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Digital Literacy in Addressing the Risks of Generative Artificial Intelligence Video Production: An Instrumental Case Study of Generation Z Content Creators on TikTok

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Abstract

The rapid proliferation of generative artificial intelligence (AI) video technologies has transformed digital content production while simultaneously amplifying risks of misinformation, visual homogenisation, and ethical concerns. Despite growing scholarly attention to AI and digital literacy, limited research examines how content producers, rather than consumers, enact digital literacy to navigate these risks. This study addresses this gap through an instrumental case study of Generation Z content creators on TikTok. Drawing on Belshaw's Eight Essential Elements of Digital Literacies as the analytical framework, data were collected via in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation from three purposively selected creators and analysed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's qualitative procedures. Findings reveal that digital literacy practices extend beyond technical proficiency in operating AI tools to encompass critical evaluation, contextual awareness, ethical judgement, and responsible distribution decisions throughout the production process. Theoretically, the study repositions digital literacy from a predominantly consumer-oriented construct toward a producer-oriented governance mechanism that enables creators to direct, evaluate, and regulate AI-mediated communication. Practically, the results underscore the necessity of integrating technological competence with ethical responsibility to safeguard the integrity of the digital public sphere. These insights contribute to advancing digital literacy scholarship in the generative AI era.

Keywords : Digital literacy, generative artificial intelligence, generation z, instrumental case study, tiktok content creators.

1. Introduction

The emergence of generative AI video technology has fundamentally transformed the practices of digital content creation and distribution, particularly across social media platforms that demand speed, efficiency, and personalized content (Olawore et al., 2025; Seeger et al., 2026). This technology has significantly accelerated production processes while enabling creators to adapt more effectively to the dynamic demands of digital environments. Yang (2025) explains that artificial intelligence plays a central role in content creation and dissemination by automatically generating visual outputs without relying on conventional production workflows. This transformation extends beyond technical efficiency, redefining content creators' responsibilities from merely producing digital content to ensuring

the accuracy, credibility, and contextual integrity of AI-generated information. Consequently, effective utilization of generative AI can no longer be assessed solely through technological proficiency but also through creators' capacity to make critical and ethically responsible decisions throughout the content production process.

Despite these advantages, the rapid adoption of generative AI has also expanded opportunities for social and ethical risks (Eacersall et al., 2025). Numerous cases of misuse demonstrate that generative AI videos are employed not only for creative purposes but also for producing misinformation, visual manipulation, and deceptive content. These developments suggest that the challenges associated with AI extend beyond technological competence to encompass content creators' ability to apply digital literacy responsibly throughout the production process. Li (2019) likewise argues that artificial intelligence enables creators to produce more sophisticated designs, videos, and visual materials within substantially shorter production cycles. However, the study also highlights concerns regarding declining originality and increasing dependence on algorithmic systems. This phenomenon reflects a profound transformation in creative practices, whereby content quality is determined not only by creators' technical expertise but also by the performance and limitations of AI models. Consequently, creators must understand AI tools, operational parameters, and technical constraints to remain accountable for the content they produce. Furthermore, Hemraj (2025) identifies several ethical challenges arising from AI adoption in the creative industry, including creative homogenization, algorithmic bias, and the diminishing role of human creativity. Collectively, these findings indicate that the primary risks associated with generative AI stem not merely from the technology itself but from the level of digital literacy possessed by those who employ it in content production.

Within the broader context of digital information dissemination, inadequate digital literacy among content producers has become increasingly consequential because generative AI is capable of creating visual materials that are often indistinguishable from authentic content. López-Borrull and Lopezosa (2025) report that generative AI substantially accelerates the production of manipulated visual content that is difficult to distinguish from genuine media. This places content creators in a strategically influential position, as the quality and ethical standards embedded in the production process determine whether AI-generated content strengthens digital literacy or exacerbates the circulation of misinformation. Content creators must therefore recognize both the technical and societal risks associated with every piece of content they publish, including its potential influence on public opinion. Nevertheless, the existing literature on digital literacy has predominantly conceptualized individuals as consumers of digital information, whereas considerably less attention has been devoted to digital literacy among those who

actively create and disseminate AI-generated content. Belshaw (2016) conceptualizes digital literacy as comprising eight essential elements that enable individuals to understand, evaluate, and produce information responsibly. However, many studies continue to examine digital literacy primarily from the perspective of information consumers rather than content producers responsible for generating and distributing digital media. Aljalabneh (2024) further emphasizes that insufficient digital literacy among visual content creators contributes to the proliferation of misinformation and the deterioration of information quality across social media platforms.

