International Journal Multidisciplinary Science
IJML Vol 5 No. 2 | June 2026 | ISSN: 2963-8119 (print), ISSN: 2963-7821 (online), Page 138-152

The Influence of Artificial Intelligence Usage Intensity on Information-Seeking Habits among Generation Z

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Article History
Received : 25 April 2026
Revised : 02 June 2026
Accepted : 22 June 2026
Published : 30 July 2026

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DOI:
https://doi.org/10.56127/ijml.v5i2.2000

Abstract: The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed how individuals access, process, and utilize information, particularly among Generation Z. This study aims to examine the influence of artificial intelligence usage intensity on the information-seeking habits of Generation Z. A quantitative explanatory approach with a cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data were collected through an online questionnaire from 400 valid Generation Z respondents in Indonesia who had experience using AI applications such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Perplexity. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability testing, classical assumption testing, and simple linear regression analysis with IBM SPSS Statistics. The results indicate that artificial intelligence usage intensity has a positive and statistically significant effect on information-seeking habits ($\beta = 0.541$, $t = 14.744$, $p < 0.001$). The regression model explains 35.3% of the variance in information-seeking habits ($R^2 = 0.353$). Respondents demonstrated high levels of AI usage, particularly in search initiation and conversational query formulation, whereas information verification and source comparison obtained relatively lower scores. These findings suggest that AI enhances the efficiency and accessibility of information seeking but does not automatically strengthen critical evaluation and verification practices. The study contributes empirical evidence regarding AI-mediated information behavior among Generation Z and highlights the importance of integrating AI literacy with information literacy to promote responsible, critical, and ethical use of generative AI.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; Generation Z; information-seeking behavior; digital literacy; generative AI

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI applications, has transformed the way individuals access, process, and use information. AI-powered platforms can provide direct responses, summarize complex materials, recommend relevant content, translate information, and generate explanations based on users' prompts. These capabilities have gradually shifted digital information-seeking activities from conventional keyword-based searches toward more interactive and conversational processes. Instead of examining multiple websites through search engines, users can obtain synthesized answers from AI applications within a relatively short period. In educational and everyday contexts, this transformation offers greater efficiency and accessibility; however, it also raises concerns regarding source transparency, information accuracy, algorithmic bias, privacy, and users' dependence on automatically generated responses. UNESCO therefore emphasizes that the use of generative AI must remain human-centered and should be accompanied by the development of critical evaluation, ethical awareness, and responsible information-use competencies (Miao & Holmes, 2023). Similarly, generative AI should not merely be viewed as a technical instrument because its

integration may influence how people formulate questions, evaluate evidence, construct knowledge, and make decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023).

This transformation is particularly relevant to Generation Z, a demographic group that has grown up in an environment characterized by widespread internet access, mobile devices, social media, recommendation algorithms, and on-demand digital services. As a digitally embedded generation, Generation Z tends to prioritize information sources that are fast, accessible, personalized, visually attractive, and responsive to immediate needs. Recent studies indicate that their information-seeking practices are increasingly distributed across search engines, social media, digital communities, online videos, and AI-based applications rather than being centered exclusively on libraries or traditional reference sources (Kolawole et al., 2025). AI systems further strengthen this tendency by offering personalized and conversational assistance that reduces the effort needed to locate and interpret information. Research involving Generation Z respondents in Java also found that AI-based digital environments influenced passive attention, passive searching, active searching, and ongoing information-seeking behavior, indicating that AI has become embedded in both intentional and incidental encounters with information (Mariyamah & Majidah, 2025). In addition, the adoption of AI among Generation Z university students is influenced by perceived usefulness, self-efficacy, ease of use, and trust, demonstrating that repeated AI usage is not solely determined by technological availability but also by users' confidence in the system and perceptions of its reliability (Rosli et al., 2026).

