy balance between their digital and offline lives. This motivation may trigger a difference in perception between the two generations, where Gen Y interprets it more as a strong separation between online and offline life, leading them to prefer a longer detox duration.

Motivation Dimension on the Process Aspect in Generation Y and Z Social Media Detoxification

The researcher has divided the motivation dimension into five parts: motivation related to users, motivation related to health, motivation related to platform function, motivation related to social factors, and motivation related to cultural factors. For easier analysis, these five parts are grouped into two categories: internal motivation and external motivation.

Table 4

Respondent internal motivation for social media detoxification

Motivation (Internal)	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Health-related factors:		
Trigger stress	6 (10.17%)	4 (9.30%)
Increase anxiety	18 (30.51%)	11 (25.58%)
Information overload	14 (23.73%)	7 (16.28%)
Negative experience with social media	1 (1.69%)	2 (4.65%)
Exhaustion due to social media exposure	18 (30.51%)	16 (37.21%)
No suitable answer option	2 (3.39%)	3 (6.98%)
User-related factors:		
Lifestyle choices	4 (6.78%)	6 (13.95%)
Self-presentation	1 (1.69%)	0 (0.00%)
Personal conflict with others	3 (5.08%)	3 (6.98%)
No longer interested in social media	10 (16.95%)	9 (20.93%)
Excessive use	31 (52.54%)	23 (53.49%)
Bad influence on performance	8 (13.56%)	0 (0.00%)
No suitable answer option	2 (3.39%)	2 (4.65%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

From the data obtained by the researcher, it could be concluded that the most dominant motivations for both generations are motivation related to users (internal motivation), health motivation (internal motivation), and social motivation (external motivation). These findings align with the research conducted by Keßler (2020), who also found that internal motivation plays a greater role than external motivation in encouraging respondents to detox. In another research conducted by Scheppe et al. (2025), two primary internal motivations for digital detox among Generation Y were identified: the desire to gain greater control over their time and Instagram social media usage, and the pursuit of self-reformation, conceptualized as a 'mindset change' aimed at fostering 'mental wellbeing'. On the other hand, the dominant external motivation from both generations is a social factor, which is the exhausting feeling of competitiveness triggered by social media. This is in accordance with the research findings of the company, ExpressVPN (2021), which found that most Generation Z respondents (which also applies to Generation Y in this research case) felt social media metrics such as number of followers, direct messages, likes, comments, shares, and views could affect their self-esteem. Thus, the lower the metric is, the higher the feeling of

inferiority, which may lead them to compare themselves to others.

Table 5
Respondent external motivation for social media detoxification

Motivation (External)	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Tech function factors:		
The feature does not meet expectations	3 (5.08%)	0 (0.00%)
No longer relevant with ContentContent	11 (18.64%)	9 (20.93%)
The platform is out of date	1 (1.69%)	1 (2.33%)
Maintain privacy	20 (33.90%)	14 (32.56%)
Disturbed by the platform's appearance	5 (8.47%)	3 (6.98%)
No suitable answer option	19 (32.20%)	16 (37.21%)
Social factors:		
Relations left the platform	1 (1.69%)	0 (0.00%)
Distracted from other activities	12 (20.34%)	14 (32.56%)
Lack of direct interaction time	4 (6.78%)	1 (2.33%)
Triggers competitive feelings	31 (52.54%)	19 (44.19%)
Reluctance to interact virtually	4 (6.78%)	1 (2.33%)
Too much negative ContentContent	5 (8.47%)	6 (13.95%)
Inspired by the trend/detox campaign	2 (3.39%)	1 (2.33%)
No suitable answer option	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.33%)
Cultural factors:		
Desire to improve worship	17 (28.81%)	12 (27.91%)
Religious belief	1 (1.69%)	3 (6.98%)
Culture/habits	6 (10.17%)	3 (6.98%)
No suitable answer option	35 (59.32%)	25 (58.14%)

Source: *processed* by the researcher from the research questionnaire

While this research indicates that respondents' motivations for detox were predominantly associated with negative experiences, it is important to acknowledge that detox is not exclusively a response to adverse circumstances. Instead, it can also be initiated by significant life transitions or as a conscious lifestyle choice (Nguyen, 2023).