Against this backdrop, the present study adopts Belshaw's (2016) Eight Essential Elements of Digital Literacies as its analytical framework because the model extends beyond technical competencies by integrating cognitive, social, cultural, communicative, and ethical dimensions that are particularly relevant to AI-assisted content production. Accordingly, the framework provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine how content creators make decisions during the creation, refinement, and dissemination of generative AI videos, thereby positioning digital literacy as an active production process rather than merely a set of competencies for information consumption. Furthermore, this perspective offers a conceptual foundation for understanding how digital literacy functions as a mechanism for mitigating the diverse risks associated with the use of generative AI technologies.

The principal research gap addressed in this study lies in the limited scholarly understanding of how digital literacy is enacted by content creators who directly employ generative AI within their creative practices. Existing studies have largely examined the benefits of AI technologies, the risks of misinformation, and digital literacy as separate areas of inquiry, leaving the relationship between AI-assisted content production and digital literacy as a decision-making mechanism insufficiently explored. This gap becomes particularly significant when examined among Generation Z, a cohort that has grown alongside digital technologies and extensively utilizes TikTok as an integrated space for content creation, distribution, and consumption. These characteristics position Generation Z TikTok content creators as an instrumental case through which a deeper understanding can be developed regarding how digital literacy is operationalized when confronting the emerging risks associated with generative AI in everyday content production practices.

The central issue investigated in this study is the limited academic understanding of how generative AI video creators shape the contemporary digital information landscape through their production practices. Content creators are increasingly expected to remain competitive while simultaneously ensuring the quality, credibility, and ethical integrity of the content they produce, despite the absence of digital literacy guidelines specifically designed for AI-assisted visual production.

This situation raises important questions concerning creators' preparedness to address misinformation, technological bias, and ethical challenges in digital content production. Accordingly, this study aims to examine how Generation Z TikTok content creators understand, utilize, and assume responsibility for the use of generative AI video production through the perspective of Belshaw's eight elements of digital literacy. In addition to identifying the risks, challenges, and digital literacy practices associated with AI-assisted content production, this study seeks to contribute theoretically by extending digital literacy scholarship from a consumer-oriented perspective toward a producer-oriented perspective within the context of generative AI, while also offering practical implications for promoting more ethical, critical, and responsible digital content production practices.

2. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using an Instrumental Case Study design. The instrumental case study was selected because the objective of the research was not to explain the uniqueness of individual participants or the TikTok platform itself, but to use the participants' experiences as an analytical vehicle for understanding the broader phenomenon of digital literacy in addressing the risks associated with generative AI video production. Accordingly, the case examined in this study comprised the experiences of Generation Z content creators in utilizing generative AI for video production, while TikTok served as the research context in which these practices naturally occurred. The unit of analysis was the participants' digital literacy practices throughout the processes of creating, evaluating, and distributing AI-generated video content. The analysis was guided by Belshaw's (2016) digital literacy theory, with its eight essential elements serving as the interpretive framework. Rather than functioning solely as theoretical concepts, these eight elements were operationalized as analytical categories during the coding, interpretation, and cross-case comparison of the empirical data.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling Sugiyono (2018) based on the following criteria: actively publishing AI-generated videos within the previous six months, having at least 1,000 TikTok followers, being between 17 and 28 years of age (Generation Z), and being willing to participate in an in-depth interview. Based on these criteria, three participants were selected: Reynaldo Putra (Social Media Specialist and storyboard artist, one year of AI experience, 25,000 followers), Yoki Arfianto (AI Content Creator, four years of AI experience, 40,000 followers), and Achmad Hafizh Rachman (AI Content Creator and Prompt Engineer, six months of AI experience, 10,000 followers). The three participants represented diverse professional experiences in AI-assisted content production while sharing comparable engagement with TikTok as their primary content distribution platform. Data collection continued until thematic redundancy was achieved, whereby no

