

**Digitalization of Tourism and the Role of Generation Z in Parepare City
(An Analysis from the Perspective of New Media Cultural
Participation Theory)**

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Abstract

The Parepare City Government's policy of positioning the city as an industry without smokestacks, as outlined in the city's vision 2018-2023, the development of the tourism sector as highly urgent. Alongside digital media determinism, there is opportunity to develop a smart city that implements a series of tourism developments through digitalization to increase tourist visits, with a tourism digitalization program through the contributions of Generation Z. Based on research findings, Parepare City Government has encouraged policies for the involvement of Generation Z through various policies, such as programs and budgets to encourage the involvement and competence of Parepare's Generation Z residents. They has a significant contribution to tourism development through the use of information and communication technology, including citizen journalism, social media platforms, and cultural events that converge with digital information, as part of the globalization of Parepare's tourism information based on new media. This aligns with theory proposed by Henry Jenkins that the presence of new media will encourage audiences to collectively take roles, including Generation Z. Hence, Generation Z contributes to the activities on social media platforms for disseminating tourism information about Parepare City. The digital space participation of Parepare's Generation Z acts both as followers and prosumers.

Keywords: *Digitalization; Tourism; Generation Z; New Media.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism development over the past 10 years has experienced a significant increase in line with the growing Indonesian middle class. Travel activities are no longer seen merely as a desire, but have become a primary need that must be fulfilled, akin to basic needs (clothing, food, and shelter). Traveling activities are seen as a necessity for every individual to gain enjoyable stimuli.

This is reinforced by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, where each individual has a hierarchy of physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Driven by the need to fulfill these needs, people travel to meet various requirements such as trade, health, education and research, sports and beauty, recreation, official duties, cultural interests, political needs, and religious needs. Parepare's potential as a city that

provides these services, along with its natural resources and beautiful coastline, makes it a destination city for tourists. A city with the vision of being an industry without smokestacks offers many services, fulfilling not only basic needs but also providing enjoyment through travel and leisure. Of course, Parepare, as a smart city presenting many services and natural potentials, encourages the growth of the tourism industry.

The increasing vibrancy of the tourism business in every region undoubtedly has a multiplier effect on the economic growth of the community, as tourist spending stimulates further expenditure, ultimately enhancing economic activity at the local level. The multiplier effect can be direct, such as tourist spending on restaurants, accommodations, local transportation, and souvenirs. The second effect is indirect, where businesses receiving direct impacts have high demand for raw materials and labor from other sectors. The induced effect occurs through local employment, where local workers' spending leads to further economic activity changes stemming from household expenditures from directly or indirectly earned income (Wandi, 2021). This uniqueness has led to the current paradigm of tourism development being dominated by the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT).

According to Norval in Spillane (1987), a British economist, tourism is not only beneficial for cultural and social education but also has significant economic importance. Many countries worldwide regard tourism as an invisible export of goods and tourism services that can strengthen the balance of payments.

The multiplier effect is certain to improve the welfare of communities, business actors, and providers of goods and services. Therefore, the government strives to implement a series of programs to promote the progress of the tourism sector, one of which is communication activities as an important instrument in tourism promotion. Parepare City itself has promoted tourism progress with the concept of smart tourism, adapted with information technology through tourism digitalization.

The digitalization factor can be observed in the phenomenon of Generation Z consuming tourism. Their high capability and mastery of advanced information and technology have made the younger generation, also known as the digital generation, more aware of digital tourism concepts compared to their predecessors (Resyadi, 2022). Some characteristics of this generation include enjoying social activities, having high environmental awareness, preferring to work in startup companies, being able to multitask, being very fond of and skilled in operating technology, easily influenced by certain products or brands, and being smart and quick to receive information (Resyadi & Suraidah, 2021).

