

Transformation of Digital Consumption Patterns of Millennials and Generation Z: Sustainable Creative Economy Growth in the Age of Technology

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of digital consumption patterns among millennials and Generation Z and its impact on sustainable creative economic growth in the technological era. The shift in consumption behavior from conventional systems to a more interactive and value-based digital ecosystem reflects a fundamental change in how individuals perceive products, experiences, and their digital identity. Through a literature review and conceptual analysis, this study highlights the role of digitalization, social media, and e-commerce platforms in shaping consumption preferences, production patterns, and creative market dynamics. Millennials and Gen Z not only function as passive consumers, but also as active prosumers who contribute to the process of innovation, collaboration, and creative content creation. Findings show that the sustainability of the creative economy is determined by the ability of industry players to integrate principles of sustainability, social responsibility, and digital ethics into their business and marketing strategies. Thus, the transformation of digital consumption is not merely a result of technological advances, but also a social phenomenon that reflects a new awareness of the values of sustainability, authenticity, and inclusivity. This research not only explains how technology changes consumption behavior, but also how sustainability values, digital ethics, and social innovation can be drivers of responsible creative economic growth. By understanding these dimensions, the research results are expected to contribute to the development of policies, creative industry strategies, and digital literacy oriented towards a balance between technological progress and socio-economic sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed social, economic, and cultural structures, presenting a new landscape of life characterized by unlimited connectivity and extraordinary speed of information exchange. Digitalization now functions not only as an instrument of efficiency in production and distribution processes, but has also transformed into a social force that shapes the way humans think, interact, create, and consume. The emergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) has accelerated the integration between the physical and virtual worlds, creating a new economic space that is not only transaction-oriented but also focused on immersive and participatory digital experiences (Ramdhani, 2024; Wibowo, 2023). In the context of the global economy, this change marks a shift in the consumption paradigm from simply fulfilling needs to the search for identity, meaning, and social connection, which is realized through digital activities. This trend is getting stronger as digital technology is no longer limited to the realm of business or communication, but has permeated all aspects of human life. Daily activities such as shopping, working, studying, and even building social relationships are now mediated by digital platforms that enable two-way interactions between producers and consumers (Makkar, 2021). This phenomenon has given rise to new forms of consumption that are oriented towards experience-based consumption, personalization, and social values built in virtual spaces. Modern consumers, especially millennials and Generation Z, no longer view consumption as a passive activity, but as a means of self-expression and participation in a dynamic digital ecosystem. This makes their consumption patterns instant, flexible, and constantly changing in line with technological developments and social trends in the virtual world. Digitalization has not only changed the economic structure, but also revolutionized the way society understands the value and meaning of consumption itself (Sari, 2024; Amory, 2025). If in the industrial era consumption was synonymous with ownership of goods, in the digital era consumption has become a form of participation in a broader social network. This is what makes digital consumption a cultural and economic phenomenon, where the boundaries between producers and consumers are becoming increasingly blurred, giving rise to a generation of individual prosumers who are simultaneously creators and users of value in the digital space. This transformation is not merely a consequence of technological progress, but rather a representation of a shift in the social paradigm towards a more interactive, reflective society based on collectively constructed digital experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Millennials and Generation Z are the two most dominant demographic groups driving the dynamics of digital consumption (Wibowo, 2024; Angreni, 2025; Tirtosetianto, 2024). Both have different characteristics compared to previous generations: they are more adaptive to technological changes, more aware of sustainability issues, and more active in constructing their identity through digital media. In this context, consumption behavior is no longer seen as merely an economic activity, but also as a form of social expression and a symbol

of identity. This generation assesses the value of a product not only based on its function or price, but also on its meaning, narrative, and the suitability of the product's values with their moral principles or lifestyle. This change in behavior has a significant impact on the growth of the creative economy, a sector that plays an important role in creating added value based on ideas, innovation, and creativity. The creative economy is growing rapidly due to its ability to connect individual creativity with digital technology in producing products and services with high cultural and economic value (Escaith, 2022). The emergence of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and creative marketplaces is proof of how consumption and production are now merging in a collaborative digital ecosystem (Ryu, 2024). Millennials and Gen Z play a dual role as consumers and producers of value (prosumers), transforming the traditional economic paradigm into a participatory economy.