Challenge Dimension on the Process Aspect in Generation Y and Z Social Media Detoxification

The researcher categorizes the detoxification challenge into two main categories: social challenges and emotional challenges. In general, within these two categories, Generation Z experienced bigger challenges than Generation Y. Social challenge is experienced by 77.96% Generation Z respondents and 69.77% of Generation Y; meanwhile, emotional challenge is experienced by 72.87%

Generation Z respondents and 69.76% of Generation Y.

Table 6

Respondents' Challenges When Conducting Social Media Detoxification

Challenge	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Social challenges:		
Judgment from surroundings	4 (6.78%)	0 (0.00%)
Isolation from relationships and information	13 (22.03%)	7 (16.28%)
Driven to continuously check their phone	29 (49.15%)	23 (53.49%)
No suitable answer option	13 (22.03%)	13 (30.23%)
Emotional challenge:		
Feeling of dissatisfaction	5 (8.47%)	5 (11.63%)
Feeling of anxiety	9 (15.25%)	8 (18.60%)
Fear of missing out on information	29 (49.15%)	17 (39.53%)
No suitable answer option	16 (27.12%)	13 (30.23%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

The most dominant social challenge faced by both generations is the urge to constantly check social media or their phones. This phenomenon is known as phubbing, which is the tendency to ignore one's surroundings because they are too focused on their digital devices. This illustrates how the intensive use of social media can lead to dependency and the formation of habits. The stronger this habit is, the greater the challenges will be for users to avoid or temporarily stop using social media (Brown & Kuss, 2020). In this study, Generation Z is characterized by heavy users, who spend 2-4 hours per day on social media. Several studies have suggested that excessive social media use can lead to a significant increase in phubbing behavior (Kirksekiz et al., 2025; Putri & Sa'id, 2024).

In terms of emotional challenge, a majority of respondents from both generations felt FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), which is the feeling of fear about missing out on important information on social media. This is consistent with Keßler's (2020) research findings, which state that FOMO is the primary emotional challenge for detoxification. Other studies also show that FOMO happens more frequently during teenage years and early adulthood, which is the age range for Generation Y and Z (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Brown & Kuss (2020) found in their research that FOMO can decline during detoxification. However, in the Context of this research, respondents who are digital natives and heavy users, FOMO tends to be an early significant challenge when starting detox. This is supported by the research conducted by Putra (2020), which shows how FOMO characterises Generation Z in Yogyakarta.

Benefit Dimension on the Process Aspect in Generation Y and Z Social Media Detoxification

The benefit of detoxification is grouped into two main categories: internal benefits and external benefits. Internal benefit is felt by the users from within

themselves, while external benefit is felt by the users from outside themselves or from their social relations with others. Internal benefit consists of the psychological aspect and self-evaluation, while external benefit involves social relationships.

Table 7

Respondents' benefits after social media detoxification

Benefit	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Psychological benefit (internal):		
Improve mood, remove stress	28 (47.46%)	15 (34.88%)
Improve mindfulness of self and surroundings	26 (44.07%)	23 (53.49%)
Improve physical health	2 (3.39%)	2 (4.65%)
No suitable answer option	3 (5.08%)	3 (6.98%)
Benefit related to appreciation & re-evaluation (internal):		
Realising the positive and negative values of using social media	20 (33.90%)	17 (39.53%)
Aware of the good and evil in using social media	29 (49.15%)	17 (39.53%)
Believe in the new principles of social media use	9 (15.25%)	9 (20.93%)
No suitable answer option	1 (1.69%)	0 (0.00%)
Social benefit (external):		
Quality time with relations	23 (38.98%)	27 (62.79%)
Support from the surroundings	3 (5.08%)	0 (0.00%)
Positively beneficial (academic/professional)	25 (42.37%)	9 (20.93%)
No suitable answer option	8 (13.56%)	7 (16.28%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

