

# The Phenomenon of Generation Z's Loss of Appreciation for Original Literary Works: A Phenomenological Study of Adaptations

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## ABSTRACT

The transformation of Indonesian literature in the digital era through adaptation shifts Generation Z's appreciation from original text-based works to digital adaptations such as films and podcasts, particularly for prospective literature educators at Raja Ali Haji Maritime University. This qualitative descriptive study using a phenomenological approach aims to describe the phenomenon of loss of appreciation among 10 Generation Z students (class of 2022) of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program through purposive sampling. In-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation were analyzed via phenomenological reduction covering five aspects: aesthetic experience, subjective awareness, transformation of experience, interpretation of meaning, and the creator-audience relationship. The results show that Generation Z appreciates digital adaptations more due to their practicality, visual-audio entertainment, concrete experiences, simple interpretations, and the incompatibility of the packaging of original works with modern technology. In conclusion, adaptation significantly influences Generation Z's aesthetic awareness, recommending a blended digital-traditional pedagogy for the preservation of in-depth literary appreciation.

**Keywords:** *Translation, Literary Appreciation, Literary Phenomenology, Generation Z, Transmediation*

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## INTRODUCTION

The development of Indonesian literature in the digital era shows a significant transformation in the presentation and appreciation of literary works, especially among Generation Z. Literary works that were previously predominantly presented in printed forms such as novels, short stories, and poetry are now frequently adapted into digital media, including films, poetry musicalizations, podcasts, and audio-visual content on social media (Damono, 2018; Nugiyantoro, 2023). This process of media transfer expands accessibility and aligns with the consumption patterns of younger generations who prefer instant and visually oriented formats (Yunita & Haryanto, 2024; Yoshimi et al., 2023).

Media transfer does not merely involve a change in format, but also the creation of new meanings through visual and audio elements that enrich the aesthetic experience of readers (Ardiansyah et al., 2020; Endraswara, 2013). Generation Z, who grew up in a digital environment, tends to be more attracted to digital versions due to their practicality and the ease of understanding plots and characters without requiring prolonged imaginative engagement (Hidayat, 2021; Prensky, 2001).

However, while media transformation can enhance accessibility, technological advancements have also contributed to a decline in interest in original literary works. Indonesian Language and Literature Education students of the 2022 cohort at Raja Ali Haji

Maritime University tend to prefer instant digital content rather than reading original texts, which are often perceived as time-consuming and demanding (Nurhadi, 2019). Although social media facilitates rapid access to content, it may reduce the depth of aesthetic and moral interpretation found in original literary works (Dimock, 2019; Tapscott, 2009).

This phenomenon reflects a shift in the mindset of Generation Z, where visual entertainment increasingly dominates over deep reflection on literary texts (Bencsik et al., 2016). The limited adaptation of original literary works to digital formats further contributes to declining interest, raising concerns about the potential loss of a generation of readers committed to original literature (Faruk, 2011; Susanto, 2016).

Conventional approaches are often insufficient to capture Generation Z's subjective experiences regarding this transformation. Therefore, a phenomenological approach is necessary to understand their consciousness, awareness, and transformation of appreciation (Husserl, 2012; Dakhi et al., 2023). Without appropriate intervention, the reflective and humanistic values embedded in original literary works risk being marginalized in the digital era (Wicaksono, 2013; Ariyanto & Handayani, 2024).

This study aims to describe the phenomenon of Generation Z's declining appreciation of original literary works through a literary phenomenological perspective among Indonesian Language and Literature Education students at Raja Ali Haji Maritime University, class of 2022. The focus is placed on aesthetic experience, subjective awareness, transformation of meaning, and the relationship between creator and connoisseur (Husserl, 2012; Yoshimi et al., 2023). The urgency of this research lies in the need to maintain deep literary literacy among prospective teachers in order to prevent the degradation of reflective culture (Nurhadi, 2019). The novelty of this study is found in its specific phenomenological examination of digital media transfer within the context of Indonesian Generation Z, offering a more in-depth exploration of subjective understanding that has not been extensively studied (Yunita & Haryanto, 2024).