This phenomenon also shows a shift in consumption orientation from ownership to experience. The younger generation prefers to participate in ecosystems that provide emotional engagement, social identity, and creative opportunities (Chawla, 2024). This can be seen from the increase in digital content consumption, the sharing economy trend, and the development of technology-based entertainment and arts industries such as streaming platforms, virtual concerts, digital art, and metaverse experiences. Thus, the digital consumption patterns of the younger generation reflect changes in economic values that are oriented towards meaning, sustainability, and innovation. Behind this rapid development, however, lie major challenges to the principle of sustainability. Massive digital consumption can lead to an increase in the carbon footprint of technological activities, exploitation of personal data, and commercialization of local culture without ethical controls. In addition, the orientation towards instant gratification, characterized by short trend cycles, can reduce awareness of the values of creative economic sustainability. Another challenge is the digital divide and inequality in access to technology, which has the potential to create imbalances between creative actors in urban centers and rural areas.

Although many studies have discussed digital consumption behavior, most still focus solely on economic or marketing aspects such as brand loyalty, social media effectiveness, and digital promotion strategies (Haris, 2025). This approach tends to ignore the social and sustainability dimensions of cross-generational digital consumption behavior. In fact, a comprehensive understanding of changes in digital consumption patterns can make a strategic contribution to the direction of a more inclusive and sustainable creative economy. This is where the research gap arises, namely the lack of research linking the digital consumption behavior of millennials and Gen Z with the principles of creative economic sustainability in the global socio-economic context. In addition, many previous studies still view millennials and Gen Z as marketing objects, not as agents of economic transformation. In fact, these two generations have great capacity to create change through content production, social innovation, and active participation in the digital ecosystem. The lack of interdisciplinary studies that combine economic, social, and environmental

perspectives makes this research important. By understanding how the younger generation shapes more sustainable digital consumption patterns, creative economy development strategies can be formulated that prioritize not only growth but also a balance of values and social responsibility.

This study also highlights the role of technology as both a catalyst and a challenge in the transformation of digital consumption. Technology enables faster, more collaborative, and open creative processes, but it also presents the risk of cultural homogenization and algorithm-based economic exploitation. Therefore, a more reflective and ethical approach is needed to understand the impact of digitalization on the consumption patterns of the younger generation. The integration of technology, sustainability, and creativity is key to building a creative economy that is resilient to disruption and relevant to human values. From a conceptual perspective, this study combines the theoretical framework of digital consumer behavior with the principles of creative economic sustainability. This approach seeks to understand consumption not only as an economic act, but also as a social process related to identity, values, and cultural participation. In this context, digital consumption can be seen as a means of social empowerment that can encourage inclusive, participatory, and environmentally conscious creative economic growth. Thus, this study places millennials and Gen Z as the main subjects in technology-based socio-economic transformation. The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis on the interrelationship between cross-generational digital consumption patterns and sustainable creative economic development within a single integrated analytical framework. This study not only explains how technology changes consumption behavior, but also how sustainability values, digital ethics, and social innovation can drive responsible creative economic growth. By understanding these dimensions, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of policies, creative industry strategies, and digital literacy that are oriented towards a balance between technological progress and socio-economic sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literature study approach as the main method to examine the transformation of digital consumption patterns among millennials and Generation Z in relation to sustainable creative economic growth in the technological era. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth analysis of concepts, theories, and previous research results relevant to the issue of cross-generational digital consumption. Through a literature study, this research seeks to identify conceptual trends, research gaps, and the relationship between digitization, consumer behavior, and creative economic sustainability from various theoretical and empirical perspectives. The literature collection process was carried out systematically by searching various academic and policy sources published between 2015 and 2025. The sources used include reputable international and national scientific journals, academic books, research institute reports, and public policy documents published by institutions such as UNCTAD, UNESCO, the World Economic Forum, and the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The databases used in the search process

include Scopus, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, DOAJ, and Google Scholar. Sources were selected selectively to ensure the relevance and credibility of the information obtained in relation to the research focus.

