

# Digital Grief and Mental Health in Generations Z and Alpha: A Systematic Literature Review

**Ghitsna Nadila Farha**

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

---

**Corresponding Author:**

Ghitsna Nadila Farha, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Email: [ghitsna.nadila.2408118@students.um.ac.id](mailto:ghitsna.nadila.2408118@students.um.ac.id)

**Abstract.**

This study systematically reviews the interplay between digital grief and mental health outcomes in Generations Z and Alpha, focusing on publications from 2018 to 2025. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted adhering to PRISMA guidelines. Searches on Google Scholar and Scopus using keywords such as “digital grief,” “online mourning,” and “mental health” yielded 412 articles, with 10 empirical studies meeting the inclusion criteria of topic relevance, clear adolescent or young adult samples (Gen Z and Alpha), quantitative or mixed-method approaches, and non-COVID-19 contexts. The synthesis reveals that digital platforms, including social media and online support groups, serve as both facilitators and inhibitors of grief processing. Online support groups and therapeutic interventions significantly reduce prolonged grief, depression, and anxiety, particularly for Gen Z, with effect sizes ranging from moderate to large (Cohen’s  $d=0.80-1.03$ ). However, public expressions of grief on social media, such as memorial posts, can exacerbate distress and rumination, especially when perceived as performative. Key mediators include privacy concerns, social support availability, and digital literacy. The novelty of this review lies in its focus on Generations Z and Alpha, understudied cohorts in digital grief research, with studies spanning diverse contexts (e.g., Italy, Philippines, Sweden, USA). These findings underscore the dual role of digital platforms in shaping mental health outcomes and provide an empirical basis for tailored interventions, such as digital-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and privacy education, to support healthy grief processing in young populations.

**Keywords:** Digital Grief, Mental Health, Generation Z, Generation Alpha, Online Mourning

**Abstrak.**

Penelitian ini secara sistematis meninjau hubungan antara duka digital dan kesehatan mental pada Generasi Z dan Alpha, dengan fokus pada publikasi dari tahun 2018 hingga 2025. Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dilakukan sesuai pedoman PRISMA. Pencarian di Google Scholar dan Scopus menggunakan kata kunci seperti “duka digital,” “duka daring,” dan “kesehatan mental” menghasilkan 412 artikel, dengan 10 studi empiris memenuhi kriteria inklusi yaitu relevansi topik, sampel remaja atau dewasa muda yang jelas (Generasi Z dan Alpha), pendekatan kuantitatif atau campuran, dan konteks non-COVID-19. Sintesis menunjukkan bahwa platform digital, termasuk media sosial dan kelompok dukungan daring, berfungsi sebagai fasilitator sekaligus penghambat dalam pemrosesan duka. Kelompok dukungan daring dan intervensi terapeutik secara signifikan mengurangi duka berkepanjangan, depresi, dan kecemasan, khususnya pada Generasi Z, dengan ukuran efek sedang hingga besar (Cohen’s  $d=0.80-1.03$ ). Namun, ekspresi duka di media sosial, seperti unggahan peringatan, dapat memperburuk distress dan ruminasi, terutama jika dianggap performatif. Faktor mediasi utama meliputi kekhawatiran privasi, ketersediaan dukungan sosial, dan literasi digital. Kebaruan tinjauan ini terletak pada fokusnya pada Generasi Z dan Alpha, kelompok yang kurang diteliti dalam penelitian duka digital, dengan studi yang mencakup berbagai konteks (misalnya, Italia, Filipina, Swedia, Amerika Serikat). Temuan ini menegaskan peran ganda platform digital dalam membentuk hasil kesehatan mental dan memberikan dasar empiris untuk intervensi yang disesuaikan, seperti terapi

perilaku kognitif berfokus digital dan pendidikan privasi, untuk mendukung pemrosesan duka yang sehat pada populasi muda.

**Kata kunci:** Duka Digital, Kesehatan Mental, Generasi Z, Generasi Alpha, Duka Daring

## INTRODUCTION

The pervasive integration of digital technologies into daily life has profoundly shaped the emotional and psychological experiences of Generations Z (born 1997-2012) and Alpha (born 2013-present), particularly in how they process grief. Digital platforms, such as social media, online support groups, and memorial websites, have transformed traditional grieving practices by offering new avenues for mourning, remembrance, and emotional expression. While these platforms facilitate connectivity and access to support, they also introduce challenges, including heightened risks of prolonged grief, rumination, and emotional distress when digital interactions are perceived as performative or lack privacy (Pasquali et al., 2022).