substantially new information emerged across interviews regarding digital literacy practices and AI-related risk management. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data were triangulated through interviews, observations, and documentation, while preliminary interpretations were confirmed with participants (member checking). In addition, an audit trail consisting of interview transcripts, field notes, coding records, and analytical memos was maintained throughout the research process to ensure transparency and consistency.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: direct observation of participants' TikTok content and audience interactions, in-depth interviews exploring their technical experiences and ethical considerations, and documentation in the form of digital archives and field notes. Data analysis followed the qualitative procedures proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the analysis, all interview transcripts and observational records were first coded inductively to identify meaningful units of information. The resulting codes were subsequently interpreted deductively using Belshaw's (2016) eight digital literacy elements as the analytical framework. Finally, a cross-case synthesis was conducted to compare patterns across participants, identify recurring digital literacy practices, and examine similarities and differences in how Generation Z TikTok content creators addressed the risks associated with generative AI video production.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Potential Positive Uses of Generative AI Video and the Risks of Its Misuse in the Digital Public Sphere

Table 1. Generation Z Content Creators' Perceptions of the Opportunities and Risks of Generative AI Video Production

Informant	Informant Profile	Key Interview Findings	Analytical Category
Reynaldo Putra	Social Media Specialist and Storyboard Artist; using AI for one year; 25,000 TikTok followers	Generative AI facilitates the pre-production process, particularly in script development, idea generation, and the creation of visual materials that are difficult to obtain through conventional production methods. AI enables creators to visualize specific locations without conducting direct filming, thereby reducing production costs.	Production Efficiency and Optimization of Creative Resources
Reynaldo Putra	Social Media Specialist and Storyboard Artist; using AI for one year;	Audiences are generally receptive to AI-generated content as long as the content maintains informational value, message clarity, and practical benefits for viewers.	Audience Acceptance and Content Quality

	25,000 TikTok followers		
Yoki Arfiantho	AI Content Creator; using AI for four years; 40,000 TikTok followers	The advancement of AI has increased the volume of generated content; however, much of this content prioritizes quantity over quality. The phenomenon of AI slop reflects risks of visual homogenization, reduced originality, and declining creative value.	Risks of Content Degradation and Loss of Originality
Achmad Hafizh Rachman	AI Content Creator and Prompt Engineer; using AI for six months; 10,000 TikTok followers	AI assists creators in developing visual concepts, producing initial drafts, and constructing narrative elements without requiring substantial investment in professional production equipment.	Democratization of Digital Content Production

Source: Research interview data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 1 demonstrate that the adoption of generative AI video production among Generation Z content creators reflects an ambivalent relationship between technological opportunities and emerging digital risks. This transformation is reflected not only in enhanced technical efficiency but also in changes to creators' work patterns in designing, developing, and distributing content. In other words, AI is no longer positioned merely as a production aid but as an integral part of creative decision-making processes. The informants' experiences demonstrate that the use of generative AI video has brought substantial changes to digital content production. All informants assessed that AI technology improves work efficiency, accelerates production processes, and reduces operational costs previously required for content creation. Beyond serving as a technical tool, AI is also employed to support idea development, scriptwriting, and visual generation, thereby rendering the production process more flexible.

In his experience as a Social Media Specialist, Reynaldo Putra explained that generative AI greatly assists the pre-production stage, particularly when facing constraints related to budget or filming locations. He uses AI to draft more humanised scripts and to generate visuals that are difficult to obtain through conventional production methods. Reynaldo provided an example in which, when requiring visualisation of a server located in Singapore, he did not need to conduct on-site filming. Instead, he used raw photographs that were subsequently processed with AI to produce moving visuals aligned with production requirements. According to him, this approach enables the reduction of operational costs without compromising the desired quality of the output (Putra Reynaldo, 2026). This experience illustrates that the primary value of generative AI for creators lies not solely in its capacity to generate visuals automatically, but in its ability to expand

production possibilities previously constrained by resources, time, or access to specific locations. Consequently, AI functions as an enabler that enhances creative capacity while broadening opportunities for more adaptive digital content production.