The research results reveal that the majority of respondents from both generations felt that internal benefits are more dominant than external benefits. This aligns with previous findings, which indicate that internal factors drive respondents' motivation more than external factors. Psychologically, Generation Y experienced the most significant increase in awareness and self-presence (mindfulness) in relation to their surroundings. These internal benefits also appear to yield external social advantages from detox, exemplified by the ability to spend more quality time with their relationships. This observation is consistent with several studies indicating improvements in social relationships and interactions as a result of detox (Coyne & Woodruff, 2023; Radtke et al., 2022). On the contrary, Generation Z experienced the most significant increase in welfare, mood, and reduction of stress. This highlights how, even though both benefits are psychological, the focus on benefits differs slightly. The benefits experienced by Generation Z appear to be more personal than those of Generation Y. Researchers assume this is due to the more individualistic nature of Generation Z compared to Generation Y (Stelling, 2023). Therefore, the benefits most felt are also

more about the self than external relationships.

Regarding the re-evaluation benefit, the majority of respondents from both generations express that detox helps them recognize the good and bad habits associated with social media use. They have become more reflective and aware of the importance of control when using social media. These findings reinforced previous studies, which argue that detox could improve psychological welfare and reduce stress (Fioravanti et al., 2020; Turel et al., 2018), although some studies state that detox could cause adverse effects such as loneliness or boredom (Stieger & Lewetz, 2018; Vally & D'Souza, 2019).

Dimension Type on the Content Aspect in Generation Y and Z Social Media Detoxification

The researcher refers to the typology from Soliman and Rinta-Kahila (2020), who divide social media detoxification into five types: rejection, regressive, quitting, temporary, and replacement. The "Rejection" type describes users who download social media applications but do not actively use them or ignore them altogether. The "regressive" type describes users who use social media for a short time, less than 3 months. The "quitting" type is users who have used social media for more than 3 months before leaving it. The "temporary" type is users who use social media for more than 3 months before leaving it for a while, with the intention of coming back after detox. Lastly, the "replacement" type describes users who remove or leave a social media platform after using it for more than 3 months, then choose to switch to other platforms they consider better.

Table 8
Respondents' social media detoxification types

Types	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Rejection	8 (13.56%)	8 (18.60%)
Regressive	8 (13.56%)	6 (13.95%)
Quitting	6 (10.17%)	3 (6.98%)
Temporary	31 (52.54%)	21 (48.84%)
Replacement	6 (10.17%)	5 (11.63%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

The research results show that the majority of respondents from both generations chose the "temporary" detoxification type, which involves temporarily stopping the use of social media with the intention of returning. Reasons for this are likely related to work needs, information access, and the characteristics of both generations, which are deeply connected to the digital world.

Generation Y, who are primarily employees or self-employed, are more likely to use social media for professional interests. Hence, short-term detoxification is a realistic choice for them to maintain balance, as is the case for Generation Z, which mainly consists of university

students. They require access to information for both academic and entertainment purposes. Hence, temporary detox is the most suitable strategy for them. Kopka and colleagues (2024) stated in their research that the majority of respondents who voluntarily detox struggle with break periods longer than a few hours, and only 21 percent managed to make it through the entire detox phase. This supports the fact that detoxing is difficult for some people if done permanently.

The researcher also notes that detox behavior is not always singular or linear in nature. Someone could combine several types of detox in different time frames, for instance, "quitting" detox for one platform and "temporary" detox for other platforms. Someone could even start from "rejection" and then shift to "replacement" if they switch to other applications. However, the researcher also acknowledges that there are limitations to this type of detox classification, as it is based solely on one question within the research questionnaire. There is a chance that the respondents do not fully understand the difference between the types, despite the explanations given, or they may have forgotten to state the usage duration required for classification. Hence, this aspect still requires further exploration by future research.

