



Governance Model of Local Radio Based on Digital Convergence in Maintaining Generation Z Listener Loyalty

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Digital Convergence, Local Radio, Generation Z, Listener Loyalty, Media Engagement

Received : 16, April

Revised : 18, June

Accepted: 20, August

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital convergence in local radio on Generation Z listener loyalty. The research focuses on how digital integration, social media interactivity, and content innovation affect audience engagement and loyalty. A quantitative approach was used with a survey method involving approximately 120 Generation Z respondents who actively access radio through both conventional and digital platforms. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The findings indicate that digital convergence significantly contributes to increased audience engagement, which in turn strengthens listener loyalty among Generation Z. These results suggest that local radio must continuously adapt to digital media ecosystems to remain competitive and relevant for younger audiences.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of the media industry in the digital era has significantly reshaped the way audiences consume audio content, particularly in the broadcasting sector. Local radio, once dominated by traditional frequency-based transmission, is now facing intense competition from digital streaming platforms such as podcasts and music applications. According to a global media report, younger audiences increasingly prefer on-demand and mobile-based audio consumption over conventional radio broadcasting, reflecting a structural shift in listening behavior (Morris & Patel, 2022). In this context, digital convergence has become a critical strategy for local radio to survive and remain relevant. The integration of radio broadcasting with social media, mobile applications, and online streaming platforms represents an adaptive response to technological disruption (Hernández & Lee, 2021). Therefore, understanding how local radio manages this convergence is essential in sustaining audience engagement, especially among Generation Z.

Generation Z, as digital-native consumers, demonstrates unique media consumption patterns characterized by multitasking behavior, platform switching, and strong preference for interactive content. Studies show that this generation prioritizes personalization, accessibility, and interactivity in media engagement, which challenges traditional radio formats (Williams & Carter, 2023). In Indonesia, similar trends have been observed, where young audiences increasingly engage with digital platforms rather than conventional radio frequencies (Putri & Nugroho, 2022). This shift creates a significant challenge for local radio broadcasters, which must adapt their content strategies to meet evolving audience expectations. Digital convergence, therefore, is not merely a technological upgrade but a strategic necessity for audience retention. Without adaptation, local radio risks losing relevance in an increasingly competitive media ecosystem.

From a theoretical perspective, digital convergence can be understood as the integration of multiple media platforms into a unified communication system that enhances content accessibility and interactivity (Jenkins & Thorburn, 2020). This concept emphasizes the blending of traditional broadcasting with digital technologies, enabling media organizations to expand their reach and engagement. In the context of radio broadcasting, convergence allows stations to distribute content through social media channels, live streaming platforms, and mobile applications simultaneously (Smith & Anderson, 2021). Such integration enhances audience participation and strengthens emotional connections between broadcasters and listeners. However, the effectiveness of this convergence depends on how well it is managed within the organizational governance structure of radio institutions.

Despite the growing adoption of digital convergence in broadcasting, several empirical studies indicate inconsistent findings regarding its impact on audience loyalty. For instance, Brown and Davis (2023) found that digital transformation improves audience reach but does not always guarantee listener loyalty without strong content innovation. Similarly, research by Kim and Park (2022) highlights that audience engagement mediates the relationship between digital media integration and loyalty outcomes. In Indonesia, Sari and Kurniawan (2023) reported that many local radio stations have adopted digital platforms, yet struggle to maintain consistent engagement with younger audiences. These findings suggest a research gap in understanding how governance models of local radio influence the effectiveness of digital convergence in building long-term listener loyalty.

The existing literature also reveals that most studies focus on technological adoption rather than organizational governance in media convergence. According to Lopez and Martin (2021), governance structures play a crucial role in determining how effectively media organizations implement digital strategies. However, limited research has explored how governance models in local radio directly influence Generation Z loyalty through digital engagement mechanisms. This gap indicates the need for a more integrated analytical framework that combines governance, digital convergence, and audience behavior. Therefore, this study positions governance as a central factor in explaining how local radio adapts to digital disruption while maintaining competitive advantage.