From an information behavior perspective, information seeking refers to purposeful activities conducted by individuals to identify, select, access, evaluate, and use information in response to particular needs. Wilson (1999) positions information searching as part of the broader process of information-seeking behavior, which itself forms part of overall human interaction with information. This process is influenced by psychological conditions, social roles, environmental contexts, source characteristics, and barriers to information access. Savolainen (1995) similarly explains that everyday information practices are shaped by individuals' ways of life, values, available resources, and strategies for managing daily problems. In an AI-mediated environment, these processes may change because conversational AI can simultaneously function as an information source, search intermediary, content generator, and recommendation mechanism. Frequent AI users may increasingly begin their searches by entering questions into AI systems, rely on AI-generated summaries, use follow-up prompts to refine their needs, and accept personalized recommendations as starting points for further exploration. Such practices may improve search efficiency and help users understand unfamiliar topics. Nevertheless, they may also reduce direct interaction with original documents, discourage comparison among multiple sources, and create a tendency to accept coherent responses without adequate verification. Studies on students' use of generative AI have shown that AI is often valued because of its rapid response and continuous availability, although traditional sources remain important when users require higher levels of authority, precision, or trustworthiness (Hou et al., 2024; Yeung et al., 2025).

The intensity of AI usage is therefore an important factor in understanding contemporary information-seeking habits. Usage intensity may be reflected in the frequency of access, duration of interaction, variety of AI applications used, and the degree to which individuals depend on AI for academic, professional, personal, and entertainment-related information. Low-intensity users may treat AI as an occasional complementary tool, while high-intensity users may use it as their primary gateway to information. Repeated interaction can build familiarity, confidence, and satisfaction, thereby encouraging continued use and potentially replacing several stages of conventional information

searching. However, greater intensity does not automatically indicate stronger information literacy. Users who frequently employ AI may become more skilled in constructing prompts and synthesizing responses, but they may also experience cognitive offloading by transferring information selection and interpretation processes to the system. Emerging research suggests that AI-supported information seeking can narrow exploration when users rely heavily on synthesized answers rather than independently examining broader information environments. Consequently, the intensity of AI usage may influence not only how frequently Generation Z searches for information but also which sources they choose, how quickly they terminate searches, how deeply they explore a topic, and whether they verify the information obtained.

Previous studies have extensively discussed AI acceptance, students' attitudes toward ChatGPT, perceived usefulness, trust, self-efficacy, academic integrity, and the educational benefits of generative AI. Other studies have examined Generation Z's digital information behavior and preferred information sources. However, these two research streams have often developed separately. Research on AI adoption generally emphasizes users' intention to accept or continue using AI, while studies of information behavior typically describe source preferences, searching patterns, and information evaluation practices. Consequently, limited empirical evidence explains whether differences in the intensity of AI usage are associated with systematic changes in Generation Z's information-seeking habits. Existing studies also tend to focus on university students in specific educational settings, even though Generation Z uses AI for a wider range of needs, including news interpretation, purchasing decisions, health information, employment, entertainment, social interaction, and everyday problem-solving. Furthermore, the Indonesian context requires additional examination because patterns of digital access, information literacy, educational background, and dependence on social media may produce information-seeking practices that differ from those identified in other countries. The study by Mariyamah and Majidah (2025) demonstrated the relevance of AI-based environments to Generation Z's information behavior in Java, but further research is necessary to specifically measure AI usage intensity as a predictor of information-seeking habits.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze the influence of artificial intelligence usage intensity on information-seeking habits among Generation Z. AI usage intensity is conceptualized through indicators such as frequency, duration, diversity of purposes, and level of dependence on AI applications. Meanwhile, information-seeking habits can be examined through source selection, search initiation, query formulation, exploration depth, information comparison, credibility assessment, and verification behavior. This study assumes that greater usage intensity may encourage faster, more personalized, and conversational information-seeking practices, while simultaneously affecting users' willingness to consult diverse sources and independently evaluate information credibility. The study is expected to contribute theoretically by extending information behavior research into the context of generative AI and empirically by explaining how different levels of AI exposure shape Generation Z's searching practices. Practically, the findings may support educational institutions, libraries, policymakers, and digital literacy practitioners in developing AI literacy programs that balance technological efficiency with critical thinking, source verification, ethical awareness, and responsible information use.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the influence of artificial intelligence usage intensity on information-seeking habits among Generation Z. The quantitative approach was selected because the study sought to measure the relationship between two observable constructs and statistically determine the extent to which variations in artificial intelligence usage intensity explain variations in respondents' information-seeking habits. The research used a cross-sectional survey design in which data were collected from respondents at a single point in time. Cross-sectional surveys are appropriate for identifying patterns, relationships, and behavioral tendencies within a particular population without manipulating the research variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The independent variable was artificial intelligence usage intensity, while the dependent variable was information-seeking habits. Artificial intelligence in this study refers to generative and conversational AI applications that can produce answers, summaries, recommendations, translations, or other information based on user prompts. These applications included ChatGPT, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, Claude, and other comparable AI-based platforms. The unit of analysis was individual Generation Z users who had previous experience using at least one AI application for academic, occupational, or everyday information needs.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of Generation Z individuals in Indonesia who actively used digital technologies and had experience using artificial intelligence applications. Generation Z was operationally defined as individuals aged between 17 and 27 years at the time of data collection. This age range was selected because the respondents were considered capable of independently using digital information sources and providing informed responses to the research questionnaire.

