

The Influence of Information Overload on Decision Difficulty Mediated by Social Media Exhaustion on Generation Z in Jepara

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Abstract

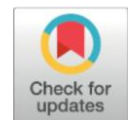
Generation Z in Jepara is the target of this study, which seeks to understand how information overload contributes to decision difficulty through the medium of social media exhaustion. Generation Z in Jepara is the focus of this quantitative study, which relies on questionnaires filled out by randomly selected participants using the Rao Purba technique. The PLS-SEM approach, along with the Smart PLS version 4.0 application, was used to analyze 310 samples in this investigation. As shown by the findings of this study, there is a positive and significant relationship between information overload and decision difficulty, as well as between social media exhaustion and decision difficulty. The impact of information overload on decision difficulty, as mediated by social media exhaustion, is positively correlated.

Abstrak

Generasi Z di Jepara menjadi sasaran penelitian ini, yang berupaya memahami bagaimana information overload berkontribusi pada decision difficulty melalui media social media exhaustion. Generasi Z di Jepara menjadi fokus studi kuantitatif ini, yang mengandalkan kuesioner yang diisi oleh peserta yang dipilih secara acak menggunakan teknik Rao Purba. Pendekatan PLS-SEM, bersama dengan aplikasi Smart PLS versi 4.0, digunakan untuk menganalisis 310 sampel dalam penyelidikan ini. Seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh temuan dalam penelitian ini adanya hubungan positif dan signifikan antara information overload dan decision difficulty, serta antara social media exhaustion dan kesulitan pengambilan keputusan. Dampak information overload pada decision difficulty, seperti yang dimediasi oleh social media exhaustion, berkorelasi positif.

Keywords: Information Overload, Social Media Exhaustion, and Decision Difficulty

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Introduction

Among the numerous technical advancements in the age of globalization is the Internet, when social media platforms are linked to the internet, users can access information anytime and anywhere. Social media offers a variety of information search options (Doni and Faqih 2017). Continuous information overload occurs when processing speed and internet accessibility are not balanced, when the quantity of information received exceeds processing capacity, then information overload occurs (Eliyana, et al. 2020). However, a person can also experience information overload due to having unlimited access to information (Wang et al., 2022).

Generation Z is a group of people born between 1997 and 2012 or who are currently between 12 and 27 years old (Aristi, Ahyaruddin et al. 2023). Thanks to digitalization, generation Z can obtain information quickly and respond quickly to the flood of information around them, and generation Z is raised to be intelligent, tech-savvy, critical, and creative (Bencsik, Horváth-Csikós et al. 2016).

Progress to provide information technology always tries in order to facilitate human access to information. Information technology which is currently very popular because of its ability to quickly, easily, provide information and without distance limitations is the new media internet (Maharani 2016). Humans as users of information technology never stop developing and creating technology to fulfill alternatives for information and to conduct more analysis on information issues (Lee, Lindsey, & Kim, 2017).

Social media usage cuts down on the time spent obtaining information, including irrelevant information such as gossip, spam, rumors, and unwanted content, which can lead to a lack of information (Fu, et al., 2020). Because digital media is so accessible, its use has grown in recent years (Dewi, Priharsari et al. 2022). Users using social media with an internet connection can get information anytime and from anywhere (Fu, et al., 2020).

In intermittent use, where individuals change behavior to prevent fatigue, burnout is a significant psychological problem (Cao & Sun, 2018). Intermittent usage habits are also related to social media saturation, poor psychological stress can lead to bad behavior, followed by a desire to quit, the detrimental effects of information overload on intermittent usage behavior are mediated by social media saturation (Fu, et al., 2020).

E-commerce businesses are increasingly relying on digital marketing techniques to raise their profile, attract clients and increase sales as a result of the increasing use of mobile devices and the internet (Syamsuddin, Semmaila, Alam, & Business, 2024). This facilitates fast transactions and communication between buyers and sellers. In addition, merchants can respond to consumer requests immediately, which increases customer satisfaction and revenue. E-business, which is a subset of e-commerce, covers a wide range of activities, including purchasing services, working with other businesses, seeking employment opportunities, and more (Fahrozi, Nasution, & Busisnes, 2024).