Table 1
Generation Gap

Source	Labels					
Howe & Strauss (2000)	Gen Matures (< 1946)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Gen Y (1981-1994)	Gen Z (1995-2010)	
Lancaster & Stillman (2002)	Tradition Alist (1990-1945)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1980)	Gen Y (1981-1999)	-	
Tapscott (2008)	Pre baby Boom (<1945)	Baby Boom (1946-1964)	Baby Bust (1965-1976)	Echo of Baby Boom (1977-1997)	Generation Net- Gen Z (1998-2009)	Generatio n Alpha- Gen A (2010)
Bencsik & Machova (2016)	Veteran (1925-1946)	Baby Boom (1947-1980)	Gen X (1981-1995)	Gen Y (1980-1995)	Gen Z (1996-2010)	Gen Alfa (>2011)
Stillman & Stillman (2017)	Tradition Alist (<1946)	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	Gen X (1965-1979)	Millennial (1980-1994)	Gen Z (1995-2012)	

Generation Z, with its characteristics as the iGeneration or internet generation, shares similarities with Generation Y. Bencsik & Machova (2016) state that what distinguishes them is their proficiency in utilizing information and technology. Gen Z has multitasking abilities, demonstrated by their capacity to perform multiple activities simultaneously. They are adept at using various gadgets, browsing on personal computers, and listening to music with headsets or earphones (Wandi & Andriana, 2022). For them, information and technology are determinants in their lives. Additionally, the surge in businesses run by young people is marked by the rapid increase in cafes and restaurants offering free internet access to visitors, as well as historical tourist sites providing new experiences and additional knowledge to visitors while also offering internet services. Thus, the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is important to develop.

The involvement of Generation Z is a crucial part of tourism development concepts in all regions, including in Parepare City, encouraging community participation in every stage of development. This creates a "sense of belonging" among the community, fostering care and involvement. It is hoped that this will benefit not only the government but also the community.

The concept and its implementation should not only come from the government; rather, the government should communicate with the community to achieve better social change.

This idea aligns with the notion that development, as a process of social change towards a better social order, is not a new phenomenon. Civilization would not have reached its current state without continuous social change, albeit with varying intensities in the past. However, development as a conscious, planned, and institutionalized human effort, though a unique phenomenon of the 20th century, is more than a value-free process.

Step by step, the development of the tourism sector makes communication an inseparable instrument from development planning. The critical role of communication is to inform the community about upcoming development activities, to focus their attention on the need for the necessary changes, the methods and ways to make these changes, the required facilities, and to inspire aspirations and participation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses qualitative descriptive content analysis techniques to dissect issues related to the digitalization policy of Parepare tourism for Generation Z through the approach of new media theory. It examines whether the tourism development policies of Parepare City, particularly in engaging the younger generation, align with new media theories or not.

Data was obtained through literature reviews from various journal articles, both domestic and international, as reference and comparison materials, as well as observations of tourism activities in Parepare City and tourism data from the Youth, Sports, and Tourism Department of Parepare City through the website <https://www.pareparetourism.id/>. This article is developed as a conceptual contribution to the model and pattern of tourism management in the era of Industry 4.0, marked by the cultural shift in society in consuming tourism services from manual systems to digitalization, especially among Generation Z.

According to Creeber and Martin (2009) in their book “Understanding New Media, new media is defined as the product of technologically mediated communication that exists alongside digital computers. In other words, new media is media that uses the internet, online technology-based media, characterized by flexibility, potential interactivity, and can function both privately and publicly (Mondry, 2008: 13). Several expectations are attached to the Digital Generation, who are accustomed to using communication technology daily, such as SMS, email, instant messaging applications, WhatsApp, Line, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and various other forms of digital communication. First, they are expected to become resilient individuals with the ability to identify problems and make decisions (problem-solving). Second, they should become early adopters or adaptive pioneers, capable of reducing various conflicts and social tensions, deviations, and uncertainties caused by changes. Third, they should be able to develop

curiosity based on empirical conditions into skills and expertise. Fourth, they should strive to continually improve and not be easily satisfied with existing achievements (growth mindset). Fifth, they should nurture and develop national character, independence, a spirit of mutual cooperation, and culture (Sukarwo, Jawa Pos Daily "Strategic Role of the Digital Generation" August 30, 2021).

The digital generation today is synonymous with Generation Z. In the book by Hadyon Widyoyo et al. (2020), it is stated that Generation Z is known as the mobile generation, most of whom were born after 2000 (Kapil & Roy, 2014: 10-11). Generation Z is a generation that grew up with technological advancements, thus viewing technology as a part of them. This generation is also called the Net Generation (Tapscott, 2013: 25). Generation Z actively uses IT, social media, and smartphones more frequently (Torocsik, Szucs, & Kehl, 2014: 43). The active use of smartphones distinguishes Generation Z from other generations. For Generation Z, active smartphone use is not addictive behavior; instead, they use smartphones as an integral part of their lives (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015: 95-96).