The respondents were selected using purposive sampling because the exact number of Generation Z individuals who actively used AI applications could not be identified with certainty. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select respondents based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). The inclusion criteria were: (1) being between 17 and 27 years old; (2) residing in Indonesia; (3) having used at least one generative AI application during the previous six months; (4) using AI to search for academic, professional, personal, or general information; and (5) being willing to complete the questionnaire voluntarily.

For the simulated research design, the questionnaire was distributed to 425 prospective respondents from January to February 2026. A total of 412 responses were received. After removing incomplete responses, duplicate entries, and responses that did not meet the inclusion criteria, 400 questionnaires were considered valid and included in the analysis. This sample size was considered adequate for regression analysis because it exceeded the minimum requirement for detecting moderate relationships between research variables and provided sufficient statistical power for hypothesis testing.

Research Variables and Measurement

Artificial intelligence usage intensity was measured through four dimensions: frequency of use, duration of use, diversity of purposes, and dependence on AI applications. Frequency of use referred to how often respondents accessed AI applications during a typical week. Duration of use represented the amount of time respondents spent

interacting with AI applications. Diversity of purposes referred to the extent to which AI was used for different activities, including completing academic assignments, understanding complex topics, finding news, obtaining product recommendations, translating text, solving technical problems, and supporting everyday decision-making. Dependence referred to the tendency to make AI the initial or primary source when information was needed.

Information-seeking habits were measured through seven dimensions: search initiation, source selection, query formulation, information exploration, source comparison, credibility evaluation, and information verification. Search initiation described the source respondents used first when they needed information. Source selection measured the preference for AI applications, search engines, social media, online videos, academic databases, and institutional websites. Query formulation referred to the respondents' ability to express information needs using keywords or conversational prompts. Information exploration measured the extent to which respondents continued searching after receiving an initial answer. Source comparison represented the habit of comparing information from multiple platforms. Credibility evaluation measured respondents' consideration of authorship, publication source, evidence, and publication date. Information verification referred to the practice of checking AI-generated information against original or authoritative sources.

All research indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1, representing "strongly disagree," to 5, representing "strongly agree." The artificial intelligence usage intensity variable consisted of 12 statement items, while the information-seeking habits variable consisted of 18 statement items. Higher scores on the artificial intelligence usage intensity scale indicated more frequent, diverse, and dependent use of AI. Higher scores on the information-seeking habits scale indicated more systematic information searching, including active exploration, comparison, evaluation, and verification.