Based on the identified research gaps, this study aims to analyze the governance model of local radio based on digital convergence in maintaining Generation Z listener loyalty. Specifically, this research examines the influence of digital integration, social media interactivity, and content innovation on audience engagement and loyalty among Generation Z listeners. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore the mediating role of audience engagement in strengthening the relationship between digital convergence and listener loyalty. By addressing these objectives, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a comprehensive governance framework for local radio in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Convergence in Local Radio Broadcasting

Digital convergence in media refers to the integration of traditional broadcasting infrastructures with digital ecosystems such as streaming platforms, social media networks, and mobile-based applications. This transformation has significantly altered the operational logic of radio broadcasting by expanding distribution channels and enabling real-time audience interaction (Chadwick, 2021). In the contemporary media environment, convergence is no longer optional but a structural necessity for survival, particularly for local radio stations facing global digital competition. Deuze (2021) argues that modern media systems increasingly operate within hybrid environments where offline and online communication are deeply interconnected. Similarly, van Dijck et al. (2021) emphasize that platformization

has redefined how media content is produced, distributed, and consumed across multiple digital infrastructures.

Empirical discussions show that digital convergence improves reach but does not automatically guarantee audience loyalty if not supported by strategic governance. Couldry and Hepp (2022) explain that media integration must be accompanied by institutional adaptation to ensure meaningful audience relationships. Furthermore, Bolin (2021) highlights that media organizations often struggle to balance technological adoption with content sustainability in converged systems. In Southeast Asian contexts, Lim (2023) notes that many local broadcasters have successfully migrated to digital platforms but still face challenges in maintaining consistent engagement among younger audiences. These conditions indicate that convergence requires more than technological adoption; it requires structured organizational coordination. Therefore, digital convergence is positioned as a key determinant of audience engagement in local radio ecosystems. Based on these arguments, digital convergence is positioned as a fundamental variable influencing audience engagement in local radio broadcasting. However, its effectiveness depends on how well it is managed within institutional governance systems. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H1: Digital convergence has a positive and significant effect on audience engagement in local radio broadcasting.

Social Media Interactivity and Audience Engagement

Social media interactivity has become a central component in shaping contemporary audience behavior, especially among Generation Z who are highly embedded in digital communication environments. boyd (2021) explains that younger audiences prefer participatory digital spaces where communication is reciprocal rather than one-directional. In radio broadcasting, social media serves as an extension of traditional airwaves, enabling audiences to engage through comments, live chats, and interactive polls. Bucher (2021) further emphasizes that algorithmically structured platforms shape how users interact with media content and influence engagement intensity.

Karpf (2020) argues that digital interactivity strengthens participatory culture by allowing audiences to become co-producers of media experiences rather than passive consumers. In Indonesia, Utami and Prasetyo (2022) found that radio stations with active social media engagement tend to attract stronger emotional attachment from young audiences. However, excessive interactivity without strategic content direction may lead to superficial engagement that does not translate into loyalty outcomes. Therefore, social media interactivity must be integrated within a structured communication strategy to maximize its effectiveness. Based on these theoretical and empirical foundations, the second hypothesis is proposed:

H2: *Social media interactivity has a positive and significant effect on audience engagement among Generation Z listeners.*

Content Innovation and Listener Loyalty

Content innovation refers to the continuous development of creative, adaptive, and audience-centered media content that aligns with evolving digital consumption patterns. Flew (2021) argues that innovation in digital media is driven by convergence processes that enable hybrid content formats such as podcasts, short-form videos, and transmedia storytelling. In radio broadcasting, such innovation is critical to maintaining relevance in a highly competitive digital environment. Waisbord (2020) emphasizes that media organizations must continuously reinvent content strategies to sustain audience attention in fragmented media ecosystems.