Integrated with their identity, today's youth live in an era of disruption. Harvard Business School professor Clayton M. Christensen defines disruption as a major change that alters the order (The Innovator's Dilemma, 1997). This transformative power is driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where everything is interconnected with technology and the internet. Disruption brings rapid and constant changes in line with the swift passage of time. Professor Klaus Schwab emphasizes that the era of disruption marked by the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings quick, deep, and widespread changes in seconds, with systemic impacts on various dimensions of life (The Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2016).

This study aims to discover and describe the role of Generation Z in promoting tourism in Parepare City. Tourism digitalization, with its interactive nature, opens up increasingly varied opportunities and involves all parties in its promotional efforts. The Parepare City Government encourages students or diaspora workers from Parepare to promote tourist attractions abroad. Generation Z, identified as the mobile generation, has the ability and adaptability to promote Parepare's tourism through digital platforms. By understanding the characteristics of Generation Z, who are indeed passionate about information technology, the research problem formulated is: How are the policies for digitalizing tourism development and the role of Generation Z in Parepare City?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Parepare City Government further breaks down this paradigm by prioritizing the development of the tourism sector as one of its key programs, in line with the city's development vision for 2018-2023: "Realizing Parepare City as an Industrial City Without Smokestacks, with a Rights-Based and Basic Services Vision Towards an Advanced, Independent, and Characteristic City." Supporting this vision is the development of the tourism sector. The concept of an Industrial City Without Smokestacks embodies the tangible manifestation of the "Footprint Theory," which serves as the driving force behind the growth of new economic resources. The assumption here is that as more people visit Parepare City, the area transforms from merely a transit city into a destination city.

Policies regarding the organization and operations of Parepare City government related to tourism development include the establishment of a specialized agency named the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism. This department is led by a head official tasked with formulating policies for local governance in sports, youth affairs, and tourism development, as stipulated in Local Regulation No. 8 of 2016 concerning the Formation and Structure of Regional Devices and Mayor Regulation No. 68 of 2016 concerning the Position, Functions, and Organizational Governance of Regional Government.

Specific duties within the tourism development scope include the promotion and marketing of tourism, overseen by the Head of the Tourism Promotion and Marketing Division. This division further includes sections such as tourism promotion, event development, tourism marketing and market analysis. The destination and tourism industry cooperation section, headed by the Division Chief, oversees natural and cultural tourism development, business standardization and support, as well as tourism cooperation and institutions. Each section is led by a section head.

In the current era, optimizing the tourism industry through technology is imperative. The integration of technology into the tourism industry has created a new environment within the tourism sector. A popular term referring to this condition is "Smart Tourism." Smart Tourism is a pillar of the Smart City concept and an essential component of the Smart Economy. It is defined as an integrated ICT tourism platform that utilizes information technology to efficiently provide information and services to tourists.

The arrival of the Creative or Cultural Industry era in the fourth industrial revolution is an inevitability that cannot be avoided. Sooner or later, it will permeate almost every sector, including tourism. Currently, 70 percent of travelers, especially millennials, are already benefiting from the digital era. They can view destinations, book, and pay all within one application on their smartphones quickly, cheaply, and easily. This presents its own challenges,

necessitating a digital tourism product showcase to ensure that SMEs remain viable by selling packages through digital marketplaces. This aligns with the Go Digital movement initiated by the Ministry of Tourism.

The Parepare City Government has been promoting the creative economy not only in terms of its products but also in its publication mechanisms that are relevant to the fourth industrial revolution. This enables tourism stakeholders to market their products digitally through the internet. The primary step in promoting tourism in Parepare City is undertaken by the Department of Youth, Sports, and Tourism (Disporapar), which involves building a dedicated tourism website to disseminate information about tourism activities and potential destinations in Parepare City, accessible through <https://disporapar.pareparekota.go.id/destinasi/>.