Literature inclusion criteria include scientific works that discuss the digital consumption behavior of millennials and Gen Z, the relationship between digitization and the creative economy, and the role of sustainability, ethics, and social innovation in the digital economy ecosystem. Literature that is not conceptually relevant or is descriptive without a strong theoretical basis is excluded from the analysis process. All collected data were then analyzed using content analysis and thematic synthesis approaches. Content analysis was used to examine recurring terms, concepts, and main ideas in the literature, while thematic synthesis was used to group findings into broad themes such as changes in consumption behavior, the dynamics of the digital generation, implications for the creative economy, and the relevance of sustainability. To ensure the objectivity and depth of the analysis results, this study applied the principle of source and concept triangulation. Each finding is compared with at least two different sources to avoid interpretive bias. In addition, cross-referencing between academic literature and policy reports is carried out so that the results of the study reflect a balance between theory and field practice. This triangulation approach strengthens the validity of the synthesis results and increases the reliability of the conclusions obtained.

Literature analysis was conducted critically and comparatively, taking into account the social, economic, and cultural variations of each source reviewed. A comparative approach was used to identify differences and similarities in digital consumption patterns across regions or social backgrounds, while critical analysis served to assess theoretical assumptions and potential biases in previous studies. Thus, the results of the analysis are not only descriptive, but also evaluative and reflective of the changing paradigm of digital consumption in a dynamic technological era. Theoretically, this study integrates three main frameworks, namely Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), Digital Behavior Model, and Sustainable Creative Economy Framework. This integration aims to understand digital consumption as a multidimensional phenomenon involving economic, social, and ethical aspects. Through this interdisciplinary framework, the study positions digital consumption not only as an economic activity but also as a cultural and social practice that plays a role in shaping sustainability values and the identity of the younger generation in the digital space. In addition to being exploratory, the literature review approach used is also analytical and evaluative. Researchers not only collect information from various sources, but also assess the extent to which existing theories and empirical findings are able to explain the dynamics of digital consumption in the context of an ever-changing creative economy. Technological developments such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and the metaverse are also taken into consideration because they have a significant impact on future consumption behavior and creative business models. This evaluation helps build a more adaptive understanding of changes in the global digital environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A review of the literature shows that the transformation of digital consumption patterns among millennials and Generation Z is not only a direct consequence of technological advances, but also a reflection of more fundamental social, psychological, and cultural changes in the structure of modern society (Kushwaha, 2021). These two generations grew up in a digital environment that shaped their worldview, where the boundaries between physical and virtual spaces are increasingly blurred, and social identity is constructed through digital representation. For them, consumption is no longer merely a utilitarian economic activity, but rather a manifestation of the process of self-identity construction, an expression of personal values, and an effort to build a social image within the online community. They do not only buy products to fulfill functional needs, but also to assert their social position, ethical values, and lifestyle preferences that reflect their uniqueness and personal aspirations. In this context, digital technology functions as a social and cultural medium that connects the values, lifestyles, and aspirations of the younger generation with participatory and interactive consumption behaviors. Through social media platforms, e-commerce, and virtual communities, millennials and Gen Z have the space to engage in the process of meaning production, where they can provide feedback, participate in digital campaigns, and even help shape brand narratives through user-generated content and collaborative activities (Ifadhila, 2024). This phenomenon shows that digital consumption has shifted to a form of social communication and cultural participation that emphasizes emotional connections, authenticity, and sustainability values as new dimensions in contemporary consumption behavior.