In addition to providing technical efficiency, the informants also assessed that AI-based content is increasingly accepted by audiences. Reynaldo explained that audiences across various age groups, including those aged 30–40 years, can accept the use of AI provided that the content remains informative, clear, and offers tangible value. In a similar vein, Achmad Hafizh Rachman stated that AI creates opportunities for creators to produce visual concepts without requiring substantial investment in expensive production equipment. According to him, the processes of generating initial drafts and story backgrounds can be completed more rapidly, allowing creators to focus more on refining ideas and enhancing content quality (Rachman Achmad Hafizh, 2026). These findings suggest that acceptance of AI-based content is determined not merely by the use of the technology itself, but more significantly by the creators' ability to maintain informational quality, message relevance, and the value perceived by audiences. Thus, the successful utilisation of AI continues to depend on human capacity to direct the creative process and critically evaluate the outputs generated by AI systems.

Nevertheless, the informants also recognised that the ease afforded by generative AI introduces new consequences. The removal of various barriers in the production process has led to an increasing volume of AI-generated content being published without adequate quality screening. Drawing on his experience with generative AI, Yoki Arfiantho observed that the majority of AI content circulating on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok prioritises quantity over quality. He estimated that approximately 70% of such content provides little meaningful informational value, a phenomenon commonly referred to as "AI slop." According to him, this situation has also elicited criticism from creative communities, including painters and animators, who argue that AI content tends to exhibit uniform visual characteristics, lack originality, and potentially threaten the sustainability of the creative industries (Arfiantho Yoki, 2026). Furthermore, these findings indicate that the lowering of technical barriers to content production simultaneously elevates the importance of digital literacy as a mechanism for quality control. The primary risk does not reside in AI technology itself, but in creators' decisions regarding information verification, visual quality evaluation, and the consideration of ethical implications prior to distributing content to the public. Consequently, increased access to AI technology concurrently intensifies the demand for creators' reflective capacity and digital responsibility.

Overall, the research findings reveal that generative AI video presents a paradoxical relationship between opportunities and risks. On the one hand, AI expands efficiency, accessibility, and flexibility in digital content production; on the other, the same technology amplifies the potential for low-quality content, visual homogenisation, and the dissemination of insufficiently accountable information when not accompanied by adequate digital literacy practices. From the perspective of Belshaw's eight elements of digital literacy, this condition demonstrates that technical competence alone is insufficient for navigating an AI-based content production ecosystem. Creators are also required to exercise critical thinking, consider ethical dimensions, understand social contexts, and reflect on the impact of every production decision upon the digital public sphere. These findings extend the understanding of digital literacy by showing that, in the era of generative AI, digital literacy no longer functions solely as the capacity to evaluate information, but as a competence that guides the entire content production process to ensure it remains responsible, credible, and oriented toward the public interest.

3.2 Digital Literacy Practices in Addressing the Risks of Generative AI Video Misuse in Public Digital Spaces

Table 2. Identified Risks of Generative AI Video Production and Digital Literacy Responses among Generation Z TikTok Content Creators

Informant	Identified AI-Related Risks	Empirical Evidence from Interviews	Digital Literacy Practices Demonstrated
Achmad Hafizh Rachman	AI-generated misinformation and deceptive content production	Generative AI enables the rapid production of large volumes of content, creating opportunities for irresponsible actors to distribute misleading information or hoaxes that may influence public perceptions.	Awareness of information responsibility and critical evaluation before content dissemination
Yoki Arfiantho	Deepfake and visual manipulation	Deepfake technology has become increasingly realistic, making it difficult for general audiences to distinguish synthetic content from authentic visual information.	Critical understanding of content authenticity and awareness of potential social consequences
Achmad Hafizh Rachman	AI hallucination and inaccurate AI-generated information	AI systems may produce inaccurate outputs because training data contain errors or limitations, resulting in information that appears credible but does not correspond with reality.	Understanding technological limitations and verification of AI-generated outputs

Yoki Arfiantho	Privacy violations and unauthorized identity manipulation	AI-generated visual content involving public figures or individuals without permission may violate privacy boundaries and ethical principles.	Ethical awareness and consideration of social responsibility in content creation

Source: Research interview data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 2 demonstrate that Generation Z TikTok content creators perceive generative AI risks not merely as technological problems, but as challenges requiring continuous digital literacy practices throughout the content production process. The results indicate that the emergence of synthetic visual technologies has transformed the responsibility of content creators from simply producing engaging content into evaluating the accuracy, ethical implications, and potential social consequences of AI-generated media.