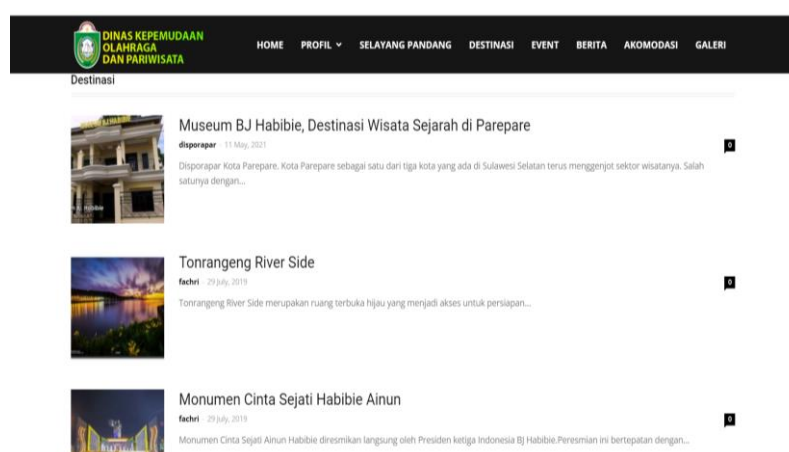


Figure 1: Screen Shoot from Website Disporapar

Source: Website Disporapar Parepare City

The Disporapar website, as shown above, provides information services with menus such as home, profile, Overview, destinations, events, news, accommodation, and gallery. These menus are customized on the website to disseminate tourism information in Parepare City. Each menu provides information and facilitates services for tourists to access anytime, as long as they have a device connected to the internet. Digitalization is a principle of new media, enabling easy dissemination and access to information for various purposes.

The presentation of information on the specific website can be shared via social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to promote tourism attractions in Parepare City. Moreover, developing an application that facilitates tourists to find and book travel packages available in Parepare City may be considered essential. This is where the potential involvement of Generation Z in tourism development lies. Growing up in a media-globalized world,

Generation Z has the ability to create, store, and present messages in various formats such as audio, visual, and audiovisual.

According to Henry Jenkins' theory of new media, transformation is expected alongside digitalization in information culture. The channels used for information dissemination have shifted from print media to online media. The Disporapar-managed website, as one of these mediums, certainly involves Generation Z in content production. Destination information, traditionally disseminated through print media, has now transitioned to visual media that is easily accessible by audiences. Thus, this information can serve as a stimulus to inspire the desire to experience the beauty presented through digital information systems (Umar, Hastuti, & Wandu, 2023).

Of course, this is influenced by the advent of new media as theorized by Mark Poster in the book "The Second Media Age," where the internet is expected to be a medium that will foster alternatives enabling audiences to become producers, distributors, personalize content, bookmark, and create web pages for broadcasting activities.

Global conditions such as the Covid-19 pandemic have also accelerated the digitalization of tourism, bringing tourism operators and tourists closer to the digital world. Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sandiaga Uno, revealed that the Ministry is currently promoting the digitalization of tourism and creative economy players in Indonesia through several programs under the "National Movement Proud of Indonesian Products." Through this movement, the government aims to cultivate pride in the works of the nation's children and also encourage digital economy players to innovate, adapt, and collaborate continuously.

These programs in the tourism policy of the Parepare City government encourage its community to create local products to meet the needs of residents and tourists alike. The love for using local products is increasingly becoming an agenda in the most dominant social media platforms operated by Generation Z. Contextual programs such as annual events organized by Disporapar with the selection of tourism ambassadors aim to increase the participation of Parepare's youth in promoting tourism. These events foster a sense of love among the youth for their local products and culture. The use of traditional costumes and behaviors associated with tourism ambassadors strengthens the identity of Generation Z in Parepare and sends a message to the world about the existence of attractive local cultures as tourism destinations.