## METHOD

### Types and Methods of Research

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach within a literary phenomenology paradigm to explore in depth the phenomenon of Generation Z's declining appreciation of original literary works amid the rise of digital media. This approach was selected because the data consist of verbal expressions, subjective experiences, and contextual statements from informants, allowing the researcher to explore the essence of lived experiences without numerical generalization (Malik, 2016; Sugiyono, 2022; Sudaryono, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

The Husserlian phenomenological paradigm emphasizes the process of *epoché* or bracketing, in which researchers suspend personal assumptions in order to achieve phenomenological reduction and uncover the essence of participants' subjective awareness (Moleong, 2017; Emzir, 2022). Through this approach, the study seeks to understand how informants consciously experience the transformation of literary appreciation in the digital era.

The research was conducted over four months (August–December 2025) in flexible locations adjusted to participants' convenience, both face-to-face and online. This flexible setting aligns with the iterative and adaptive nature of qualitative data collection (Sugiyono, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

### Data Analysis Instruments and Techniques

The primary instrument in this research is the researcher as a human instrument who determines the research focus, selects informants, collects data, analyzes findings, and interprets meanings holistically (Moleong, 2017; Sugiyono, 2019). The researcher was supported by semi-structured in-depth interview guidelines developed based on five aspects of literary phenomenology: aesthetic experience, subjective awareness, transformation of

*The Phenomenon of Generation Z's Loss of Appreciation for Original Literary Works: A Phenomenological Study of Adaptations* experience, meaning and interpretation, and the relationship between creator and audience (Emzir, 2022).

Data collection techniques included: (1) In-depth interviews to explore participants' subjective meanings; (2) Participant observation of literary consumption patterns; and (3) Documentation of secondary literature and digital artifacts, such as poetry musicalization playlists and other online literary content (Sudaryono, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative procedures through several stages: verbatim transcription of interview data, data reduction using thematic coding, categorization into phenomenological themes, interpretation of essential meanings, and synthesis of findings. To ensure credibility, the study employed source triangulation and member checking (Sugiyono, 2022; Emzir, 2022).

### Population and Sample

The research population consisted of Indonesian Language and Literature Education students of Raja Ali Haji Maritime University, class of 2022, categorized as Generation Z (aged 15–25 years). The inclusion criteria were: (1) having read original literary works, (2) actively consuming digital media, and (3) being aware of shifts in literary appreciation.

Ten informants were selected through purposive sampling based on data saturation criteria, ensuring the inclusion of rich experiential data and diverse perspectives (Sugiyono, 2019; Sudaryono, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature on phenomenology, media transfer, and digital literacy to support triangulation and strengthen the analytical framework (Emzir, 2022; Malik, 2016).

### Research Procedures

The research procedure began with a preliminary study and the preparation of research instruments, followed by data collection through in-depth interviews (45–60 minutes per session, audio-recorded and transcribed), observation of informants' interactions with literary media, and collection of supporting documentation during the period August–December 2025.

Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection using an inductive cycle consisting of data reduction, thematic display, and conclusion verification. The process concluded with member checking to confirm the accuracy of interpretations (Moleong, 2017; Sugiyono, 2022; Emzir, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

To maintain trustworthiness, the study applied method triangulation and maintained an audit trail to ensure that the findings are scientifically accountable and transparent (Sudaryono, 2021).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals the phenomenon of Generation Z's loss of appreciation for original literary works among Indonesian Language and Literature Education students of Raja Ali Haji Maritime University, Class of 2022. Data were obtained from in-depth interviews with ten informants (N1–N10), analyzed using a literary phenomenology approach that includes aesthetic experience, subjective awareness, transformation of experience, meaning and interpretation, and the relationship between creator and audience.



Informant 1  
Name: Ika Febriani



Informant 2  
Name: Dwi Rahma Sundari



Informant 3  
Name: Andrani Hanifashahira



Informant 4  
Name: Novi Zuriyanti Ayu



Informant 5  
Name: Erika



Informant 6  
Name: Filza Aiza



Informant 7  
Name: Istanul Hasanah



Informant 8  
Name: Niken Wulan Rizki



Informant 9  
Name: Viona Juliyan Dini



Informant 10  
Name: Mersides A. Manulang

### **Aesthetic Experience**

Interview results indicate that the majority of respondents are more interested in literary works adapted into digital forms, particularly films. They stated that films or musicalizations of poetry are more practical and enjoyable than reading the original text, which takes longer and is considered boring (DF-TP-N1, N2, N5). The visual and audio aspects of digital works facilitate understanding of the storyline and characters, making the aesthetic experience more vivid and immediate. This finding aligns with Endraswara (2013) and Yoshimi et al. (2023), who emphasize that aesthetic experiences emerge through individual engagement with the work and generate personal meaning.