From previous research, different findings or research gaps can be obtained Hu & Krishen (2019) revealed that excessive information has significant effects on decision-making difficulties, but research by Peng & Xu (2021) showed that excessive information has no effect on decision-making difficulties. This finding emphasizes the importance of effective information management to reduce cognitive load and improve the decision-making process in a professional context.

The purpose of this study is to determine how Information overload influences Decision Difficulty mediated by Social Media Exhaustion on Generation Z in Jepara. In addition, by examining the impact of decision difficulty, this study aims to determine the mechanism that connects social media exhaustion along with information overload. Therefore, it is anticipated that the results of this investigation will will theoretically add to the literature discussing digital decision making and generation Z who are highly connected to technology.

Literatur Review and Hypothesis Development

Information Overload

Information overload is a situation where too much information makes it impossible for someone to find the information they need and makes decision difficulty (Renjith & Studies, 2017). Information overload has several impacts such as the inability to make choices, remember information, and cause anxiety and stress. A steady stream of information is constantly presented to users of social media, often at a rate much faster than their cognitive capacity to process information (Tsabitah, Priharsari et al. 2022). Developed countries also have a major problem with information overload, which causes a gap between the amount of information available and the resources needed to process it and create informative knowledge (Hariyati, Heriyanto et al. 2021).

Social Media Exhaustion

Social media exhaustion is the inclination for users to stop accessing social media due to consuming too much material (Bright, Kleiser et al. 2015). In the digital age, excessive use of social media can lead to mental health problems known as social media exhaustion (Malik, Dhir et al. 2020).

One definition of social media fatigue is a phenomena known to occur when people have the opportunity to stop using social media due to a sense of togetherness (Zhang, Shen et al. 2021). A person who uses social media extensively is likely to experience fatigue due to constant exposure to social media related content (Yu, Cao et al. 2018).

Decision Difficulty

The inability felt by maximizers to make decision-making difficulties due to initial uncertainty about when to act leads them to feel uncertain about the choice (Sparks, Ehrlinger et al. 2012). Decision-making difficulties can stem from a variety of elements related to the decision-making environment and the particular decision maker; those who consistently struggle with decision-making have lower levels of confidence in their decisions (Rim, 2012).

The Effect of Information Overload on Decision Difficulty

The abundance of information hinders decision-making and makes it difficult for people to find the information they need (Renjith & Studies, 2017). Previous research found a positive and significant influence between Information Overload and Decision Difficulty (Hu & Krishen, 2019).

The aforementioned description leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H1: Information overload has a positive and significant effect on Decision Difficulty

The Effect of Information Overload on Social Media Exhaustion

Excessive amounts of information can quickly disrupt cognitive function and cause fatigue (Eliyana, Ajija et al. 2020). Previous research found a positive and significant effect between Information Overload and

Social Media Exhaustion (Sudarsono Putri, Chandra Saputra et al. 2023). Similar results were also seen in a study conducted by (Fu et al., 2020) showing a positive and significant influence between Information Overload and Social Media Exhaustion.

The aforementioned description leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H2: Information Overload has a positive and significant effect on Social Media Exhaustion

The Effect of Social Media Exhaustion on Decision Difficulty

Social media exhaustion contributes to decreased concentration, thus increasing the level of difficulty in decision making (Gao et al. 2020). Previous research found a positive and significant influence between Social Media Exhaustion and Decision Difficulty (Ahmed & Rasul, 2023).

The aforementioned description leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H3: Social Media Exhaustion has a positive and significant effect on Decision Difficulty