The operationalization of the research variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
Artificial Intelligence Usage Intensity	Frequency of use	Frequency of accessing AI applications per day or week
	Duration of use	Time spent interacting with AI applications
	Diversity of purposes	Use of AI for academic, occupational, personal, and entertainment needs
	Dependence on AI	Tendency to use AI as the first or primary information source
Information-Seeking Habits	Search initiation	Selection of the first source when information is needed
	Source selection	Preference for AI, search engines, social media, and authoritative sources
	Query formulation	Ability to formulate keywords and conversational prompts
	Information exploration	Willingness to continue searching beyond the first answer

	Source comparison	Habit of comparing information from multiple sources
	Credibility evaluation	Evaluation of authorship, evidence, publication source, and recency
	Information verification	Verification of AI-generated responses using original or authoritative sources

Research Instrument and Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire developed through Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section contained a research explanation, informed consent statement, and screening questions. The second section collected respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, educational level, employment status, and area of residence. The third section measured artificial intelligence usage intensity, while the fourth section assessed respondents' information-seeking habits.

Before the main data collection, the instrument was reviewed by two experts in communication and information behavior and one expert in quantitative research methodology. The review evaluated the relevance, clarity, and consistency of each statement with the conceptual definition of the variables. Several items were revised to avoid ambiguous wording, double-barreled questions, and technical expressions that might not be understood by all respondents.

A pilot test was subsequently conducted with 30 Generation Z respondents who were not included in the final sample. The pilot test was used to evaluate item validity, instrument reliability, and questionnaire completion time. Items with corrected item-total correlation values below 0.30 were revised or removed. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a coefficient of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). Based on the simulated pilot test, the artificial intelligence usage intensity scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88, while the information-seeking habits scale obtained a coefficient of 0.91. These values indicated that the instrument had satisfactory internal consistency.

The questionnaire link was distributed through WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, student communities, and professional networking groups. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary, their identities would remain anonymous, and their responses would only be used for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information, such as identity numbers or detailed residential addresses, was collected. Respondents were also allowed to discontinue participation before submitting the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The initial stage involved data cleaning, coding, and screening. Incomplete questionnaires, duplicate submissions, and responses with uniform answers across all items were excluded from the dataset. Descriptive statistical analysis was then conducted to summarize respondent characteristics and describe the distribution of each research variable using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Instrument quality was assessed through validity and reliability testing. Item validity was examined using corrected item-total correlation, with values above 0.30 regarded as acceptable. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with values of at least 0.70

indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The average score of each variable was subsequently categorized using the following intervals: 1.00–1.80 as very low, 1.81–2.60 as low, 2.61–3.40 as moderate, 3.41–4.20 as high, and 4.21–5.00 as very high.

Before hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were performed. The normality of residuals was examined using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and normal probability plot. Linearity was assessed to ensure that the relationship between artificial intelligence usage intensity and information-seeking habits followed a linear pattern. Heteroscedasticity was examined using the Glejser test and scatterplot analysis. Because the model included only one independent variable, multicollinearity testing was not required as a primary assumption; however, tolerance and variance inflation factor values could still be reported if additional control variables were included.

The t-test was used to examine whether artificial intelligence usage intensity had a statistically significant influence on information-seeking habits. The coefficient of determination, represented by (R^2), was used to determine the proportion of variation in information-seeking habits that could be explained by artificial intelligence usage intensity. The hypothesis was tested at a significance level of 5%. The research hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H1: Artificial intelligence usage intensity has a significant influence on information-seeking habits among Generation Z.

To obtain a more comprehensive interpretation, additional analyses were conducted for each dimension of information-seeking habits. These analyses examined whether AI usage intensity was associated with changes in search initiation, source preference, information exploration, credibility assessment, and verification behavior. Demographic comparisons based on age group, educational level, and primary purpose of AI use were also performed using independent-samples t-tests or one-way analysis of variance where appropriate. These supplementary analyses were intended to identify whether the influence of AI usage intensity differed across respondent groups.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 412 questionnaires were received during the data collection process. After screening for incomplete responses, duplicate submissions, and respondents who did not meet the inclusion criteria, 400 questionnaires were considered valid and included in the analysis. All respondents were members of Generation Z aged between 17 and 27 years and had used at least one generative artificial intelligence application during the previous six months.