### **Subjective Awareness**

Generation Z demonstrates a strong subjective awareness of digital media. Interviewees experienced enjoyment and entertainment when enjoying digital works, while reading original texts often led to boredom and difficulty understanding the story (DF-TP-N3, N4, N7). This aligns with Husserl's (2012) view that human consciousness is central to phenomenology, and meaning emerges from an individual's subjective experience of the object. Preference for

digital media suggests that subjective awareness influences the level of appreciation for original literary works.

### **Experience Transformation**

The phenomenon of experiential transformation is evident in the shift in how Generation Z appreciates literary works when switching media. Films or digital works provide a more concrete experience through visuals and audio, replacing the freedom of imagination that arises when reading text (DF-TP-N3, N6, N8). Although there are some inconsistencies between film scenes and the original text, the interviewees still consider digital works more interesting because of their convenience and entertainment. This finding supports the views of Sobur (in Wicaksono, 2013) and Wellek & Warren (2016) that literary works are open to reinterpretation, and that switching media is not just a change of form, but a re-creation that brings new meaning.

### **Meaning and Interpretation**

Digital works make it easier for readers to understand the story, making interpretation quicker and less tedious. Conversely, original texts require a longer process of reflection and imagination, leading to boredom (DF-TP-N10). This phenomenon suggests that Generation Z appreciates digital works more due to their accessibility and presentation styles that suit their habits. This is consistent with the views of Wolff (in Faruk, 2011) and Endraswara (2013), who argue that the meaning of a work is open and influenced by individual experiences and social interactions.

### **The Relationship between Creator and Enjoyer**

Interview results indicate a low level of concern among Generation Z for classical literary works due to their packaging not being compatible with modern technology (DF-TP-N4, N5, N7). Digital media transfer creates a new relationship between creators and audiences through more engaging and entertaining interactions. This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of media in mediating aesthetic experiences and appreciation of literary works, in line with Husserl (2012) and Suyanto (2019) on the role of consciousness and intersubjectivity in understanding art.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

Based on five aspects of literary phenomenology, Generation Z's loss of appreciation for original literary works is caused by: (1) The practicality of digital media is faster and easier to access. (2) Visual and audio entertainment that enhances the aesthetic experience. (3) The transformation of experience that makes digital works more engaging than the original text. (4) A simpler and less boring interpretation. (5) The incompatibility of packaging classical works with modern technological developments.

This phenomenon confirms that Generation Z tends to appreciate literary works translated into digital formats more, while original works experience a decline in interest. This is relevant to the dynamics of culture and media adaptation, which continue to evolve with changing times.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study reveals the main finding that Generation Z in the Indonesian Language and Literature Education students of Raja Ali Haji Maritime University class of 2022 experienced a decline in appreciation for original literary works due to the dominance of digital media transfer, with five main causal factors: the practicality of digital media access, more engaging visual-audio entertainment, the transformation of aesthetic experience from imaginative to concrete, faster interpretation without saturation, and the incompatibility of packaging classical works with modern technology. Literary phenomenological analysis confirms that the subjective awareness of informants is more inclined towards digital works such as films and poetry musicalization, which mediate the creator-consumer relationship instantly and entertainingly. However, limitations of the study include the limited sample coverage of one class at one university, the potential for researcher subjectivity bias in phenomenological interpretation, and the lack of comparisons across generations or geographic regions that

could enrich the generalizability of the findings. These findings provide practical implications for literature educators to integrate digital media as a bridge to the appreciation of original texts, such as through blended learning that combines film adaptations with in-depth analysis of the original novels. Suggestions for further research include multi-university comparative studies with Generation Z from diverse backgrounds, exploration of digital literature gamification-based learning interventions, and a mixed methods approach to measure changes in appreciation longitudinally. Thus, this research contributes to enriching the study of literary phenomenology in the digital era while encouraging the preservation of in-depth literacy among prospective Indonesian language teachers.

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