Social Media Addiction: Does it Affect the Grit Of Generation Z?

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Abstract

The transition from adolescence to adulthood experienced by Generation Z involves facing new responsibilities, making important decisions, and adapting to the demands of higher education, work, or married life. To succeed in this transition requires adapting, surviving, and focusing on objectives. Grit, characterized by passion and perseverance, plays an important role in facing the challenges of modern life. This increases resilience and fosters commitment, making it an important factor in facing contemporary life’s dynamic and demanding aspects. However, exposure to internet access raises concerns about the emergence of social media addiction and its negative impacts. Therefore, this study aims to determine the effect of social media addiction on Generation Z’s grit, measured by the Social Media Addiction Scale and the Short-grit Scale. This study involves 333 Generation Z who actively interact on social media for 4 hours or more. The results show that there is influence of social media addiction on Generation Z grit of about 20.4% (p < .001, B = -.452). In short, Generation Z must pay attention to their interactions on social media to avoid addiction, as the significant impact of their grit affects various aspects of their lives, including academics, sports, and work.

Key words: social media addiction, grit, generation z

Introduction

Humans experience transformation and growth throughout their lives in various aspects, including physical, cognitive, psychological, social, and emotional, and this also applies to Generation Z. Generation Z, a group of individuals born between 1997 and 2012, is in the development phase of adolescence until early adulthood. In this phase, Gen Z is also facing a transition period, such as moving to higher education, marriage, and work associated with new responsibilities, making important decisions, and adapting to higher education, work, or married life demands. To succeed in this transition requires adapting, surviving, and focusing on goals. However, the characteristics of Gen Z, which are achievement-oriented and tend to seek instant results or quick success, often cause them to experience despair and easily give up on difficult tasks (Suh, A., & Li, M, 2020). Most fail and underachieve due to lacking skills, self-confidence, motivation, persistence, and relationships with teachers and peers (Darnell, 2014). Grit, characterized by passion and perseverance, is an important quality for Generation Z because it allows individuals to stick to their goals and persevere even when they fail (Tang et al., 2019).

As stated by Eskreis-Winkler et al. (2014), grit can help to foster a passion for working hard, setting high standards for achievement, having no difficulty in focusing on fulfilling responsibilities, and showing perseverance when
facing obstacles, difficulties, and failures during the achievement process. Individuals with grit are more likely to develop mental and emotional resilience, allowing them to face challenges and failure more easily. They tend to set ambitious goals and demonstrate a strong will to persevere despite obstacles, learning from setbacks (Tang et al., 2019). In recent research conducted by Gonlepa et al. (2023), grit is identified as an important trait that influences factors in the workplace. With grit, they tend to be enthusiastic, committed, and creative in carrying out results, resulting in good performance in the workplace. In contrast, individuals with low grit tend to have difficulty making career choices (Septania & Khairani, 2019), academic procrastination significantly hinders student progress and achievement (Septania et al., 2018), and difficulty adapting to academic demands. They may experience lower academic performance (Stoffel & Cain, 2018) and high levels of depression and anxiety, which are likely catalysts for other problems and challenges (Musumari et al., 2018).

Duckworth (2016) defines grit as a characteristic reflected in behavior that shows persistence and enthusiasm to achieve long-term goals. According to Jin and Kim (2017), grit is a determination to achieve long-term goals with enthusiasm. It is closely related to success achieved through efforts to overcome difficulties and perseverance to achieve personal satisfaction. Meanwhile, Hochanadel & Finamore (2015) consider grit as a trait that helps individuals change the perception that the only determinant of success or achievement is not just intelligence. Duckworth (2007) identified two dimensions in the grit concept: (a). Consistency of Interest (Passion) refers to individual persistence in pursuing a particular direction or goal. This is seen in a person's ability to maintain interests and goals without being easily tempted by other ideas or interests and remaining committed to their initial goals (b). Perseverance involves how hard a person works to achieve their goals and how long they can maintain that effort. This is reflected in diligent behavior and hard work, the ability to remain persistent in facing obstacles and challenges that may arise. In other words, grit combines a consistent interest in achieving a goal and perseverance in undertaking the journey toward that goal.