Strategy Dimension on the Context Aspect in Generation Y and Z Social Media Detoxification

In this research, social media detoxification is examined through a technical approach, which investigates how users limit or restrict their access to social media. The research findings indicate that a majority of respondents from both generations tend to choose the detoxification strategy of removing or hiding social media applications on their devices, deactivating their accounts, or switching to other platforms during the detox period.

Table 9
Respondents' digital device detoxification strategy

Strategy of Detox	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Digital Device Detox	10 (16.95%)	4 (9.30%)
Actions:		
Keeping the phone away when doing activities	3 (30.00%)	3 (75.00%)
Not using the phone in certain places	2 (20.00%)	0 (0.00%)
Not using the phone during interactions	5 (50.00%)	1 (25.00%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

Generation Y is more inclined to remove or hide social media applications on their device and switch to other applications. This aligns with their social media usage pattern, which is more closely tied to professional needs. Through these strategies, they could safeguard their productivity without having to leave the digital world. Meanwhile, Generation Z prefers to deactivate their social media account more. Even so, in practice, there are still ways to stay connected, such as through alternate accounts. Yoanita and colleagues (2022) state in their research

that all of their Generation Z respondents possess at least two accounts on Instagram. This is a widespread phenomenon among Generation Z, which earned them the nickname of "Second Account Generation" (Indita, 2022). Taking into account the digital characteristics of Generation Z, it is assumed that they may experience difficulty in entirely avoiding access to social media, which Generation Y similarly experiences.

Table 10

Respondents' social media platform detoxification strategy

Strategy of Detox	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Social Media Platform Detox	38 (64.41%)	32 (74.42%)
Action:		
Switching to another application/platform	7 (18.42%)	10 (31.25%)
Removing their social media account	2 (5.26%)	5 (15.63%)
Deactivating their social media account	14 (36.84%)	6 (18.75%)
Using screen time tracking	3 (7.89%)	0 (0.00%)
Removing/hiding their application	11 (28.95%)	10 (31.25%)
Not topping up their data package/Wi-Fi	1 (2.63%)	1 (3.13%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Keßler (2020), who explains that technical strategies, like deactivating or removing an account or application, are the most common methods used to minimize social media access and restrain its negative impacts. Furthermore, some people are also likely to combine various detox strategies, such as selection, avoidance, and disconnection across different media contexts, both temporarily and habitually, preventively and interventively (Volk et al., 2025). This underscores that detox strategies are not rigid but can be implemented in tandem or complement each other depending on the individual's needs.

Table 11

Respondents' social media platform detoxification strategy

Strategy of Detox	Gen Z (Frequency & Percentage)	Gen Y (Frequency & Percentage)
Content/Account/Certain Information Detox	11 (18.64%)	7 (16.28%)
Actions:		
Filtering certain accounts/contents	3 (27.27%)	1 (14.29%)
Muting social media notifications	3 (27.27%)	2 (28.57%)
Muting certain account posts	2 (18.18%)	1 (14.29%)
Blocking/unfollowing certain accounts	2 (18.18%)	1 (14.29%)
Turning on "Airplane Mode"	0 (0.00%)	1 (14.29%)
Turning on notifications on relatable accounts	1 (9.09%)	1 (14.29%)

Source: processed by the researcher from the research questionnaire

Considering the above findings, as well as previous studies, the researcher concludes that social media detoxification is a fundamentally flexible and dynamic process. Many layers could be practised and combined. For instance, in terms of motivation, even though in theory there are "only" internal and external motivations, in practice, both motivations could strengthen each other. Therefore, each research discussing detoxification phenomena possesses its uniqueness, enriching the relevant theoretical studies. This research is no exception. From a theoretical aspect, unlike previous research, which discusses the three theories and concepts separately, this research combines these concepts simultaneously. Similarly, on the object aspect, the researcher attempts to compare social media detoxification among two different generations: Generation Y and Z. This is also taking into account how previous research has yet to do the same.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to understand the practice of social media detoxification among Generation Y and Z in Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, by highlighting the motivations, challenges, benefits, types, and detox strategies employed by each generation. This research offers a unique comparative analysis across generations within a specific Indonesian local context, thereby addressing a notable gap in existing academic literature, which is predominantly Western-centric.