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	184	46.0%
	Female	216	54.0%
Age	17–20 years	142	35.5%
	21–24 years	183	45.8%
	25–27 years	75	18.7%
Main activity	University student	238	59.5%
	Employee	76	19.0%
	Senior high school student	38	9.5%

	Entrepreneur	24	6.0%
	Other	24	6.0%
Daily AI usage duration	Less than 30 minutes	82	20.5%
	30–60 minutes	148	37.0%
	1–2 hours	112	28.0%
	More than 2 hours	58	14.5%

Table 2 shows that most respondents were between 21 and 24 years old, representing 45.8% of the sample. University students constituted the largest occupational group, accounting for 59.5% of all respondents. This composition is relevant because students frequently encounter information needs related to assignments, academic writing, concept clarification, translation, and examination preparation.

Regarding usage duration, 37.0% of respondents used AI applications for approximately 30–60 minutes per day, while 28.0% used them for one to two hours. Only 20.5% used AI for less than 30 minutes per day. These results indicate that AI had become part of respondents' regular digital activities rather than being used only occasionally.

Artificial Intelligence Applications Used by Respondents

Respondents were asked to identify the AI application they used most frequently. ChatGPT was the dominant application, followed by Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity, and other applications.

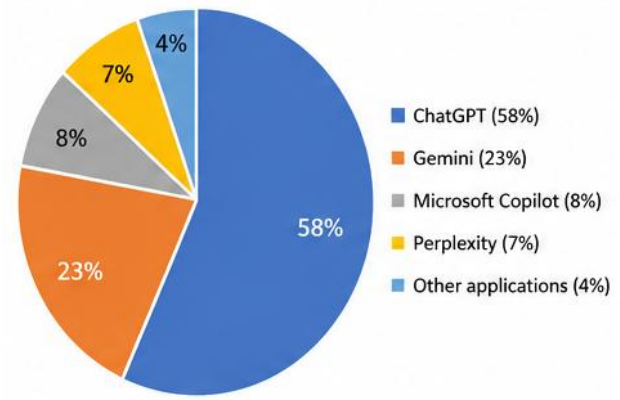

Figure 1. Most Frequently Used Artificial Intelligence Applications

Figure 1 shows that ChatGPT was used most frequently by 58.0% of respondents. Gemini was the second most frequently used application, with 23.0%, while Microsoft Copilot and Perplexity were used by 8.0% and 7.0% of respondents, respectively. The dominance of ChatGPT may be associated with its accessibility, conversational format, broad range of functions, and ability to respond to follow-up questions.

The findings suggest that Generation Z tends to prefer AI applications that integrate multiple information functions into a single platform. These applications can be used to summarize documents, explain difficult concepts, generate ideas, translate text, and recommend additional information. This multifunctionality may encourage users to make AI their first point of contact when an information need arises.

Descriptive Analysis of Research Variables

Descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the general level of artificial intelligence usage intensity and information-seeking habits. Mean scores were interpreted using five categories: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable and Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
AI usage intensity	**3.96**	**0.61**	**High**
Frequency of use	4.14	0.68	High
Duration of use	3.88	0.72	High
Diversity of purposes	4.12	0.64	High
Dependence on AI	3.69	0.76	High
Information-seeking habits	**3.78**	**0.55**	**High**
Search initiation	4.10	0.67	High
Source selection	3.86	0.63	High
Query formulation	4.02	0.59	High
Information exploration	3.60	0.71	High
Source comparison	3.55	0.73	High
Credibility evaluation	3.67	0.69	High
Information verification	3.48	0.75	High

Table 3 indicates that the overall mean score of AI usage intensity was 3.96, which was categorized as high. The highest score was recorded for frequency of use, with a mean of 4.14, followed by diversity of purposes, with a mean of 4.12. This result demonstrates that respondents not only used AI frequently but also applied it to various information needs.