Achmad Hafizh Rachman highlighted that because AI can generate content instantly and at a large scale, irresponsible actors may exploit the technology to distribute misleading information or hoaxes capable of manipulating public perceptions Rachman,. Similarly, Yoki Arfiantho emphasized that deepfake technology has reached a level of realism that makes synthetic content increasingly difficult for ordinary audiences to distinguish from authentic information. These findings indicate that the primary challenge of generative AI is not only the availability of manipulation technologies but also the imbalance between technological sophistication and users' capacity to critically evaluate digital content.

From the perspective of digital literacy, these findings illustrate the importance of critical and cognitive dimensions in managing AI-generated content. Content creators must develop the ability to assess the authenticity of visual information, understand the limitations of AI systems, and recognize the broader consequences of distributing synthetic media. Therefore, digital literacy functions not only as a personal competency but also as a form of social responsibility within contemporary digital communication environments.

The study further reveals that AI-related risks extend beyond misinformation and deepfake manipulation to include limitations embedded within AI systems themselves. Technically, this challenge is reflected in the phenomenon of AI hallucination. Achmad Hafizh Rachman explained that hallucination occurs when AI models are trained using incomplete or inaccurate online data, causing systems to generate outputs that appear correct but are factually incorrect. This finding highlights that generative AI cannot be considered an autonomous source of reliable information; instead, human creators remain responsible for verifying, interpreting, and contextualizing AI-generated outputs before public distribution.

In addition, unauthorized use of individuals' visual identities represents another significant ethical concern. Yoki Arfiantho described an experience in which AI-generated content involving a political figure (such as Zulkifli Hasan) was removed by Instagram due to privacy-related violations. This finding demonstrates that responsible AI content production requires ethical literacy, particularly regarding consent, representation, and the social implications of manipulating human identities through synthetic media.

Overall, this study reveals that digital literacy among Generation Z AI content creators operates as a multidimensional mechanism for managing the risks of generative AI video production. Consistent with Belshaw's (2016) framework, the findings show that effective AI literacy involves not only technical ability but also critical evaluation, ethical awareness, contextual understanding, and responsible participation in digital environments. The instrumental case of TikTok content creators demonstrates that in the era of generative AI, digital literacy has expanded from the ability to consume and evaluate information toward the ability to responsibly produce, regulate, and govern the circulation of AI-generated content in public digital spaces.

3.3 Independent Risk Mitigation Practices, Media Literacy Enhancement, and Ethical Awareness among Content Creators

Table 3. Risk Mitigation Strategies in Generative AI Video Production among Generation Z Content Creators

Informant	Key Interview Findings	Risk Mitigation Practices	Digital Literacy Dimensions
Achmad Hafizh Rachman	AI-generated outputs frequently contain visual errors (*artifacting*) and AI hallucinations, requiring further evaluation before being incorporated into final content production.	Conducting prompt experimentation through trial-and-error processes, evaluating AI outputs, and utilizing additional tools such as Automatic1111 and Adobe After Effects to refine visual quality.	**Technical competence and critical evaluation**
Reynaldo Putra	The role of content creators has shifted from merely producing content toward becoming context creators who are responsible for understanding information contexts before utilizing AI.	Verifying information, evaluating the appropriate use of AI, and ensuring that the use of facial and voice representations is based on explicit permission.	**Contextual awareness and ethical responsibility**
Reynaldo Putra	AI-generated content may be misused, potentially creating public misunderstandings and manipulating original messages.	Avoiding content containing elements of ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA), misinformation, and	**Social awareness and responsible participation**

		exploitation of sensitive public events; applying watermarks and providing clarification when content is manipulated.	
Yoki Arfiantho	The use of AI creates challenges related to platform restrictions, copyright issues, and potential misuse of creative works.	Adjusting prompts according to platform policies, considering legal aspects, and evaluating the social consequences of generated content.	**Ethical awareness and digital citizenship**