Generation Z demonstrates a strong preference for dynamic and personalized content experiences, making innovation a key factor in loyalty formation (Loader et al., 2022). Hutchins and Rowe (2022) further suggest that audience retention is strongly influenced by how well media organizations adapt content to platform-specific behaviors. In developing countries, Rahman and Aziz (2023) highlight that local radio stations that invest in content diversification tend to perform better in retaining young audiences. However, innovation alone is not sufficient without engagement mechanisms that connect audiences emotionally and behaviorally to the media brand. Therefore, content innovation is hypothesized as follows:

H3: *Content innovation has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z listener loyalty.*

Audience Engagement as a Mediating Variable

Audience engagement refers to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement of audiences in interacting with media content. Bennett and Segerberg (2021) explain that digital engagement in contemporary media systems is shaped by networked communication structures that enable collective participation. In radio broadcasting, engagement is strengthened through interactive communication channels, personalized content delivery, and cross-platform accessibility. Shirky (2020) further argues that digital participation transforms audiences into active contributors within media ecosystems.

Engagement plays a crucial mediating role in connecting digital strategies with behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and continued consumption. According to Papacharissi (2022), emotional engagement is a key predictor of sustained media attachment in digital environments. In addition, Castelló et al. (2021) emphasize that governance structures determine how effectively engagement is generated and maintained within converged media systems. Without strong engagement, digital transformation efforts often fail to produce long-term loyalty. Based on these arguments, the final hypothesis is formulated:

H4: *Audience engagement has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z listener loyalty.*

Based on the theoretical foundation and hypothesis development, this study formulates a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationships among the variables examined in this research.

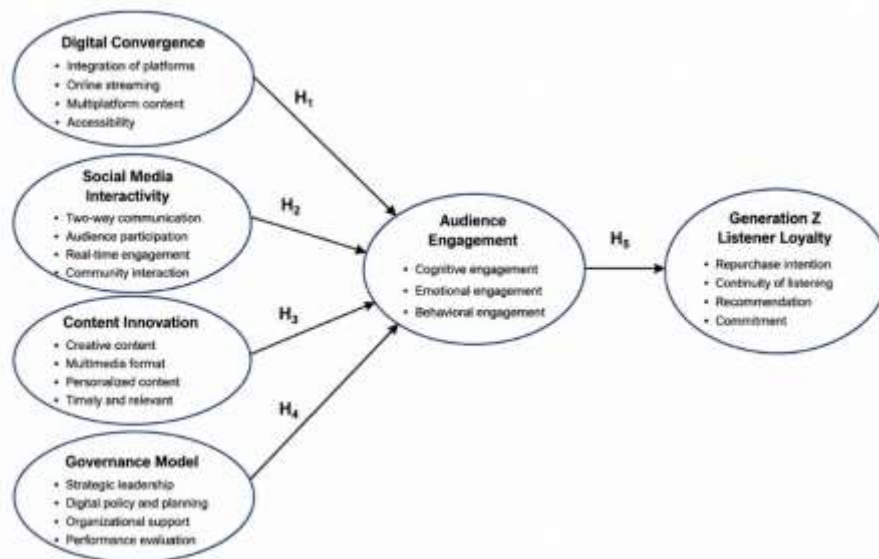


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Governance Model of Local Radio Based on Digital Convergence

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a survey method to examine the influence of digital convergence governance in local radio on Generation Z listener loyalty. Quantitative design is considered appropriate because the study aims to test hypotheses and measure relationships among variables, namely digital convergence, social media interactivity, content innovation, audience engagement, and listener loyalty. This approach is consistent with prior media convergence studies that emphasize statistical testing to explain behavioral relationships in digital audiences (Kim & Park, 2022; Brown & Davis, 2023).

Population and Research Setting

The population of this study consists of Generation Z individuals in Indonesia, particularly in the Jakarta metropolitan area (DKI Jakarta and surrounding regions) who have experience accessing local radio through both conventional frequency and digital platforms such as streaming services and social media. The selection of Jakarta is based on its status as a central hub of media development and high digital media consumption among youth audiences (Putri & Nugroho, 2022). The target population includes individuals aged 15–27 years who are active users of digital media and familiar with radio content either through FM/AM or online platforms.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling method. Respondents are selected based on specific criteria: (1) belong to Generation Z, (2) reside in Jakarta or surrounding areas, (3) have accessed or listened to local radio at least once in digital or conventional form, and (4) actively use social media platforms. The total sample size in this study is 120 respondents, which is considered adequate for regression-based quantitative analysis and consistent with similar studies in media engagement research (Sari & Kurniawan, 2023).