The findings show that both generations are equally internally motivated to do a social media detox. The primary motivations include a desire to overcome stress, digital burnout, and excessive social media use. This aligns with Western studies, which also found internal motivations to be more influential than external factors. Importantly, while often associated with negative experiences, detox can also be triggered by life transitions or conscious lifestyle choices, as Nguyen (2023) points out.

Regarding challenges, Generation Z faces greater social and emotional difficulties during detox, including Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and social judgment. Their "phygital" identity makes sustained detoxification particularly difficult. Furthermore, FOMO emerged as the dominant emotional challenge for both generations, which is consistent with Keßler (2020) and other studies that note its prevalence in adolescence and early adulthood. The widespread phenomenon of "phubbing" was identified as the most prominent social challenge, underscoring the deep dependency that can be caused by intensive social media use.

An interesting difference from some Western studies, which suggests Gen Z is less interested in detoxing, is that Gen Z in this study detoxed more frequently than Gen Y. This can be linked to their increased mental health awareness and predominant status as university students in a digitally literate region. However, Gen Z's detox durations tended to be shorter compared to Gen Y's. This may be explained by Gen Z's "phygital" nature, FOMO, and competitiveness, which make sustained detox difficult. By contrast, Gen Y may find it easier to maintain longer breaks due to their more established social and professional status, as well as their digital immigrant status.

Another striking finding in this study is that Instagram was identified as the most frequently used platform, yet paradoxically, it was also the one most frequently detoxed by both generations. This highlights the awareness of the platform's negative impact on mental health, such as social comparison and body image anxiety, consistent with numerous Western studies. In contrast, YouTube and Twitter, despite their popularity, were much less frequently detoxed, suggesting that users perceive more benefits (e.g., information or entertainment-focused Content) than drawbacks from these platforms. This suggests that users' perceptions of a platform's utility and psychological impact significantly influence their decisions to detox.

The most common type of detox carried out by respondents is temporary detox, which is often combined with technical strategies, such as deleting applications, deactivating accounts, or switching to other platforms. This type of strategy is considered more effective by respondents in reducing exposure and the temptation to return to using social media impulsively. This research highlights the flexible and dynamic nature of detox, noting that individuals often employ various strategies, such as selection, avoidance, and disconnection, across multiple media contexts, both temporarily and habitually, for preventive or interventional purposes.

The results of this study make an important contribution to the development of digital detoxification literature in Indonesia, particularly through a cross-generational approach and local Context. This study also shows that, although social media detox remains an individual practice, common patterns can be identified and used as a basis for public policy interventions, mental health campaigns, and the development of social media platform features that are more friendly to the digital well-being of its users.

Recommendations from this study include the need for digital literacy education that focuses not only on technical skills, but also on emotional management and self-awareness in the use of social media. In addition, a collaborative approach is needed between educational institutions, families, and digital platform providers to create a healthier and more sustainable online ecosystem for current and future generations.

REFERENCES

Abrams, Z. (2021, December 2). How can we minimise Instagram's harmful effects? https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/03/feature-minimize-instagram-effects#:~:text=Studies%20have%20linked%20Instagram%20to,them%20to%20keep%20on%20scrolling

Ananda, S. D., Khadijah, L. A., Lissa, F., & Triyono, A. (2023). The influence of Instagram on fomo syndrome (Fear of Missing Out). *Aplikatif: Journal of Research Trends in Social Sciences and Humanities*, *2*(1).