Source: Research interview data (2026)

The findings presented in Table 3 demonstrate that Generation Z content creators do not perceive the risks of generative AI merely as technical challenges, but rather as multidimensional issues involving technological accuracy, information credibility, ethical responsibility, and social consequences. In addressing various risks associated with generative AI video production, the three informants did not rely solely on technical capabilities to generate content but also developed independent mitigation strategies. Their experiences indicate that AI-based video production requires proficiency in prompt engineering, evaluation of AI-generated outputs, and post-production refinement to ensure that the resulting content remains accurate, credible, and appropriate for public dissemination.

Achmad Hafizh Rachman explained that AI-generated outputs cannot be directly implemented because they frequently contain visual errors (*artifacting*) and AI hallucinations. Therefore, he consistently applies trial-and-error processes in developing prompts and utilizes software such as Automatic1111 and Adobe After Effects to improve the final video output. This experience demonstrates that effective AI utilization does not solely depend on the technological tools employed but also on creators' ability to critically evaluate and refine AI-generated results. Reynaldo Putra further emphasized that the role of creators has shifted from merely being content producers toward becoming *context creators*, namely individuals who understand the informational context before employing AI as a creative instrument.

These findings indicate that digital literacy within the context of generative AI cannot be reduced to the operational ability to use AI technologies but must also encompass evaluative capabilities to understand technological limitations and apply human judgment to AI-generated outputs. From the perspective of Belshaw's (2016) framework, these practices reflect the importance of integrating technical competence, critical thinking, and contextual understanding in AI-assisted content production. Therefore, this study extends the conceptualization of digital literacy from merely using technology toward the ability to control, evaluate, and direct technological systems in producing responsible digital information.

Beyond technical capabilities, all informants emphasized that ethical considerations represent an inseparable component of AI-based content production. Reynaldo Putra explained that the use of individuals' faces and voices is always based on explicit permission and limited to specific purposes, such as improving the quality of webinar speakers' photographs. When requiring visual or audio assets, the informants preferred using officially licensed resources. Similarly, Achmad Hafizh Rachman highlighted the importance of examining the origins of AI training data to prevent copyright violations and legal conflicts. Meanwhile, Yoki Arfiantho stated that he frequently modifies prompts to comply with platform policies when encountering restricted terms within AI systems.

These practices demonstrate the emergence of a new form of creator responsibility within the AI ecosystem, where creators are required to consider social and legal consequences before producing and distributing digital content. This finding is significant because it positions AI creators not merely as technology users but also as communication actors who influence the quality, credibility, and safety of information circulating within public digital spaces. Thus, digital literacy in generative AI production incorporates a normative dimension that requires creators to negotiate the boundary between creative innovation and ethical responsibility.

Ethical awareness was also reflected through creators' moral responsibility toward the broader social impacts of their content. Based on Yoki Arfiantho's experience, the misuse of his creative work by other parties previously generated misunderstandings on social media, leading him to become more cautious in producing AI-generated content. Reynaldo Putra demonstrated a commitment to avoiding content containing SARA-related elements, misinformation, or exploitation of publicly sensitive events. As an anticipatory strategy against content misuse, he applies watermarks and provides clarification whenever published videos are manipulated. Meanwhile, Achmad Hafizh Rachman consistently discloses that his published videos involve AI-generated elements and actively engages with communities to seek solutions for technical and ethical challenges emerging from AI utilization.

These findings reveal that risk mitigation strategies among AI content creators develop through reflective and collective practices rather than relying solely on formal regulations established by digital platforms. AI disclosure, watermark implementation, asset verification, and community engagement represent forms of digital citizenship that constitute essential dimensions of digital literacy in the generative AI era. Accordingly, the primary contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that AI content creators require not only the ability to generate digital content but also the capacity to manage communication risks arising from AI-mediated production processes.