Theoretical Framework of Thought

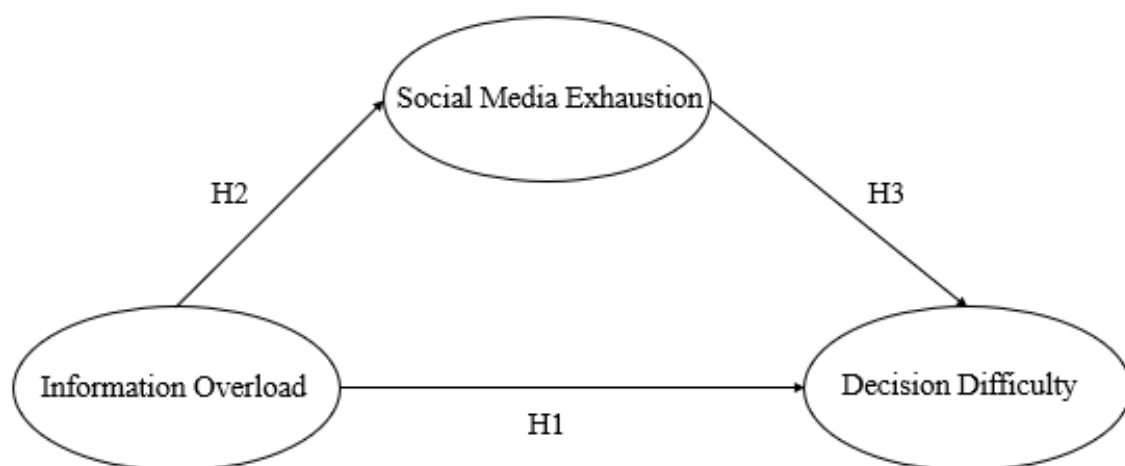


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework of Thought

1. Research Method

To investigate the potential relationships between variables, this study uses a causal research strategy (Roosdhani, Farida, Indriani, & Society, 2023). Quantitative research by looking for causal associative relationships (Juwita and Faddila 2023). This study contains three variables, namely information overload (X), social media fatigue (Z), decision-making difficulties (Y) which were carried out on Generation Z. To collect measurements using a Likert scale with a range of 1 proved ineffective at all to 10 very helpful (Harpe and learning 2015). The population in this research are all Generation Z in Jepara.

Since the precise quantity of people included in this study population is unknown, the researchers had to use the random sampling method, which is to select a portion of the entire population at random. The Rao Purba formula is used to determine the sample size in this study (2006):

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{4 + (Moe)^2}$$

Description:

n = Sample size

Z = Confidence level in determining the sample 95% = 1.96

Moe = The greatest mistake that may be accepted in this situation, or the margin of error, is set at 5% it is evident from this calculation that the sample size that has to be reached is:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2}{4 + (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 310$$

A total of 96 people were in this study. In this study, 310 samples were surveyed to ensure that no questionnaires were considered inappropriate for research or data processing. In order to collect valid and reliable response data, a structured questionnaire with well-organized and systematic questions was used to collect data for this study (Komaryatin et al., 2025). One type of Primary data was used in this study, which is data that researchers have directly gathered using online surveys distributed via Google Forms (Britania & Roosdhani, 2024). It is not known exactly how many Generation Z are in Jepara.

This research hypothesis test was also used in the study (Arifin & Roosdhani, 2024) using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with an emphasis on the SmartPLS version 4.0 method used as an analysis tool in the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling) data testing process.

Table 1. Description of Respondent Data

Category	Description	Frequency (people)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	128	58,8%
	Woman	182	41,2%
Amount			100%
Age	< 20 Year	22	7,1%
	21-25 Year	279	90%
	26-28 Year	9	2,9%
Amount			100%
Marital Status	Marry	292	93,9%
	Unmarried	18	6,1%
Amount			100%
Work	Student/collage	186	59,8%
	PNS	5	1,9%
	Employee	83	26,7%
	Private	33	10,7%
Amount			100%

Table 2. Measurement Indicators

Variable	Variable Name	Indicator	Source
Information Overload	IO.1	I am often sidetracked by the quantity of information on social media that I can access.	(Gao, Liu et al. 2018) (Hwang, Hong et al. 2020) (Lee, Lee et al. 2020)
	IO.2	I feel overwhelmed by the amount of information I have to process every day on social media.	
	IO.3	In my opinion, just a small percentage of the content on social media is pertinent to my requirements.	
	IO.4	I sometimes misread social media since there is too much information there.	
	IO.5	There was too much information presented that I felt overwhelmed in handling it.	
	IO.6	I am confident that the information presented meets my needs for making decisions.	
Social Media Exhaustion	SME.1	I am exhausted with my social media activity.	(Fu, Li et al. 2020) (Pang, Quan et al. 2023)
	SME.2	Activities that require me to utilize social media leave me feeling exhausted.	
	SME.3	For me, using social media is a hassle.	
	SME.4	After utilizing social media nonstop, I have trouble unwinding.	
	SME.5	I need to attempt focusing in my spare time after utilizing social media.	
Decision Difficulty	DD.1	Making decisions is a complicated activity for me.	(Song, Lee et al. 2019) (Hu and Krishen 2019)
	DD.2	I feel frustrated when making decisions.	
	DD.3	For me, the decision to buy online was very difficult.	
	DD.4	I struggled for a long time to make a decision.	
	DD.5	Regarding this choice, I am confident in my choice.	