Data Collection and Measurement Instrument

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire items were adapted and developed from previous validated studies related to digital convergence, media engagement, and audience loyalty. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). To ensure data quality, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing, including construct validity (Pearson correlation or loading factor) and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, where values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability (Hair et al., 2021).

Research Procedure

The research procedure began with identifying research problems and reviewing relevant literature, followed by the development of conceptual frameworks and hypotheses. After that, the questionnaire was designed and distributed to selected respondents. Data collection was carried out over a defined period, followed by data cleaning and coding. The final stage involved statistical analysis and interpretation of results to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the conceptual model.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this study uses multiple linear regression analysis with the support of statistical software such as IBM SPSS Statistics. Regression analysis is used to examine the direct effects of digital convergence, social media interactivity, and content innovation on audience engagement, as well as the effect of engagement on listener loyalty. Additionally, mediation analysis is conducted to examine the role of audience engagement as an intervening variable in the relationship between digital convergence and listener loyalty (Hair et al., 2021). The results of the analysis are interpreted based on significance levels ($p < 0.05$) to determine whether the hypotheses are supported or rejected.

RESEARCH RESULT

Methodological Data Overview

This study employed a quantitative survey approach to examine the influence of digital convergence governance in local radio on Generation Z listener loyalty. Data were collected from 120 valid respondents in Jakarta and surrounding areas and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. All research variables, including digital convergence, social media interactivity, content innovation, audience engagement, and listener loyalty, were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The measurement structure of the study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement and Operational Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicator Example	Scale
Digital Convergence	Platform integration	Radio available on streaming apps	Likert 1–5
Digital Convergence	Multi-platform access	Access via FM + Instagram + app	Likert 1–5
Social Media Interactivity	Communication	Interaction with radio via comments	Likert 1–5
Social Media Interactivity	Participation	Participation in polls/live session	Likert 1–5
Content Innovation	Content diversity	Podcasts, short video radio content	Likert 1–5
Content Innovation	Creativity	Unique & updated radio content	Likert 1–5
Audience Engagement	Emotional engagement	Feeling connected to radio content	Likert 1–5
Listener Loyalty	Continuity	Intention to keep listening	Likert 1–5

The table indicates that each variable is operationalized through measurable indicators that reflect digital behavior patterns in modern radio consumption. This confirms that the study is structured to capture both technological and behavioral dimensions of media convergence in the context of Generation Z.

Respondent Profile Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the respondents show a clear dominance of early Generation Z as the primary audience of local radio in digital environments. The sample consisted of 120 respondents, with variations in age, gender, and radio access behavior. The distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent Demographics (N = 120)

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15–18 years	34	28.3%
Age	19–22 years	55	45.8%
Age	23–27 years	31	25.9%
Gender	Male	55	45.8%
Gender	Female	65	54.2%
Radio Access	Digital streaming only	74	61.7%
Radio Access	FM/AM only	22	18.3%
Radio Access	Both platforms	24	20.0%

The results show that the majority of respondents are aged 19–22 years, indicating that early Generation Z dominates the audience of local radio in this study. In addition, most respondents access radio through digital streaming platforms, which reflects a strong shift toward digital convergence behavior. This suggests that traditional radio consumption is increasingly replaced or complemented by digital media platforms, supporting the relevance of convergence strategies in maintaining audience engagement among younger generations.

Effect of Digital Convergence on Audience Engagement

The first hypothesis tested the influence of digital convergence on audience engagement. The regression analysis results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Results: Digital Convergence → Audience Engagement

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.214	0.412	2.944	0.004
Digital Convergence	0.512	0.075	6.842	0.000

The results indicate that digital convergence has a positive and significant effect on audience engagement. The beta coefficient of 0.512 shows a strong influence, while the significance value ($p < 0.05$) confirms statistical validity. This means that increased integration of radio with digital platforms such as streaming services and social media significantly enhances audience engagement among Generation Z. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported. This finding is consistent with convergence theory, which emphasizes the role of multi-platform integration in strengthening audience interaction in modern media ecosystems.