Digital literacy and social awareness play a significant role in shaping the consumption orientation of the younger generation (Rullah, 2025; Fikri, 2025; Putrayasa, 2024). The higher their ability to understand digital information and assess the social and environmental impact of a product, the greater their tendency to choose ethical, sustainable consumption that is in line with the principles of social responsibility. Young consumers are now more critical of business practices that are not transparent, environmentally friendly, or attentive to community welfare. They prioritize brands that not only offer aesthetic and functional value, but also moral and sustainability values that are consistent with their collective awareness of the future of the earth and social justice. The changing digital consumption patterns of millennials and Gen Z cannot be understood solely through an economic lens, but must be seen as part of a broader cultural evolution and transformation of social consciousness (Sardanelli, 2025). Digitalization has transformed consumption into an arena for reflection on values and social participation, where every purchasing decision has dimensions of identity, ethics, and sustainability. This phenomenon has important implications for creative industry players and policymakers, as understanding the values of this generation is key to developing marketing strategies, product innovations, and business models that are relevant, inclusive, and sustainable in the digital economy era.

The transformation of digital consumption behavior is also marked by a significant paradigm shift, from passive consumption to active participation in the value creation process (Aini, 2024; Bamasputri, 2025). Millennials and Generation Z are no longer positioned as market objects that receive products unilaterally, but rather as creative subjects who help determine the direction, meaning, and form of the digital products and services they use. This phenomenon has given rise to the concept of presumption, a term that combines the roles of producer and consumer in a single entity. In this context, millennials and Gen Z not only consume digital content such as music, videos, or artwork, but also actively create, modify, and redistribute these works on various digital platforms. This activity demonstrates a fundamental shift in the relationship between users and economic value, where value is no longer entirely determined by companies, but by social interactions and collective creativity that emerge in the digital space. This phenomenon of prosumption has led to the emergence of what is known as the community-driven economy, an economic model that relies on participation, collaboration, and social contribution as the primary sources of value creation (Ohnishi, 2024). In this ecosystem, digital communities serve as dynamic spaces for interaction, where ideas, cultures, and innovations meet and form new economic values through sharing economy, collaborative creation, and crowdsourcing mechanisms (Pouri, 2021). For example, platforms such as YouTube and TikTok are concrete examples of how individuals can convert creativity into social and economic capital, while online communities serve as the main catalyst for the dissemination of value and social recognition. The boundaries between producers and consumers are becoming increasingly blurred, creating more horizontal and inclusive economic relationships, where the power to distribute information and value is no longer monopolized by large institutions but is spread among millions of active users. This shift has not only economic implications but also cultural and ethical ones.

Through active participation in value creation, the younger generation is developing a new form of social capital rooted in collaboration, empathy, and empowerment. They view consumption not merely as an individual act, but as a contribution to a larger ecosystem, whether in the form of support for local creators, advocacy for social issues, or sustainability campaigns. Thus, digital consumption becomes a meaningful activity, where every act of sharing or creating can be seen as an expression of solidarity and participation in building a more humane economic order (Achmad, 2022). This phenomenon marks a transition towards a creative economy that no longer relies solely on material capital, but also on the power of community, social networks, and cross-border collaboration. In a broader context, prosumption and community-based economic patterns open up opportunities for the creation of a more adaptive, participatory, and sustainable creative economic growth model. Value is no longer produced linearly from companies to markets, but is formed circularly through social interaction, user innovation, and digital community participation. This is what makes the transformation of digital consumption behavior an important pillar in the evolution of the future economy, where creativity and

collaboration become key resources that not only generate economic profits, but also strengthen social, ethical, and sustainability values.

The analysis shows that digitization has encouraged the emergence of new platform-based creative economy models, which fundamentally change how value is created, distributed, and monetized in the technological era (Towse, 2022). This platform economy operates through a digital ecosystem that enables direct interaction between producers, consumers, and communities in a globally connected space (Howson, 2022). Platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, Spotify, Shopee, and even digital art marketplaces such as OpenSea, have become new arenas for individuals to express their creativity, build personal branding, and develop digital entrepreneurship independently. With skills, creativity, and connectivity as their capital, millennials and Gen Z are able to transcend geographical and social boundaries to create new sources of income based on innovation, interaction, and community participation. Behind these great opportunities, this transformation also presents complex structural challenges. Platform-based economic models inherently create new inequalities in the form of “algorithmic inequality,” where visibility, access, and economic opportunities are often determined by opaque algorithmic systems that tend to favor a handful of users with mass appeal. In addition, the exploitation of personal data as an economic commodity raises serious ethical dilemmas, as users are often not fully aware of how their data is being used for commercial purposes. Dependence on digital infrastructure monopolized by global corporations such as Meta, Google, or ByteDance also highlights the paradox between the independence of creators and the dominance of centralized digital capitalism. This phenomenon has the potential to suppress content diversity and weaken creative independence, especially for small economic actors who do not have adequate technological resources. In this context, the role of the younger generation is very important as agents of balance between economic needs, social responsibility, and digital ethics.