Results and Discussion

Outer Model

Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity is the degree of closeness between items or indicators in a latent variable and actually measure the same construct. This test ensures that there is a strong and reliable correlation between all indicators in a variable. Convergent Correlation between item scores generated using SmartPLS software is used to assess the measurement model's validity using indicators reflected by SmartPLS. The size for individual reflective indicators is said to be high if the outer loading value is ≥ 0.7 with the measured construct (i Nurdiant, Prastawa et al. 2017). The measurement is considered to meet the requirements of factor analysis or structural equation modeling when the external loadings of the indicator variables exceed

0.7 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value reaches 0.5 or higher (Uysal, Yorulmaz et al. 2020). Thus, AVE shows how well the indicator measures the volatility of the construct, and the indicator variable contains a lot of information about the elements it measures. Additional details about the findings of the convergent validity test of the research model are shown in Table 2.

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	AVE	Results
<i>Information Overload (X)</i>	IO.1	0.881	0.684	Valid
	IO.2	0.880		
	IO.3	0.822		
	IO.4	0.797		
	IO.5	0.853		
	IO.6	0.715		
<i>Social Media Exhaustion (Z)</i>	SME.1	0.870	0.706	Valid
	SME.2	0.870		
	SME.3	0.870		
	SME.4	0.870		
	SME.5	0.870		
<i>Decision Difficulty (Y)</i>	DD.1	0.844	0.672	Valid
	DD.2	0.858		
	DD.3	0.834		
	DD.4	0.826		
	DD.5	0.727		

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS version 4.0.

The statistics above show that the variables information overload, social media exhaustion, and decision difficulty are measured by indicators that check convergent validity with a value of > 0.7 and show an AVE value of > 0.5 .

Composite reliability (Cr) is a metric that indicates how far the reliability of the variable is, which indicates internal consistency reliability. As a general rule, composite reliability must be at least 0.7. The reliability of all indicators can be determined by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, which can be between 0 and 1. If > 0.7 , then this finding is reliable. Based on Yamin's research in 2021.

Reliability Test

Composite Reliability (Cr) is a measure of reliability that shows how reliable a variable is if the expected reliability value is greater than 0.7, however, it is not an absolute standard in analysis, and Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of reliability that shows how reliable all indicators are, measured on a scale of 0 to 1.

It can be considered dependent if the Alpha value is more than 0.7. Accurate and reliable statistical analysis requires a thorough understanding of both approaches.

Table 4. Value Composite Reliability & Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha	Description
Information Overload	0.912	0.906	Reliable
Social Media Exhaustion	0.897	0.896	Reliable
Decision Difficulty	0.878	0.877	Reliable

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS version 4.0.

The research variable indicator obtained a value of more than 0.7 according to the reliability test's findings. This shows that the indicator is very consistent in measuring the intended construct. Therefore, in the context of this study, it can be said that the indicator is reliable.

Inner Model

One way to describe the interactions between hidden and unobserved factors is through testing the inner model. To find the underlying relationships between these variables and the associated reinforcement, statistical analysis requires a solid understanding of the inner model.