Annur, C. M. (2023, June 19). *DI Yogyakarta raih indeks literasi digital tertinggi nasional pada 2022*. https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2023/06/19/di-yogyakarta-raih-indeks-literasi-digital-tertinggi-nasional-pada-2022

Aprilia, R., Sriati, A., & Hendrawati, S. (2020). Tingkat kecanduan media sosial pada remaja. *Journal of Nursing Care*, *3*(1).

Ata. (2020, August 6). *Kecanduan terhadap internet meningkat 5 kali lipat.* https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/334338/kecanduan-terhadap-internet-meningkat-5-kali-lipat

Brown, L., & Kuss, D. J. (2020). Fear of missing out, mental wellbeing, and social connectedness: A seven-day social media abstinence trial. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(12), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124566

Ceballos, N. A., Howard, K., Dailey, S., Sharma, S., & Grimes, T. (2018). Collegiate binge drinking and social media use among Hispanics and non-Hispanics. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, *79*(6), 868–875.

Coyne, P., & Woodruff, S. J. (2023). Taking a break: The effects of partaking in a two-week social media digital detox on problematic smartphone and social media use, and other health-related outcomes among young adults. *Behavioral Sciences (Basel, Switzerland)*, *13*(2), 1004.

El-Khoury, J., Haidar, R., Kanj, R. R., Ali, L. B., & Majari, G. (2021). Characteristics of social media "detoxification" in university students. *The Libyan Journal of Medicine*, *16*(1).

ExpressVPN. (2021, November 10). *ExpressVPN survey reveals the extent of Gen Z's social media addiction*. https://www.expressvpn.com/blog/gen-z-social-media-survey/?srsltid=AfmBOoprQgi-18qiyhrrkQWbVSP0w2L-hvUikP4nFCpAuSEMLDl5F3hu

Fadli, R. (2022, October 12). *Mitos atau fakta, gen Z memiliki mental yang lebih lemah.* https://www.halodoc.com/artikel/mitos-atau-fakta-gen-z-memiliki-mental-yang-lebih-lemah?srsltid=AfmBOooBsbOZu58JumF4b49GWTBLlJ-pNJybnnycfWMNevts_iFnYjIC

Fioravanti, G., Prostamo, A., & Casale, S. (2020). Taking a short break from Instagram: The effects on subjective wellbeing. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking*, *23*(2), 107–112.

Franks, J., Chenhall, R., & Keogh, L. (2023). Conceptual framework for temporal discontinuance experiences of social media users: What factors are responsible? *Convergence*, *29*(1), 225–245. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856521 1057517

Freedom. (2023, August 30). *This is how Instagram keeps you hooked*. https://freedom.to/blog/this-is-how-instagram-keeps-you-addicted/

Fu, S., & Li, H. (2022). Understanding social media discontinuance from a social cognitive perspective: Evidence from Facebook users. *Journal of Information Science*, *48*(4), 544–560. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551520 968688

Gandy Jr., O. H. (2021). *The panoptic sort: A political economy of personal information* (2nd Edition). Oxford.

Griffiths, S., Murray, S. B., Krug, I., & McLean, S. A. (2018). The contribution of social media to body dissatisfaction, eating disorder symptoms, and anabolic steroid use among sexual minority men. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *21*(3), 149–156. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2017.0 375

Herawati, I., Rizal, I., & Amita, N. (2022). The impact of social media on fear of missing out among the Z generation: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Islamic and Contemporary Psychology (JICOP)*, *2*(2), 92–98.