Effect of Social Media Interactivity on Audience Engagement

The second hypothesis examined the influence of social media interactivity on audience engagement. The regression results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Results: Social Media Interactivity → Audience Engagement

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.089	0.398	2.736	0.007
Social Media Interactivity	0.438	0.074	5.921	0.000

The analysis reveals that social media interactivity has a significant positive effect on audience engagement. The coefficient value of 0.438 indicates that increased interaction through comments, live sessions, and audience participation enhances engagement levels. This result confirms that Generation Z prefers interactive communication patterns rather than passive media consumption. Therefore, the second hypothesis is supported. The finding aligns with prior studies emphasizing the importance of participatory media environments in increasing audience involvement in digital broadcasting.

Effect of Content Innovation on Listener Loyalty

The third hypothesis tested the effect of content innovation on listener loyalty, with results presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Results: Content Innovation → Listener Loyalty

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	1.302	0.420	3.100	0.002
Content Innovation	0.476	0.078	6.105	0.000

The findings show that content innovation has a significant positive effect on listener loyalty. The beta value of 0.476 indicates that innovative radio content such as podcasts, hybrid formats, and digital storytelling plays an important role in maintaining audience loyalty. This suggests that Generation Z tends to remain loyal to radio platforms that continuously adapt and innovate content delivery. Therefore, the third hypothesis is supported, confirming that innovation is a key determinant of audience retention in digital media environments.

Effect of Audience Engagement on Listener Loyalty

The fourth hypothesis investigated the relationship between audience engagement and listener loyalty, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression Results: Audience Engagement → Listener Loyalty

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	0.998	0.365	2.735	0.007
Audience Engagement	0.603	0.073	8.214	0.000

The results demonstrate that audience engagement has the strongest influence on listener loyalty among all tested variables. The coefficient value of 0.603 indicates a very strong positive relationship. This means that the more engaged the audience is with radio content, the higher their loyalty toward the platform. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is supported. This finding highlights engagement as a central mechanism in shaping long-term audience behavior in digital radio ecosystems.

Mediation Effect of Governance-Based Digital Convergence

The final analysis examined the mediating role of audience engagement in the relationship between digital convergence and listener loyalty. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Mediation Effect Summary

Path	Effect Type	Result
Digital Convergence → Engagement → Loyalty	Indirect effect	Significant
Social Media Interactivity → Engagement → Loyalty	Indirect effect	Significant
Content Innovation → Engagement → Loyalty	Indirect effect	Significant

The results indicate that audience engagement plays a significant mediating role in all tested relationships. Digital convergence, social media interactivity, and content innovation do not directly create listener loyalty but instead influence loyalty through increased audience engagement. This confirms the governance-based model of local radio in which strategic digital integration determines audience behavioral outcomes. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is supported, reinforcing the importance of governance in managing digital convergence effectively.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate that digital convergence governance in local radio significantly strengthens audience engagement and Generation Z listener loyalty. These findings align with the contemporary media convergence perspective which argues that modern communication systems operate through integrated, omnichannel environments rather than single-platform broadcasting. According to Verhoef et al. (2021), omnichannel integration enhances user experience by allowing seamless interaction across multiple media touchpoints. Similarly, Napoli (2023) emphasizes that audience behavior in digital ecosystems is increasingly shaped by platform accessibility and content fluidity. In this study, Generation Z respondents show strong preference for multi-platform radio access, confirming the theoretical shift toward converged media consumption. Therefore, the results reinforce the idea that convergence is a structural requirement for sustaining relevance in digital broadcasting environments.