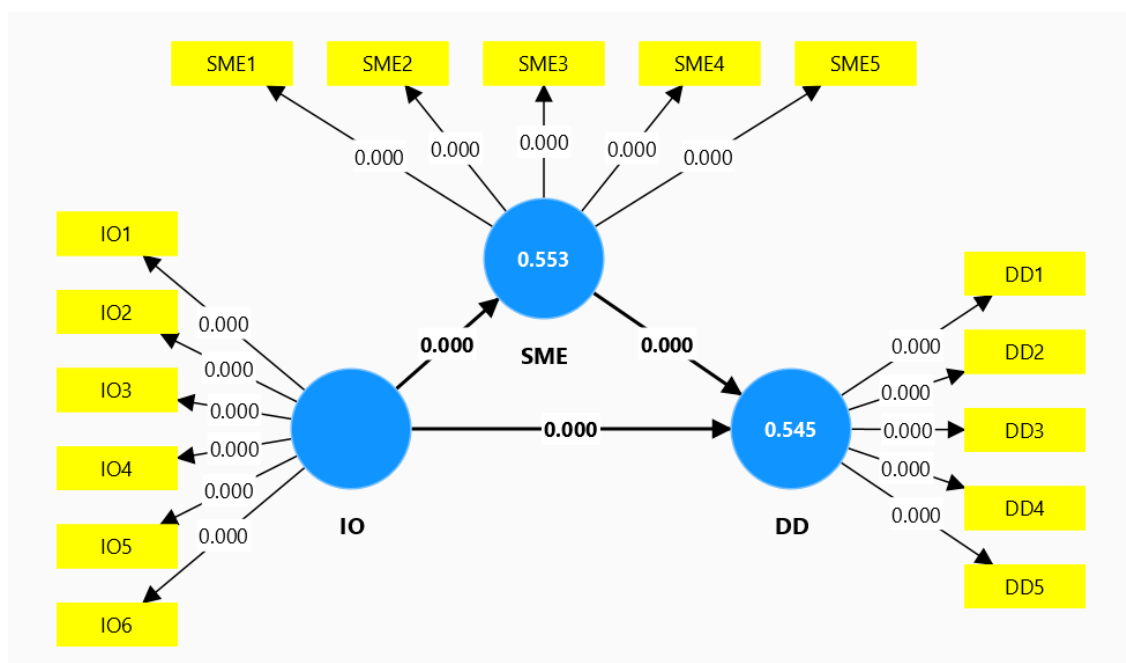


Figure 2. Model Struktural

R-square

R-Square is a test utilized to evaluate the degree to which independent variables affect dependent variables. R-Square is used to evaluate the study model's viability and ascertain the degree to which independent factors affect the dependent varia

bles in this study. After reaching 0.67, R-Square is deemed strong at 0.33, moderate at 0.19, and weak at 0.19.

Table 5. R-square

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted	Description
Social Media Exhaustion	0.545	0.552	Moderate correlation
Decision Difficulty	0.553	0.543	Moderate correlation

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS version 4.0.

According to the table, Social Media Fatigue has a simple R-Square of 0.545 and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.552. Information overload explains 54.5% of social media exhaustion, while other variables not studied explain 45.5%. The R-Square of Decision Difficulty is 0.553, and the Adjusted R-Square is 0.543, indicating a simple correlation. This shows that information overload and Social Media Fatigue explain 55.3% of the variation in Decision Difficulty, while other variables not included in the study explain 44.7%.

Uji Mediasi

Mediation test determines whether the mediator variable can mediate the dependent (bound) and independent (free) variables. The independent variable influences the dependent variable through the mediator variable. Mediation has three basic categories. When the mediating variable is negative and the independent and dependent variables are both positive, non-mediation takes place. Second, when the mediating variable is positive and the independent and dependent variables are negative, complete mediation takes place. When the independent and dependent variables are both positive and the mediating variable is also positive, partial mediation takes place. It is also important to remember that a Specific Indirect Effect P-Value greater than 0.05 implies a negative effect, while a value less than 0.05 indicates a positive effect.

Table 6. Path Coeffisien

Variable	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Information Overload -> Decision difficulty	0.406	0.404	0.067	6.062	0.000
Information Overload -> Social Media Exhaustion	0.744	0.744	0.034	22.070	0.000
Social Media Exhaustion -> Decision Difficulty	0.385	0.387	0.069	5.543	0.000

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS version 4.0.

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effect

Variable	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Information Overload -> Social Media Exhaustion -> Decision Difficulty	0.286	0.289	0.056	5.148	0.000

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS version 4.0.

Based on tables 5 and 6 attached, the conclusion is:

The Effect of Information Overload on Decision Difficulty Mediated by Social Media Exhaustion

Since the P value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, Table 5 makes it evident that there is a positive relationship between Information Overload and Decision Difficulty, as indicated by the route coefficient. Furthermore, as can be observed from Table 6, which details the indirect specific effects, there is a positive relationship between information overload and decision difficulty mediated by social media exhaustion ($P = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, it may be inferred from these results that the impact of Information Overload on Decision Difficulty is mediated by Social Media Exhaustion.