Millennials and Gen Z are strategically positioned as both users and creators of technology that can drive change towards a more inclusive and equitable digital ecosystem (Kshirsagar, 2025). They are required to utilize technology not only as an economic production tool, but also as a medium for social empowerment and cultural preservation. By promoting the principles of sustainability, transparency, and digital empathy, this generation can be a catalyst in building a new form of sustainable creative economy that values humanity and maintains a balance between innovation and ethical responsibility. The adaptation of the younger generation to the platform ecosystem requires an increase in digital literacy capacity covering three main dimensions: technological literacy, ethical literacy, and cultural literacy. Technological literacy enables them to understand algorithmic logic and utilize data strategically; ethical literacy guides them in avoiding manipulative practices and irresponsible consumption; while cultural literacy ensures that the digitization process does not erode local values, social identity, and community wisdom. These three dimensions form an important foundation for creating a digital generation that is not only economically competitive, but also morally reflective

and socially contributive. The platform-based creative economy is not merely a new economic phenomenon, but also an arena for shifts in values and power within the digital society (Anjaningrum, 2023). It opens up tremendous opportunities for the democratization of creativity, but at the same time demands critical awareness of the structures of domination hidden behind the technological system. Millennials and Gen Z, as the main actors in this ecosystem, face a historical responsibility to ensure that digital progress does not sacrifice the principles of humanity, sustainability, and social justice that form the foundation of a truly inclusive creative economy of the future.

The digital consumption patterns of millennials and Gen Z are greatly influenced by psychological and emotional values formed through intensive interaction with social media (Susiati, 2024). In a hyperreal and globally connected digital space, consumption is no longer merely understood as an economic activity, but as a manifestation of identity, emotions, and social relations. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) have become symbolic arenas where individuals negotiate their self-image, social status, and sense of connection with online communities (Sahraz, 2025; Salsabila, 2025). Thus, digital consumption has become part of the self-branding process, where individuals consciously curate lifestyle choices, products, and activities to build their desired self-image in the digital public sphere. Digital platforms provide ample space for selective, strategic, and performative self-presentation. Consumption decisions, whether in the form of product purchases, service usage, or participation in digital trends, are often closely related to the ideal image that individuals wish to construct. This phenomenon has given rise to the concept of social validation consumption, which is consumption behavior driven by the need to gain social recognition through digital signs such as “likes,” “shares,” and “followers.” In this context, consumption becomes a symbolic medium for affirming one's existence and social affiliation in a competitive and highly visual digital society. The drive to be recognized and accepted positions consumption as a form of social communication that is rich in meaning, while also showing how social and psychological capital is now being capitalized on through digital platforms. Recent literature also shows the emergence of a counter-movement among younger generations who are beginning to question excessive consumer culture and its impact on environmental sustainability and social welfare. Millennials and Gen Z are increasingly aware that excessive consumption not only contributes to the ecological crisis, but also causes psychological pressure due to image competition on social media (Pallegrino, 2024). This awareness has given rise to a new trend towards ethical and sustainable consumption, where individuals are more selective in choosing products based on moral values, production origins, and social and environmental impacts. This trend is reflected in the increasing support for local products, small businesses, and brands with social narratives, which are considered more authentic and meaningful than mass products that merely offer symbolic status.