Dependence on AI recorded the lowest score among the AI usage dimensions, although it remained in the high category. This finding suggests that respondents had developed a relatively strong reliance on AI but had not completely abandoned search engines, social media, academic databases, or official websites.

The overall mean score of information-seeking habits was 3.78. Search initiation obtained the highest mean score of 4.10, showing that AI was frequently used at the beginning of the information-search process. Query formulation also received a high mean score of 4.02. Respondents appeared comfortable using complete questions, commands, and follow-up prompts when interacting with AI systems.

In contrast, information verification obtained the lowest mean score of 3.48. Source comparison and information exploration also received relatively lower scores. These findings indicate that respondents were more active in initiating searches and formulating questions than in comparing sources and verifying the accuracy of the information obtained.

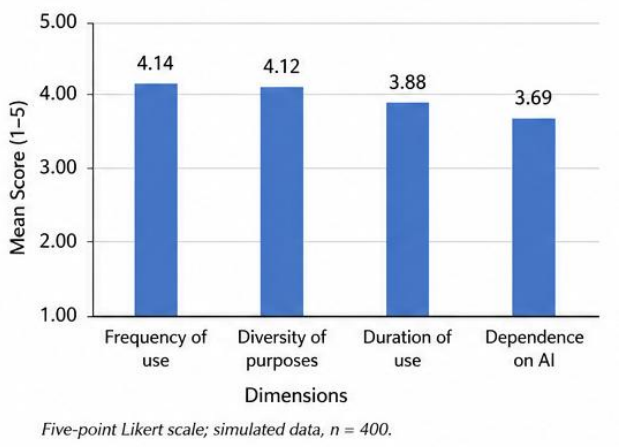

Figure 2. Mean Scores of Artificial Intelligence Usage Intensity Dimensions

Figure 2 illustrates that frequency of use and diversity of purposes were the strongest components of AI usage intensity. Respondents used AI repeatedly and for various needs, including academic work, translation, news interpretation, career information, product recommendations, content creation, and everyday problem-solving.

The lower score for dependence suggests that AI generally functioned as an important information intermediary rather than the only source of information. However, continued increases in frequency and diversity of use may gradually strengthen users' dependence on AI-generated responses.

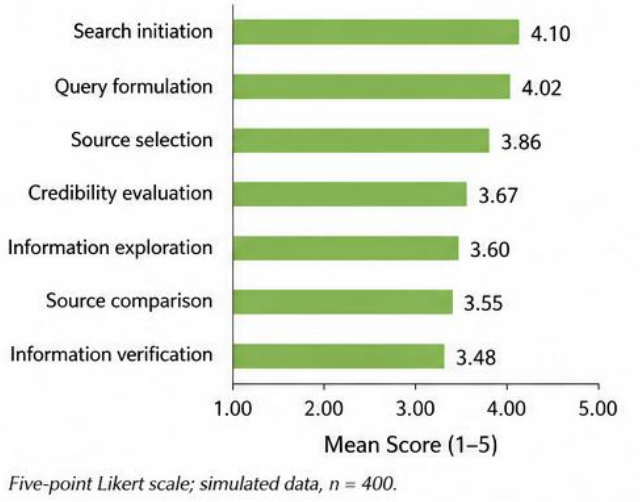

Figure 3. Mean Scores of Information-Seeking Habit Dimensions

Figure 3 shows a declining pattern from search initiation to information verification. Generation Z respondents demonstrated strong ability and willingness to begin searches using AI and formulate conversational questions. However, activities requiring deeper critical engagement, such as checking references, comparing multiple sources, and verifying information, received lower scores.

This pattern shows that AI may improve the speed and convenience of information access more rapidly than it improves critical information-literacy practices. Users may feel that a clear and coherent AI-generated answer is sufficient, even when the response does not provide transparent or verifiable sources.

Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity test showed that all questionnaire items had corrected item-total correlation values greater than 0.30. Therefore, all 30 statement items were retained for further analysis. The reliability test resulted in a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.884 for artificial intelligence usage intensity and 0.912 for information-seeking habits. Both values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument had satisfactory internal consistency.