Generation Z is one of the generations that has grown and developed in the era of digital technology, which is so rapid that it has made them active consumers of technology, especially the internet and social media. Due to its convenience and efficiency, they spend much money and time on social media. Therefore, generation Z considers social media a means of entertainment and an integral part of their daily lives. Moreover, generation Z has an innate character of always wanting to be the first in success, so they often fear being left behind (FOMO) regarding trends, knowledge and achievements (Stillman & Stillman, 2019). This fear of missing out (FOMO) can make them unconsciously monitor social media continuously. Ultimately, their preoccupied behaviour becomes excessive or impulsive, causing disturbance or stress. Siah et al. (2020) found that excessive engagement with social media directly reduces one's grit, as revealed in their research investigating the relationship between social media addiction and academic adjustment, with grit mediating or moderating factors in college students. It was also found that grit can be changed by social context rather than being an unchangeable state. This may happen because students are transitioning, increasing their chances of relying on social media to solve their problems. Frequent use of social media will reduce students' grit in pursuing their long-term goals, creating more difficulties in academic adjustment. This finding is by the contextual perspective on personality which shows that personality is a state that can be changed in a particular social context.

Social media is a communication tool that allows someone to interact with others (Hartinah et al., 2019). Social media's flexible and widespread nature allows access to communication anytime and anywhere. Social media platforms are constantly updated with interesting features. As a result, it becomes a challenge for social media users to disengage, potentially leading to social media addiction. According to Gunawan et al. (2021), social media addiction is a situation where a person uses social media intensively and cannot control it, thus leading to a general negative trend and considering social media as a predictable way to resolve emotional crises and ignoring the processes that occur in social reality. This deep involvement in social media comes with potential risks, especially regarding addiction. Monks, Knoers, and Haditono (in Deswita, 2006) revealed that Generation Z is very vulnerable to social media addiction. For Generation Z, social media and smartphones are not just tools but integral aspects of their lifestyle. Research from Pratiwi (2021) highlights concerns about self-control issues and relatively high levels of social media addiction among Generation Z, leading to behavior such as phubbing, which sometimes occurs without their awareness. This addiction causes individuals to experience sleep disturbances, academic decline, anxiety or depression, and neglect of daily life relationships (Jamaludin et al., 2022).

Based on the background stated above, generation Z faces a very big challenge where the negative effects of social media addiction can divert a person's attention and focus from important tasks or their long-term goals. This can result in a lack of ability to complete tasks well or achieve set goals. Studies investigating grit and social media addiction are minimal, especially those investigating these two variables' effects. By studying the relationship between social media addiction and grit, it is hoped that this study can provide additional insight into how external factors such as social media use can influence internal traits such as grit. Therefore, this study aims to determine the effect of social media addiction on Generation Z's grit.
**Method**

**Participants**

The subjects in this study were Generation Z, with an age range of 11–26 years. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling method, selecting subjects with certain criteria to ensure that the subjects were in line with the research objectives so that the criteria selected would depend on the focus and objectives of the research (Sugiyono, 2013). Criteria for subjects in this study: having and being active in social media (4 hours/more per day). Tutgun–Ünal (2020) found that those who used social media for 4 hours or more per day provided more continuity on social media and were reported to be at risk in terms of addiction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 20 years old</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 – 26 years old</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student (JHS, SHS, University)</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Graduate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Social Media Usage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 5 hours</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 hours</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Instruments**

Social media addiction was measured using the Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), developed by Menayes in 2015 and adapted by Agung & Sahara in 2023. The social media addiction scale consists of 15 items with a four-point Likert scale (e.g. “keluarga saya sering mengeluh karena saya terlalu asyik menggunakan media sosial”). The items exhibited a discriminating index of .083 to .589 and a reliability index of (α = .812).

Grit was measured using the Short Grit Scale (grit-S) questionnaire developed by Duckworth and Quinn in 2009 and translated by the UMM Language Center. The grit scale consists of 8 items with a five-point Likert scale (e.g. “Saya seorang pekerja keras”). The items exhibited a discriminating index of .288 to .437 and a reliability index of (α = .655).

**Data Analysis Techniques**

The analysis technique used in this study is a regression analysis technique using the Statistical Product and Service or not Solution (SPSS) version 24.0. To examine whether social media addiction affects grit.

**Results and Discussion**

**Results**

Based on the description in Table 3, the level of social media addiction of respondents is generally in the medium category (M = 37.5, SD = 7.5), proven by the distribution where the majority are in the medium category (69.4% or
Table 3. Data Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Addiction</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grit</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

231 subjects). Likewise, the grit level of respondents is generally in the medium category (M = 24, SD = 5.3), proven by the distribution where most respondents are in the medium category (67% or 223 subjects).