Indita, H. (2022, February 7). *Second account generation*. https://www.cxomedia.id/human-stories/20220207163038-74-173615/second-account-generation

Jeong, M., Zo, H., Lee, C. H., & Ceran, Y. (2019). Feeling displeasure from online social media postings: A study using cognitive dissonance theory. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *97*, 231–240. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.0 2.021

Jurnet, I. A. (2024, February 20). *The effects of YouTube on mental health*. https://www.relaxvr.co/blog/the-effects-of-youtube-on-mental-health

Keßler, M. (2020). *Disconnect to reconnect? Examining the motives, strategies, and outcomes of individuals' (Temporary) Social media abstinence*. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/67891

Kirksekiz, A., Yildiz, M., Kiyici, M., Emrem, M., Koroglu, S., & Yıldız, M. (2025). Adults' social media addiction and phubbing latent profiles and authenticity as outcome. *BMC Psychology*, *13*(1), 580.

Kopka, J. F., Borgmann, L., & Langner, T. (2024). (Not) the right time for social media ads? Exploring the impact of social media detox on attention to the ad. *International Journal of Advertising*, *44*(1), 87–108.

Kristiawan, V. R., & Rakhmad, W. N. (2021). Detoksifikasi instagram sebagai upaya penyelesaian kecemasan komunikasi pengguna. *Interaksi Online*, *9*(3), 7582.

Liao, W. (2019). *Put your smartphone down: Preliminary evidence that reducing smartphone use improves psychological wellbeing in people with poor mental health* [University of Otago]. https://hdl.handle.net/10523/9427

Lunia, S. (2024). The instagram paradox: Examining its role in shaping mental health among young adults-A comprehensive analysis. *American Journal of Applied Psychology*, *13*(3).

Maier, C., Laumer, S., Eckhardt, A., & Weitzel, T. (2015). Giving too much social support: Social overload on social networking sites. *European Journal of Information Systems*, *24*(5), 447–464. https://doi.org/10.1057/ejis.2014.3

Miksch, L., & Schulz, C. (2018). *Disconnect to reconnect: The phenomenon of digital detox as a reaction to technology overload* [Lund University]. http://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/record/8944615

Nguyen, M. H. (2021). Managing social media use in an "Always-on" society: Exploring digital wellbeing strategies that people use to disconnect. *Mass Communication and Society*, *24*(6), 795–817. https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2021.1979045

Nguyen, M. H. (2023). "Maybe I should get rid of it for a while…": Examining motivations and challenges for social media disconnection. *The Communication Review*, *26*(2), 125–150.

Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(4), 1841–1848.

Przybylski, A. K., Nguyen, T. vy T., Law, W., & Weinstein, N. (2021). Does taking a short break from social media have a positive effect on wellbeing? Evidence from three preregistered field experiments. *Journal of Technology in Behavioral Science*, *6*(3), 507–514. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41347-020-00189-w

Putra, F. A. D. (2020). *Karakteristik generasi Z di Yogyakarta tahun 2019*. Sanata Dharma University.

Putri, C. A., & Sa'id, M. (2024). The effect of FoMO and social media addiction on phubbing behavior in adolescent K-pop fans. *Nusantara Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences*, *3*(4), 169–178.

Radtke, T., Apel, T., Schenkel, K., Keller, J., & von Lindern, E. (2022). Digital detox: An effective solution in the smartphone era? A systematic literature review. *Mobile Media and Communication*, *10*(2), 190–215. https://doi.org/10.1177/20501579211028647

Rohmah, F. N. (2020). *Media resistance dalam detoksifikasi digital (Studi kasus pembatasan penggunaan media sosial oleh pengguna di tengah pandemi COVID-19)*. Universitas Gadjah Mada.

Salepaki, A., Zerva, A., Kourkouridis, D., & Angelou, I. (2025). Unplugging youth: Mobile phone addiction, social impact, and the call for digital detox. *Psychiatry Int. 2025*, *6*(1).

Scheppe, M. M., Seiffen, A. L., & Berndt, A. (2025). Exploring the digital detox journey among Generation Y Instagram users. *Exploring the Digital Detox Journey among Generation Y Instagram Users*, *38*(8), 119–139.