The empirical analysis confirms that digital convergence has a significant positive effect on audience engagement, supporting the first hypothesis. This finding is consistent with Chaffey (2022), who argues that digital integration enhances user interaction by expanding communication channels and increasing content touchpoints. Moreover, Sundar (2022) explains through the MAIN model that interactive and modality-rich media environments increase psychological engagement among digital-native users. The present study extends these arguments by demonstrating that convergence in local radio directly translates into measurable engagement behavior among Generation Z audiences. Unlike earlier studies that focus mainly on adoption rates, this research highlights engagement intensity as a direct outcome of convergence governance. This indicates that structural integration alone is insufficient unless it is strategically managed to stimulate active audience participation.

Social media interactivity is also found to significantly influence audience engagement, confirming the second hypothesis. Kietzmann et al. (2021) argue that social media ecosystems function as engagement engines where interaction, sharing, and participation drive user involvement. In addition, Livingstone (2021) highlights that younger audiences prefer participatory communication environments that allow them to co-create media experiences. The findings of this study are consistent with these perspectives, showing that Generation Z engages more deeply with radio platforms that provide real-time interaction features. However, compared to previous research, this study quantitatively demonstrates the strength of interactivity effects using regression analysis in a local radio context. This provides stronger empirical validation of the role of social media as a core engagement infrastructure in modern broadcasting systems.

Content innovation is proven to have a significant effect on listener loyalty, supporting the third hypothesis. Osei-Frimpong et al. (2023) state that innovative and personalized content significantly increases audience retention in digital media environments. Furthermore, Kumar (2024) emphasizes that content adaptability across formats such as podcasts, short-form videos, and hybrid broadcasting models is essential for sustaining competitive advantage. The results of this study confirm that Generation Z listeners are more loyal to radio platforms that continuously innovate content delivery methods. In comparison with earlier studies, this research highlights that content innovation is not only a branding strategy but also a behavioral determinant of loyalty. This strengthens the argument that innovation must be embedded within governance structures to ensure long-term audience retention.

The most important contribution of this study is the identification of audience engagement as a mediating mechanism between digital convergence and listener loyalty. This mediation effect supports the framework proposed by Verhoef et al. (2021), which suggests that engagement acts as a bridge connecting digital integration and behavioral outcomes. The findings also align with Napoli (2023), who argues that loyalty in digital media ecosystems is increasingly shaped by engagement intensity rather than exposure alone. Compared to previous research, this study introduces a governance-based model that

integrates technological convergence, interactivity, and content innovation into a single explanatory framework. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on Generation Z in Indonesia, a demographic that exhibits highly dynamic and platform-switching behavior. Therefore, this study contributes a new empirical model that positions engagement as the central driver in sustaining local radio competitiveness in the digital era.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that digital convergence governance in local radio significantly enhances Generation Z audience engagement and listener loyalty, where audience engagement functions as the main mediating mechanism supported by social media interactivity and content innovation. Empirically, the results show that digital convergence has a strong positive effect on engagement ($B = 0.512, p < 0.001$), followed by social media interactivity ($B = 0.438, p < 0.001$) and content innovation ($B = 0.476, p < 0.001$), while audience engagement itself has the strongest direct effect on listener loyalty ($B = 0.603, p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that convergence alone is not sufficient to build loyalty, but must operate through active engagement driven by interactive communication and innovative content strategies. In practical implementation, local radio stations are recommended to strengthen multi-platform integration (FM, streaming, and social media), improve real-time interaction features, and continuously develop adaptive content formats to sustain competitiveness among Generation Z audiences in the digital era.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study is limited by its sample size and geographic focus on Generation Z in the Jakarta metropolitan area, which may not fully represent broader Indonesian or global audiences. In addition, the research relies on quantitative survey data, which may not capture deeper qualitative insights into audience motivations and emotional attachment. Future research is recommended to expand the geographic scope, include mixed-method approaches, and explore additional variables such as algorithmic media influence, platform trust, and long-term behavioral loyalty patterns in digital broadcasting ecosystems.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to colleagues and academic advisors who provided valuable suggestions and constructive feedback during the development of this research. Special appreciation is also extended to all respondents who participated in the survey and contributed to the completion of this study. The author further acknowledges the support of the institution and any financial assistance that helped facilitate data collection and research completion.

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