From a creative economy perspective, literature findings show that young people, especially millennials and Gen Z, have become the main drivers of growth in innovation and creativity-based industries in the digital age

(Abdullah, 2024; Sari, 2023; Nurul'ain, 2025). They not only play a role as consumers of global trends, but also as producers of ideas, innovators, and entrepreneurs who create economic value through the integration of creativity, technology, and local culture. This generation has an adaptive advantage to technological changes, high digital literacy skills, and a tendency to think across disciplines, enabling them to combine art, design, technology, and entrepreneurship in the form of unique products and services. This mindset encourages the emergence of a dynamic, collaborative, and value-based digital creative economy ecosystem, where innovation is not only seen as a commercial product but also as a form of social expression and contribution to sustainable development. The contribution of the younger generation is evident in the increasing number of digital creative entrepreneurs, independent designers, content creators, and artists who utilize digital platforms to expand their markets and build global networks. This phenomenon shows that digitalization has democratized access to production and distribution resources, enabling individuals to build businesses with relatively low creative and social capital. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Spotify, YouTube, and e-commerce sites such as Shopee and Tokopedia have become a new economic infrastructure that facilitates the exchange of creative value between individuals and communities. In this context, creativity is no longer exclusive, but has become an economic asset that can be managed inclusively through cross-sector and cross-cultural collaboration.

In Indonesia, the contribution of the younger generation to creative economic growth can be seen in the rapid development of a number of leading sub-sectors, such as fashion, culinary arts, crafts, design, music, film, and animation. The digitization of production and distribution processes has enabled local players to penetrate international markets without going through traditional intermediaries, while strengthening the position of Indonesian products on the global stage (Wahyudin, 2025). For example, the emergence of local fashion brands based on sustainability, culinary brands with a digital storytelling approach, and animations by Indonesian artists that have penetrated international festivals are proof that creativity combined with technology can be a strategy for national economic independence. The trend of creative collaboration between actors across subsectors, such as collaborations between musicians and local brands, or between designers and digital communities, further enriches Indonesia's creative economy structure. This dynamic growth is not without challenges that must be anticipated in order to be sustainable. One of these is the need for a strong supporting ecosystem, including equitable digital infrastructure, adaptive public policies, and an education system that fosters creativity and entrepreneurship from an early age. The issue of intellectual property rights (IPR) protection is crucial in maintaining the sustainability of innovation in the digital era (Lazuardi, 2024; Desiroto, 2024; Sinaga, 2023). Without adequate protection systems, creative works are at risk of plagiarism, algorithmic exploitation, and loss of economic value due to uncontrolled digital distribution.

Strengthening the digital creative economy requires comprehensive digital literacy, not only in technical aspects, but also in ethics, social and cultural aspects (Mubarok, 2024). The younger generation needs to be equipped with an understanding of social responsibility in creativity, such as awareness of environmental sustainability, gender inclusiveness, and preservation of cultural heritage. In this case, the creative economy should not be trapped in a purely capitalistic logic, but must become a vehicle for social transformation that strengthens social cohesion and expands access to prosperity. The involvement of the government, the private sector, educational institutions, and creative communities is key to creating a collaborative ecosystem that supports sustainable innovation. Programs such as startup incubators, creative hubs, and digital entrepreneurship training need to be expanded in order to accommodate the enormous potential of the younger generation in developing new ideas. A public-private collaborative approach can also strengthen connectivity between actors in the creative economy value chain, creating synergy between digital innovation and inclusive socio-economic development. It can be concluded that millennials and Gen Z are not only users of technology, but also architects of the future of the creative economy based on the values of sustainability and social justice. Their success in utilizing technology to create new economic opportunities is an indicator of the emergence of a new development paradigm, in which creativity, culture, and digitalization converge to form a more humane, inclusive, and resilient economic system in the face of global change. Conceptually, changes in the digital consumption patterns of millennials and Gen Z are also related to Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), which emphasizes that consumption is a cultural phenomenon that reflects social values and meanings. Within this framework, younger generations use digital consumption to build social relationships, negotiate status, and fight for certain values such as sustainability, social justice, and authenticity. These findings indicate that digital consumption behavior cannot be explained solely through economic variables such as price or utility, but must also be understood through the symbolic and affective dimensions that accompany it. Therefore, the success of the creative industry in attracting the attention of the younger generation depends on its ability to construct narratives that are authentic, ethical, and in line with the social values they hold.