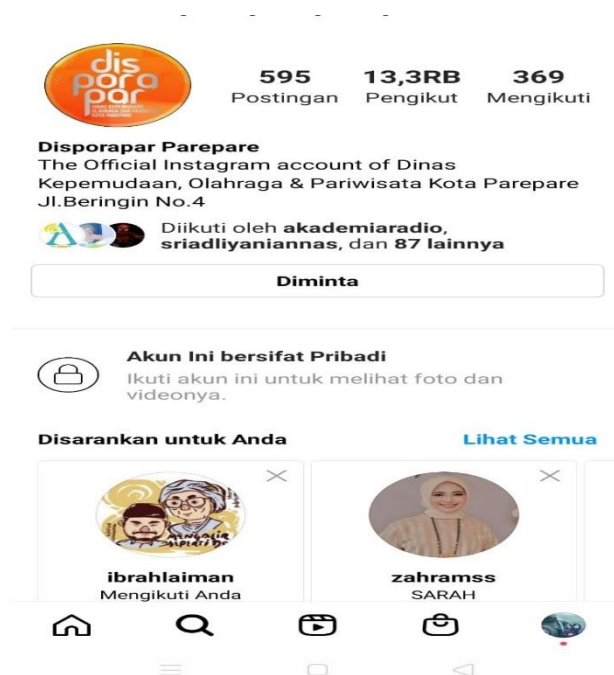


Figure 2: Screen shoot Disporapar Instagram account

The Instagram account of Disporapar aims to fulfill and disseminate tourism activities and potentials in Parepare City, targeting Generation Z audiences. The account has garnered 13.3 thousand followers and has posted 595 messages in various formats including audio, video, and audiovisual content, resonating well with young people both in content and followership. Thus, the presence of this social media platform engages Generation Z from Parepare City in the development of tourism.

The selection of tourism ambassadors also shows a positive trend in Generation Z's involvement in tourism development. Ambassadors participate in key events and act as tourism promoters in various cross-sectoral events organized by the city government of Parepare, disseminating information through social media platforms.

A significant number of Generation Z followers demonstrate that each individual's participation increases in digital activities to consume and observe real-time information published via Instagram. Generation Z is actively involved not only as media followers or consumers but also as prosumers — individuals or groups actively creating various messages to fill digital spaces. One such example is the Instagram social media managed by Parepare City Tourism Ambassadors. This aligns with Jenkins' thesis on new media, suggesting that the

presence of new media encourages everyone to act as both consumers and producers of media content.



Figure 3: Screenshoot Instagram Account of Tourism Ambassador

The ambassador selected to promote tourism activities in Parepare City manages an Instagram account under the username 'Duta Pariwisata' and has garnered attention from netizens with 1,500 followers. This official account, managed by tourism ambassadors, actively produces content and broadcasts events and tourism potentials in Parepare City, with a total of 280 posts.

Another social media account involving Generation Z is the YouTube channel 'disporapar parepare,' accessible via the link <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUGnua32zHFQMPlrZEVYO8w>. Despite being relatively new, established on May 24, 2020, the channel has attracted 6,021 views with 13 pieces of content about information and the implementation of the Salo Karajae festival. This trend indicates that the assumptions of digital broadcast theory have been leveraged in the development of tourism in Parepare City, with a significant contribution from Generation Z. This aligns with the planned programs of the tourism department as outlined in the Parepare City Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). It is poised to further enhance information dissemination and potentially increase tourist numbers using information provided through

digital broadcast platforms, especially social media platforms dominated by Generation Z in Parepare City, which plays a crucial role in tourism development.