The residual normality test produced a significance value of 0.086, which was greater than 0.05. The deviation-from-linearity value was 0.147, indicating a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The Glejser test produced a significance value of 0.284, showing no indication of heteroscedasticity. Therefore, the dataset met the principal requirements for simple linear regression analysis.

Effect of AI Usage Intensity on Information-Seeking Habits

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to test whether artificial intelligence usage intensity influenced information-seeking habits among Generation Z.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression and Hypothesis Testing

Statistical Indicator	Result
Regression constant	1.638
Unstandardized coefficient	0.541
Standardized beta coefficient	0.594
t-value	14.744
Significance value	<0.001
Correlation coefficient	0.594
Coefficient of determination	0.353
Adjusted coefficient of determination	0.351
F-value	217.39
Model significance	<0.001

The regression equation obtained from the analysis was:

$$[Y = 1.638 + 0.541X]$$

where (Y) represents information-seeking habits and (X) represents artificial intelligence usage intensity.

The regression coefficient of 0.541 indicates that a one-unit increase in AI usage intensity was associated with an increase of 0.541 units in the information-seeking habit score. The positive coefficient shows that respondents with greater AI usage intensity tended to demonstrate stronger information-seeking habits.

The t-test produced a value of 14.744 with a significance level below 0.001. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that artificial intelligence usage intensity significantly influences information-seeking habits among Generation Z was accepted.

The coefficient of determination was 0.353, indicating that AI usage intensity explained 35.3% of the variation in information-seeking habits. The remaining 64.7% was influenced by other factors not included in the research model, such as digital literacy, educational background, trust in technology, type of information need, academic demands, peer influence, and access to authoritative sources.

Discussion

The results demonstrate that artificial intelligence usage intensity has a positive and statistically significant influence on the information-seeking habits of Generation Z. Respondents who used AI more frequently, for longer periods, and for more varied purposes were more likely to use AI as an initial information source and formulate their information needs through conversational prompts.

This finding indicates that generative AI has become an information intermediary rather than merely a supplementary digital tool. In conventional online searching, users enter keywords, examine search results, visit several webpages, and evaluate the relevance of each source. In AI-mediated searching, several of these stages are compressed into a single conversational interface. AI can interpret users' intentions, summarize information, explain difficult concepts, and provide follow-up responses without requiring users to leave the platform.

The high score for search initiation supports the argument that Generation Z increasingly considers AI an efficient starting point for obtaining information. This finding is consistent with Dwivedi et al. (2023), who explain that generative AI has the potential to transform interactions between users and digital information. AI does not simply retrieve documents but produces synthesized responses based on user instructions.

The high score for query formulation also indicates that respondents were accustomed to using conversational language when searching for information. Unlike conventional search engines that often require concise keywords, AI applications allow users to submit complete questions, provide contextual details, and refine responses through follow-up prompts. This interactive process can help users clarify their information needs and obtain responses that are more relevant to their circumstances.

The diversity-of-purposes dimension received a mean score of 4.12, confirming that respondents used AI for various activities. AI was not limited to academic assignments but was also used for translation, career planning, product comparison, content creation, news interpretation, and personal decision-making. Repeated positive experiences across different activities may strengthen habitual usage and encourage users to consult AI whenever new information is needed.

This result is consistent with Kasneci et al. (2023), who state that large language models can support personalized learning, explanation, writing, and interactive knowledge development. Nevertheless, they also emphasize that users must remain aware of inaccurate, biased, or fabricated outputs.

The findings reveal an important imbalance between information access and information evaluation. Search initiation and query formulation obtained relatively high scores, while source comparison and information verification received lower scores. This means that respondents were generally effective in obtaining quick answers but were less consistent in determining whether those answers were supported by reliable evidence.