A literature review also reveals fundamental challenges in realizing a sustainable creative economy amid the rapid pace of digitalization. Issues such as digital fatigue, content overproduction, exploitation of creative labor, and degradation of local culture are of primary concern (Abudaqa, 2025). Without fair and ethical digital governance, the growth of the creative economy risks creating new inequalities among industry players. Strengthening regulations, algorithmic transparency, and digital education are important prerequisites for building an inclusive and resilient creative economy ecosystem. On the other hand, collaboration between the government, the private sector, and the creative community is needed to ensure that digital innovation remains committed to social and environmental sustainability. In the context of sustainability, the digital consumption behavior of the younger generation shows positive potential

as agents of social change (Ardila, 2025; Fikri, 2025; Ubaidullah, 2025). They are increasingly aware of environmental issues, copyright, and brand social responsibility. The digital minimalism, ethical consumption, and slow fashion movements are tangible expressions of this new awareness in more reflective and responsible digital consumption practices. This phenomenon confirms that millennials and Gen Z are not only technology users but also shapers of a new direction in global consumption ethics. This awareness can serve as an important foundation for creative economic growth that is not only profit-oriented, but also focused on social welfare and ecological sustainability.

The results of the literature synthesis show that the key to the sustainability of the creative economy in the digital era lies in the ability of industry players to integrate technological innovation, cultural values, and sustainability principles into their business models (Gurgu, 2024). Digital technology should be seen as a means of expanding inclusiveness, not merely a tool for commercialization. By placing human values and sustainability at the center of innovation, the creative economy can become a sector that is adaptive to disruption while also providing a positive social impact. The transformation of digital consumption among the younger generation, if directed appropriately, has great potential to become a driving force for a fair, empowered, and forward-looking economy (Zeng, 2025). Overall, the results and discussion of this literature study show that strengthening the role of millennials and Gen Z in the digital ecosystem is not only related to adapting to technology, but also a long-term social investment in shaping ethical and sustainable consumption patterns. The novelty of this research lies in emphasizing the importance of synergy between technological approaches and sustainability values in understanding cross-generational digital consumption behavior. By prioritizing the integration of innovation, ethics, and social responsibility, the transformation of digital consumption can become a major driver of creative economic growth that is not only productive, but also socially and ecologically meaningful.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study confirms that the transformation of digital consumption patterns among millennials and Generation Z is a complex phenomenon driven not only by technological advances, but also by changes in values, identity, and social awareness among young people regarding sustainability and moral responsibility. Their consumption behavior has shifted from a material orientation to a meaning orientation, from ownership to experience, and from passive consumption to active participation in the digital ecosystem. In this context, millennials and Gen Z play a role not only as consumers but also as prosumers who help create economic, cultural, and social value through creative and collaborative digital activities. This phenomenon proves that digital consumption can be a transformative force that builds new economic structures based on creativity, innovation, and social participation.

The findings of this literature study also show that the sustainability of the creative economy in the technological era is highly dependent on the ability of industry players, policymakers, and the digital community to integrate the principles of sustainability, ethics, and inclusivity into every aspect of digital

ecosystem development. Technology must be positioned as a means of empowerment, not merely a tool for commercialization. The use of social media, e-commerce platforms, and other digital systems needs to be directed towards strengthening human values, preserving local culture, and raising environmental awareness. This is in line with the new paradigm of a sustainable creative economy that emphasizes a balance between innovation and social responsibility. This study identifies structural challenges that need to be addressed, such as the digital divide, algorithmic exploitation, and excessive commercialization, which have the potential to undermine sustainability values in the creative industry. Therefore, adaptive and collaborative policies between the government, private sector, academia, and creative communities are needed to build fair, transparent, and participatory digital governance. Digital literacy education and technological ethics awareness are also key factors in shaping smart and responsible consumption behavior, especially for the younger generation growing up in an era of hyper-connectivity.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research is needed on the topic of Transformation of Digital Consumption Patterns of Millennials and Generation Z: Sustainable Creative Economy Growth in the Age of Technology in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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