Hypothesis Testing

In hypothesis testing, T-Statistics and P-Value of each path coefficient are used. If P-Value < 0.05 , the hypothesis is accepted. To find out, It is seen in the Path Coefficient that the bootstrapping method yielded technique in the Smart-PLS version 4.0 program.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Analysis
Information Overload -> Decision difficulty	P value = 0.000 T statistics = 6.062 T-table = 1.650 T statistics > T-table
Information Overload -> Social Media Exhaustion	P value = 0.000 T statistics = 22.070 T-table = 1.650 T statistics > T-table
Social Media Exhaustion -> Decision Difficulty	P value = 0.000 T statistics = 5.543 T-table = 1.650 T statistics > T-table

Source: Primary data processed with SmartPLS version 4.0.

Hypothesis 1: The Effect of Information Overload (X) on Decision Difficulty (Y)

Indicating that the T statistics value (6.062) is greater than the T-table value (1.650), and the P value (0.000) is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. This leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}). In this context, it indicates that there is a significant positive influence between the Information Overload variable and Decision difficulty. It can be said that, the higher the level of Information Overload, the higher the level of Decision difficulty significantly.

The more information a person has, the harder it is for them to make judgments. A person's capacity to properly evaluate and absorb information is hampered by information overload, which makes decision-making more complicated. In the context of this study, the level of information overload received by social media users was shown to influence their difficulty in making decisions. This is in line with research Hu & Krishen, (2019) demonstrating that decision difficulty is impacted by information overload.

Hypothesis 2: The Effect of Information Overload (X) on Social Media Exhaustion (Z)

Indicating that the T statistics value (22.070) is greater than the T-table value (1.650), and the P value (0.000) is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. This leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha2). In this context, it indicates that there is a significant positive influence between the Information Overload variable and Social Media Exhaustion. It can be said that, the higher the level of Information Overload, the higher the level of Social Media Exhaustion significantly.

The higher the Information Overload, the higher the level of psychological exhaustion due to social media. The uncontrolled flow of information on digital platforms triggers emotional stress, which ultimately leads to Social Media Exhaustion. In the context of this study, intense exposure to information on social media has been shown to significantly contribute to psychological fatigue in users. This is consistent with findings from studies Sudarsono Putri, Chandra Saputra et al. (2023) dan Fu et al., (2020) This indicates that information overload affects social media exhaustion.

Hypothesis 3: Social Media Exhaustion (Z) on Decision Difficulty (Y)

Indicating that the T statistics value (5.543) is greater than the T-table value (1.650), and the P value (0.000) is less than 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. This leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha3). In this context, it indicates that there is a significant positive influence between the Social Media Exhaustion variable and Decision Difficulty. One may argue that the greater the degree of social media exhaustion, the higher the level of decision difficulty significantly.

Social media fatigue interferes with a person's capacity to concentrate and analyze information efficiently. In the context of this study, social media fatigue has been shown to impair individuals' decision-making abilities. As a result, in addition to high levels of fatigue, decision-making becomes more difficult. This is in line with research Ahmed & Rasul, (2023) which proves that the effects of social media exhaustion include decision difficulty.

Conclusion

This study concludes that information overload has a positive and significant effect on decision difficulty in generation z in Jepara. Information overload increases cognitive load, making it difficult for individuals to filter, understand, and determine decisions effectively. In addition, social media exhaustion has also been shown to be a significant mediating variable in the relationship. This means that information overload not only has a direct impact on decision difficulty, but also has an indirect impact through increasing social media exhaustion, which then worsens an individual's ability to make decisions. The three hypotheses in this study are accepted with strong data support, both from validity testing, reliability, and structural model testing using PLS-SEM. Therefore, it is important for Generation Z to manage the flow of information wisely in order to minimize digital fatigue and improve the quality of decision making.

Suggestion

These findings are important for understanding how Generation Z interacts with information in the digital age. Generation Z needs to consider the effects of social media exhaustion and information overload when designing more effective communication strategies and information delivery for this generation. Therefore, This study highlights the need of taking a prudent approach to information overload to help Generation Z make better decisions amidst the ever-growing flow of information.

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