The low verification score may be associated with the persuasive presentation of AI-generated responses. Generative AI can produce answers in a fluent, organized, and confident manner, even when the information is incomplete or incorrect. Users may therefore interpret linguistic fluency as evidence of factual accuracy. This condition can be problematic when AI is used to obtain academic, health, financial, legal, or political information.

The findings support the guidance of Miao and Holmes (2023), who emphasize that generative AI literacy should include critical evaluation, ethical awareness, data privacy, and human responsibility. The ability to produce effective prompts is not sufficient if users cannot distinguish between verified information and automatically generated content.

From the perspective of information behavior, the findings are also consistent with Wilson's (1999) model, which explains that information-seeking behavior is influenced by individual characteristics, environmental conditions, information sources, and barriers to access. AI reduces several traditional barriers by providing rapid and easily understood responses. However, reduced barriers may also encourage users to stop the information-search process prematurely.

The coefficient of determination indicates that AI usage intensity explained 35.3% of information-seeking habits. This proportion is substantial, but it also confirms that information-seeking behavior is shaped by multiple factors. Digital literacy may determine whether users verify AI responses. Educational experience may influence the ability to distinguish academic sources from popular information. Trust may affect whether users accept AI responses immediately or seek additional evidence.

Another factor that may explain the relationship is cognitive offloading. AI enables users to transfer some searching, summarizing, organizing, and interpreting activities to the system. Cognitive offloading can increase efficiency and reduce the effort required to process large amounts of information. However, excessive dependence may reduce independent analysis, source exploration, and critical reflection.

The relatively lower dependence score suggests that most respondents had not completely transferred their information-seeking activities to AI. Many respondents continued to use search engines, social media, online videos, journal databases, and official websites. This result represents a potentially positive condition because the combination of AI and conventional sources can produce more comprehensive information-search practices.

Educational institutions should therefore encourage the use of AI as an initial support tool rather than as the final authority. Students may use AI to identify keywords, understand basic concepts, develop search strategies, or obtain preliminary explanations. However, important claims should be checked against journal articles, books, government publications, institutional websites, and original documents.

Lecturers can require students to explain how AI was used, identify which information was verified, and provide the original sources supporting their arguments. Libraries can also develop AI literacy programs that combine prompt-writing skills with source evaluation, citation tracking, misinformation detection, and ethical information use.

Overall, the findings show that artificial intelligence usage intensity contributes positively to Generation Z's information-seeking habits, particularly in terms of search initiation, query formulation, and source accessibility. However, increased usage does not automatically strengthen critical information literacy. The relatively low scores for source comparison and information verification indicate that Generation Z still requires guidance in evaluating the quality, origin, and credibility of AI-generated information.

Accordingly, AI literacy programs should balance efficiency-oriented skills with critical information-evaluation competencies. Generation Z should not only be able to obtain information quickly but also understand when to question, compare, verify, and reject an AI-generated response.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the intensity of artificial intelligence (AI) usage has a positive and statistically significant influence on the information-seeking habits of Generation Z. Respondents who used AI more frequently and for a wider range of purposes tended to initiate information searches through AI applications, formulate more effective

conversational queries, and access information more efficiently. The regression analysis revealed that AI usage intensity explained 35.3% of the variation in information-seeking habits, indicating that AI has become an important factor shaping contemporary digital information behavior. However, despite the improvement in search efficiency, respondents showed relatively lower performance in source comparison and information verification, suggesting that the convenience of AI-generated responses has not been fully accompanied by stronger critical information-evaluation practices.

The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on AI-mediated information behavior by providing empirical evidence of how generative AI influences the information-seeking patterns of Generation Z in the Indonesian context. Practically, the results highlight the need for educational institutions, libraries, and policymakers to integrate AI literacy with information literacy by emphasizing source verification, credibility assessment, ethical AI use, and critical thinking alongside prompt-writing skills. This study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, which may not fully capture actual user behavior over time. Future research is therefore recommended to employ longitudinal designs, incorporate additional variables such as digital literacy, trust in AI, and critical thinking, and compare different demographic groups or generations to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of AI-driven information-seeking behavior.

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