Based on these findings, risk mitigation in generative AI video production is not solely achieved through technical mastery but also through the implementation of ethical principles, respect for intellectual property rights, and moral responsibility toward the public. These three dimensions provide an essential foundation for creators to utilize AI responsibly. Overall, the findings demonstrate that digital literacy functions as a risk governance mechanism that enables creators to maximize the potential of generative AI while maintaining information accuracy, creative integrity, and social responsibility. This perspective reinforces the argument that the primary challenge in AI-based content production is not merely technological capability, but human preparedness to critically and ethically guide the use of such technologies.

3.4 Discussion

The development of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) video within the new media ecosystem has fundamentally transformed the position of digital creators, shifting their role from merely producing content toward becoming communication actors responsible for constructing meanings and shaping public perceptions. Studies on new media emphasize that the internet has democratized information production (Hesmondhalgh, 2019; Pilati et al., 2025), accelerated distribution processes, and dismantled the editorial boundaries traditionally associated with conventional media, thereby enabling individuals to independently produce and disseminate content. The findings of this study demonstrate that the ability of generative AI to produce highly realistic visual content further strengthens these characteristics by reducing technical and financial barriers faced by creators (Vitellaro et al., 2026; Zhou & Lee, 2024). The utilization of AI by Reynaldo Putra to generate visuals that are difficult to obtain through conventional production methods, as well as the production efficiency achieved by Achmad Hafizh Rachman, illustrates that this technology expands creators' capacity to develop content within digital environments.

However, the accessibility and efficiency offered by generative AI also introduce new forms of risk, particularly when the ability to generate realistic visuals is not accompanied by adequate capabilities to evaluate contextual accuracy, informational validity, and the social consequences of digital content. Li (2019) previously highlighted that the integration of AI into creative industries may increase dependence on algorithms and potentially reduce the originality of creative works. This study reinforces such concerns through Yoki Arfiantho's observation regarding the growing phenomenon of *AI slop*, referring to the large-scale production of AI-generated content with limited informational value and declining creative quality. This condition indicates that the primary challenge of generative AI does not merely

concern technological capability, but also the possibility that such technologies may be utilized without sufficient critical control by content producers.

In relation to public opinion manipulation, the realistic visual characteristics of generative AI provide this technology with significant persuasive power while simultaneously creating opportunities for information distortion. Technically, generative AI video systems operate by learning patterns from datasets to produce new visual representations without direct recording processes, as explained by Karagoz (2024). However, the probabilistic nature of these systems generates inherent limitations, including *AI hallucination* and *artifacting*. Westerlund (2019) warned that AI's ability to create highly realistic visual representations may blur the boundary between factual reality and artificial construction, making it increasingly difficult for audiences to distinguish authentic information from synthetic content. This study supports this argument through Yoki Arfiantho's experience, which highlights the potential misuse of deepfake technologies, particularly when the faces or identities of public figures are manipulated to construct specific perceptions among audiences.

These findings demonstrate that the risks associated with generative AI video extend beyond the production stage and also involve the interpretive processes through which audiences perceive and evaluate digital content. The case of a deepfake video falsely representing the Indonesian Ministry of Finance illustrates how realistic AI-generated visuals can be exploited to construct misleading claims and influence public trust. The official Kemenkeu PRIME account clarified that a video featuring a figure resembling the Minister of Finance and promoting a false government grant scheme was an AI-based hoax. This phenomenon demonstrates that within an increasingly visual-oriented digital environment, the ability to produce content must be accompanied by the ability to understand communication contexts. Therefore, this study extends the conceptualization of digital literacy from the perspective of information consumers toward the perspective of information producers, as creators' decisions during the production process directly influence the quality and integrity of the digital public sphere.

The findings further reveal that generative AI video producers develop multidimensional digital literacy practices to address potential information manipulation risks. Based on the experiences of the three informants, digital literacy is not limited to the ability to operate AI tools but also encompasses the capacity to understand technological mechanisms, evaluate AI outputs, consider ethical implications, and determine the appropriateness of content before publication. This finding differs from Aljalabneh (2024), who demonstrated that insufficient digital literacy among visual content creators contributes to the increasing dissemination of misinformation. In contrast, this study reveals that creators with direct experience in AI production can develop self-regulatory mechanisms through verification, editing,

and ethical reflection processes. These findings indicate that digital literacy in the generative AI era functions as a risk mitigation mechanism (Meesook et al., 2025) rather than merely an adaptive capability toward emerging technologies.