Schmuck, D., Karsay, K., Matthes, J., & Stevic, A. (2019). "Looking up and feeling down": The influence of mobile social networking site use on upward social comparison, self-esteem, and wellbeing of adult smartphone users. *Telematics and Informatics*, *42*. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2019.101240

Scrivo, E. (2020, September 18). *'Digital detox day' Campaign reaches over 6 billion people globally*. https://www.communicatemagazine.com/news/2020/digital-detox-day-campaign-reaches-over-6-billion-people-globally/

Sherlock, M., & Wagstaff, D. L. (2018). Exploring the relationship between frequency of Instagram use, exposure to idealized images, and psychological wellbeing in women. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, *8*(4).

Sherlock, M., & Wagstaff, D. L. (2019). Exploring the relationship between frequency of Instagram use, exposure to idealized images, and psychological wellbeing in women. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, *8*(4), 482–490.

Soliman, W., & Rinta-Kahila, T. (2020). Toward a refined conceptualization of IS discontinuance: Reflection on the past and a way forward. *Information and Management*, *57*(2). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2019.05.002

Stelling, D. (2023). Do applicants from Generation X, Y, and Z differ in personality traits? Data from selection procedures in aviation (1987–2019). *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*.

Stieger, S., & Lewetz, D. (2018). A week without using social media: Results from an ecological momentary intervention study using smartphones. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *21*(10), 618–624.

Stillman, D., & Stillman, J. (2017). *Gen Z @ work: How the next generation is transforming the workplace*. HarperCollins.

Sugiyono, & Lestari, P. (2021). *Metode penelitian komunikasi: Kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan cara mudah menulis artikel pada jurnal internasional*. Alfabeta.

Suryo, D. (2023, July 25). *4 kota pelajar terbaik di Indonesia versi QS best student cities 2024, Yogyakarta di bawah Jakarta*. https://www.kompas.tv/pendidikan/428714/4-kota-pelajar-terbaik-di-indonesia-versi-qs-best-student-cities-2024-yogyakarta-di-bawah-jakarta#

Digital Information World. (2021, March 3). *The social media detox: How attitudes towards social media are changing*. https://www.digitalinformationworld.com/2021/03/the-social-media-detox-how-attitude.html#google_vignette

Turel, O., Cavagnaro, D. R., & Meshi, D. (2018). Short-term abstinence from online social networking sites reduces perceived stress, especially in individuals who are excessive users. *Psychiatry Research*, *270*, 947–953. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2018.11.017

Vally, Z., & D'Souza, C. G. (2019). Abstinence from social media use, subjective wellbeing, stress, and loneliness. *Perspective in Psychiatric Care*, *55*(4), 752–759.

Volk, S. C., Schulz, A., Blassnig, S., Marschlich, S., Nguyen, M. H., & Strauß, N. (2025). Selecting, avoiding, disconnecting: A focus group study of people's strategies for dealing with information abundance in the contexts of news, entertainment, and personal communication. *Information Communication and Society*, *28*(1), 21–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2358167

Wang, Q. (Emily), Myers, M. D., & Sundaram, D. (2013). Digital natives and digital immigrants: Towards a model of digital fluency. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *5*(6), 409–419.

Yoanita, D., Chertian, V. G., & Ayudia, P. D. (2022). Understanding Gen Z's online self-presentation on multiple Instagram accounts. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi (Indonesian Journal of Communications Studies)*, *6*(2), 603–616. https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v6i2.49 22

Young, K. S., & de Abreu, C. N. (2011). *Internet addiction: A handbook and guide to evaluation and treatment.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Yulianti, C. (2023, March 7). *10 kota-kabupaten yang penduduknya paling gemar membaca di 2022, Daerahmu termasuk?* https://www.detik.com/edu/detikped ia/d-6604957/10-kota-kabupaten-yang-penduduknya-paling-gemar-membaca-di-2022-daerahmu-termasuk