Table 4. Result of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>36.537</td>
<td>31.367</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Addiction</td>
<td>-.302</td>
<td>-.452</td>
<td>-9.222</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2$ adjusted = .204.

Table 4 shows a significance value of $p < 0.001$ which can be said that there is an effect of the social media addiction on grit with a negative effect ($\beta = -.452$), indicate that the higher social media of gen Z the lower grit of gen Z would be. Additionally, the proportion of the effect of social media addiction on grit, namely 20.4% ($R^2 = .204$).

Discussion

This study aims to test whether social media addiction affects Generation Z's grit. Based on the data analysis results, the hypothesis is accepted that social media addiction can predict grit. Thus, the direction of the relationship is negative, meaning that the higher generation Z's social media addiction will lead to lower grit.

The findings of this study align with studies that have explored social media addiction and its relationship with grit. According to Chua et al. (2019), lack of focus, productivity, obstruction of long–term goals, potential social isolation, and emotional impacts such as stress and anxiety are reasons for low levels of grit caused by difficulty controlling social media use. Furthermore, low grit can cause various problems, including career challenges, decreased performance, and a lack of persistence in what one wants to achieve. Apart from that, the results of this study are also relevant to the results obtained by England (2023), who found a statistically significant negative correlation between grit and social media addiction in students. This means that the higher the level of media addiction that students have, the lower their grit will be. These findings also contribute to previous literature linking age to higher grit and lower social media addiction. In research by Ch'ng & Soo Hoo (2022), a significant negative correlation was found between social media addiction and grit ($r(88) = -.27, p=.011$), indicating that participants who scored higher in addiction to social media tend to score lower in terms of grit. Additionally, it was also found that social media addiction significantly predicted grit. Grit is a trait that is negatively related to various types of addictive behaviour, including social media addiction (England, 2023).

The results of this study also indicate that the majority of Generation Z have moderate grit and social media addiction, namely 67% or 223 people in the grit variable and 69.4% or 231 people in the social media addiction variable. This result means that Generation Z can still control themselves using social media. On the other hand, they can also maintain focus, productivity, perseverance and enthusiasm to achieve their long–term goals, so their grit is classified as medium. However, no literature explains the proposition that individuals with social media addiction may have comparable or higher grit. If we refer to previous literature, individuals with high social media addiction will have low grit and vice versa. For example, research by Septania & Proborini (2020) found a negative correlation between social media addiction and grit, where individuals with high grit tend to show better self-regulation and self-organization. Thus, individuals with high grit are less likely to be addicted to social media. In short, there is no literature to support the assumption that individuals suffering from social media addiction necessarily have equal or higher levels of grit.

The proportion of the effect of social media addiction on grit is 20.5%. In comparison, the remaining 78.5% may be influenced by other factors, such as gender (Christensen & Knezek, 2014), age (England, 2023), personality traits (Terry & Peck, 2020), self-control (Theresa, 2019), social support from peers (Pangaribuan & Savitri, 2019), father involvement in parenting (Kusumawardhani et al., 2020), and motivation (Moreta, 2021).
Conclusion

Based on the results, it is found that there is a negative effect of social media addiction on the grit of Generation Z. The higher the social media addiction, the lower the grit of Gen Z. This study also reveals that a significant majority of respondents possess a moderate social media addiction and grit. This indicates that Generation Z can control themselves using social media; however, if they can reduce the intensity of time and effort they spend being active on social media, their grit will likely increase so that they able achieve their long-term goals.

Implication

With the findings of this study, educators, parents, and mental health professionals working with Generation Z can develop educational and intervention programs aimed at increasing grit in individuals who tend to experience social media addiction. This emphasizes the need for educational programs that promote healthy online behavior and coping strategies, empowering Generation Z to overcome the challenges of excessive social media use.

As for future and an aspect study, they can conduct study with other methods that can reveal cause and effect, an aspect not explored in this research. Using different and specific populations will certainly be very beneficial, especially for individuals who cannot freely use social media but need grit in their tasks or work, for example, content creators, YouTubers, etc.

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Authors’ Contributions

AQFS initiated and developed the study in collaboration with MSY. AQFS conducted the research, analyzed the data, and prepared the manuscript under the supervision of MSY. All authors reviewed and endorsed the final draft of the manuscript.

Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests. The research was conducted without financial, professional, or personal relationships that could be construed as potential conflicts of interest.

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