From the perspective of Belshaw's (2016) Essential Elements of Digital Literacies framework, these practices demonstrate that the eight elements of digital literacy operate collectively throughout the generative AI video production process. The *Cultural* and *Communicative* elements are reflected in creators' ability to understand audience characteristics and construct messages appropriate to social contexts. This is evident in Reynaldo Putra's experience of positioning himself as a *context creator*, namely a creator who not only produces visual materials but also determines the meaning and communicative objectives of the content. Meanwhile, the *Cognitive* and *Critical* elements are demonstrated through Achmad Hafizh Rachman's practices of evaluating AI outputs, recognizing system limitations, and conducting verification before content dissemination. These practices indicate that humans remain the primary decision-makers in AI-mediated communication despite increasing automation within the production process.

Beyond technical and cognitive dimensions, this study highlights that ethical responsibility and social awareness represent crucial factors in preventing the misuse of generative AI video (Al-kfairy et al., 2024). The informants implemented various mitigation strategies, including watermarking, AI-generated disclosures, transparency labels, the use of licensed assets, and avoidance of content containing misinformation or exploitation of sensitive issues. These practices represent the implementation of the *Confidence* and *Civic* elements within Belshaw's (2016) Essential Elements of Digital Literacies framework, as creators not only develop confidence in utilizing technology but also recognize their social responsibilities as information producers. The importance of transparency is further illustrated through the circulation of AI-generated images related to the Myanmar earthquake verified by BBC Verify (2025), as well as AI-generated wildfire images in British Columbia, Canada, reported by CBC News (2025). These cases demonstrate that synthetic visuals can significantly influence public perceptions when they are distributed without adequate verification and ethical consideration.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the misuse of generative AI video in influencing public opinion is not solely determined by technological capabilities but also by the level of digital literacy possessed by content producers. Social media environments amplify this challenge because algorithmic systems tend to increase content visibility based on user engagement rather than informational accuracy alone. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) explained that social media platforms have weakened traditional information-filtering mechanisms, while Tandoc et al. (2018) and Perlman (2021) emphasized that digital algorithms often prioritize engagement-oriented

content distribution. Within this context, the findings demonstrate that generative AI video creators occupy a strategic position as self-regulated gatekeepers before content reaches wider audiences. The primary contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that producer-oriented digital literacy is a fundamental component in maintaining the integrity of digital communication, as the quality of the public information environment depends not only on technological sophistication but also on human capacity to guide AI technologies critically, ethically, and responsibly.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that digital literacy practices among generative AI video producers are not limited to the technical ability to operate artificial intelligence tools but involve a broader set of competencies encompassing critical evaluation, contextual understanding, ethical awareness, and responsible participation in digital environments. The findings reveal that Generation Z AI content creators actively integrate the eight elements of Belshaw's (2016) Essential Elements of Digital Literacies framework throughout the content production process, including idea development, prompt engineering, AI output evaluation, visual refinement, and content distribution. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Belshaw's framework by repositioning digital literacy from a consumer-oriented perspective toward a producer-oriented perspective, demonstrating that digital literacy functions as a governance mechanism that enables creators to critically direct, evaluate, and regulate AI-mediated communication. Practically, the findings highlight that responsible generative AI adoption requires creators to combine technological competence with ethical judgment, transparency practices, information verification, and social responsibility to maintain the integrity of the digital public sphere.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The findings are derived from a limited number of participants within a specific context of Generation Z TikTok content creators, which may restrict the transferability of the results to other demographic groups, platforms, or cultural settings. Furthermore, the qualitative case study approach provides in-depth insights into individual experiences but does not capture broader patterns of AI content production practices across diverse creator communities. Future research should therefore involve larger and more heterogeneous samples, comparative studies across different digital platforms and cultural contexts, and mixed-method approaches to further validate and expand the conceptualization of producer-oriented digital literacy in the era of generative AI.

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