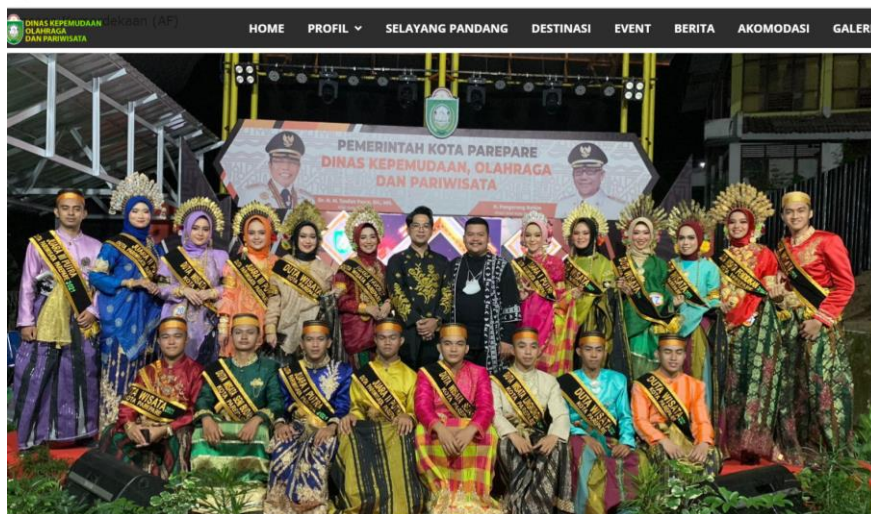


Figure 4: Finalist Tourism Ambassador of Parepare City

Source: Official Website Disporapar Parepare

Real steps of Gen Z involvement are also implemented through the involvement of youths selected as tourism ambassadors to design annual work programs. In 2021, the Tourism Ambassadors planned five work programs, including: Gesit (Tourism Clean-up Movement), Tourism Awareness Seminar in Parepare, Promotional Video Design, History Tour, and Independence Charm (AF). The work programs planned for 2022 have become part of the tourism department's work program, with the participation of Parepare's youth represented by the tourism ambassadors in planning the development of the tourism sector. These programs clearly reflect initiatives aligned with the advancement of digital media. These activities are continuously promoted in sustainable programs with an average annual budget allocation of Rp. 394,804,700. All activities are outlined in the Parepare City Budget.

The internet generation is seen as highly beneficial in promoting Parepare City's tourism potential to everyone, both nationally and internationally. This is particularly effective when internet usage for recreational purposes is combined with the introduction of picnic spots into the digital world. As of early 2021, internet users in Indonesia reached 202.6 million, an increase of 15.5 percent or 27 million compared to January 2020. Indonesia's total population is currently 274.9 million. This means that internet penetration in Indonesia at the beginning of 2021 was 73.7 percent. This data is included in the latest report released by the content

management service HootSuite and the social media marketing agency We Are Social in the report titled "Digital 2021." The most popular internet activity among Indonesian users is social media. Currently, 170 million Indonesians are active social media users, spending an average of 3 hours and 14 minutes on social networking platforms.

Millennials and Gen Z in Parepare City significantly contribute and have strong penetration in tourism promotion through information technology adaptation. The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly changed the life order, including in the tourism sector. Now, young generations can develop tourism by utilizing their social media to promote local tourism through the production of tourism potential content and broadcasting via social media. Gen Z can consistently promote sustainable tourism destinations and conduct responsible tourism activities to demonstrate to the public how to travel during the ongoing pandemic.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The tourism development policy of Parepare City is enshrined in Regional Regulation No. 8 of 2016 concerning the Formation and Composition of Regional Devices and Mayor Regulation No. 68 of 2016 concerning the Position, Functions, and Governance of Local Government Organizations. Appointments within regional agencies include responsibilities for tourism development through the Tourism Promotion and Marketing Department, led by the Head of Department overseeing several sections including tourism promotion, event management, tourism marketing, and market analysis. Additionally, the Destination and Tourism Industry Cooperation Department is led by the Head of Department overseeing sections such as the development of natural and cultural tourism, tourism business standardization, cooperation with tourism institutions, each managed by section heads. Through this organizational structure, the policy explicitly promotes the advancement of the local tourism sector.

Budget policies involve the engagement of Generation Z through annual routine programs, enhancing digital skills with content creators, tourism ambassadors, and the Salo Karajae festival, with Parepare City Government allocating Rp. 394,804,700 for fiscal year 2021 to enhance Generation Z's potential in tourism digitalization. The goal is to improve tourism promotion through social media information management with various content variations in audio, visual, and audio-visual formats. Continuous efforts are made to optimize tourism digitalization by educating Generation Z to utilize digital media skills effectively in creating creative tourism messages and disseminating global information through digital mediums, as suggested by McLuhan's concept of the Global Village, which brings digital media information in real-time accessible to people worldwide regardless of location.

The participation of Generation Z in Parepare City involves their inclination towards broadcasting skills in new media, contributing to tourism development in designing, organizing, implementing, and monitoring phases. Generation Z, represented by Parepare City's Tourism Ambassadors, plays a role as both consumers and prosumers in developing Parepare City's tourism excellence through digital media determination.

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