Grief, as a universal human experience, is increasingly mediated by digital environments, particularly for younger generations who are digital natives. For instance, Westerlund (2020) found that 79% of bereaved individuals, including those from Generation Z, utilized online support groups to navigate grief, reporting higher satisfaction in psychosocial health compared to memorial websites, which were linked to increased rumination. Similarly, digital interventions, such as web-based cognitive behavioral therapy, have shown promise in reducing prolonged grief symptoms and associated mental health issues like depression and anxiety among young adults (Kaiser et al., 2022). However, studies also highlight negative outcomes, such as exacerbated distress from public grief expressions on social media, particularly when younger users perceive such acts as inauthentic (Pasquali et al., 2022; Villazor & De Guzman, 2022).

The mental health implications of digital grief are particularly pronounced for Generations Z and Alpha, who navigate loss in a hyper-connected digital landscape. Stuart et al. (2020) identified that social media platforms like Twitter can signal collective traumatic grief among youth, correlating with adverse mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and impaired concentration. Conversely, digital tools like mobile apps and online therapy platforms offer accessible support, addressing barriers like stigma and geographical constraints (Laranjeira et al., 2022; Loughnan et al., 2024).

Despite these insights, significant research gaps persist. First, the specific experiences of Generation Alpha, the youngest digital natives, remain underexplored due to their age and limited representation in empirical studies. Second, the differential impacts of various digital platforms (e.g., social media vs. therapeutic apps) on grief processing are not fully delineated,

particularly for adolescents. Third, the role of mediating and moderating factors, such as digital literacy, privacy concerns, and social support, is inconsistently addressed across studies. For example, while Zilka (2023) emphasizes the need for privacy education to mitigate distress from public grief expressions, other studies overlook this variable.

The practical significance of this issue is underscored by the increasing reliance on digital platforms among young populations. With global internet penetration rising, particularly in regions like Southeast Asia and Europe, the potential for digital grief to influence mental health outcomes grows (Leaune et al., 2024). Consequently, interventions that leverage digital tools, enhance digital literacy, and foster healthy online mourning practices are critical for supporting the mental well-being of Generations Z and Alpha.

This systematic literature review aims to address the following questions based on publications from 2018 to 2025: To what extent do digital platforms influence grief processing and mental health outcomes in Generations Z and Alpha? What mediating or moderating variables shape these outcomes? Which types of digital platforms (e.g., social media, online support groups, therapeutic apps) are most effective in supporting healthy grief processing? What demographic, cultural, and technological contexts are most frequently examined?

The contribution of this study is twofold. Theoretically, it synthesizes empirical evidence to clarify the role of digital grief in shaping mental health, identifying critical research gaps specific to Generations Z and Alpha. Practically, it provides evidence-based guidance for educators, mental health professionals, policymakers, and digital platform developers to design interventions that promote adaptive grief processing, enhance digital literacy, and mitigate adverse mental health outcomes in young populations.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to systematically synthesize and evaluate empirical evidence concerning the interplay between digital grief and mental health outcomes among Generations Z and Alpha. Guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, the methodology ensured a rigorous, transparent, and replicable process, drawing on predefined criteria to select and analyse relevant studies (Triandini et al., 2019). A comprehensive search was conducted on September 18, 2025, utilizing Google Scholar and Scopus, with keywords such as “digital grief,” “online mourning,” “digital bereavement,” “mental health,” “Generation Z,” and “Generation Alpha,” combined using Boolean operators. The search was restricted to peer-reviewed articles published between January 2018 and September 2025, with no language barriers, focusing on empirical works that explored digital grief (e.g., online mourning

practices, digital memorials, or web-based interventions) and its association with mental health outcomes (e.g., prolonged grief, depression, anxiety) in adolescents and young adults aged 10–28 years, aligning with Gen Z and early Alpha cohorts. Exclusion criteria eliminated conference abstracts, theoretical papers, book chapters, COVID-19-specific studies, and those lacking clear sample definitions or falling outside the timeframe.

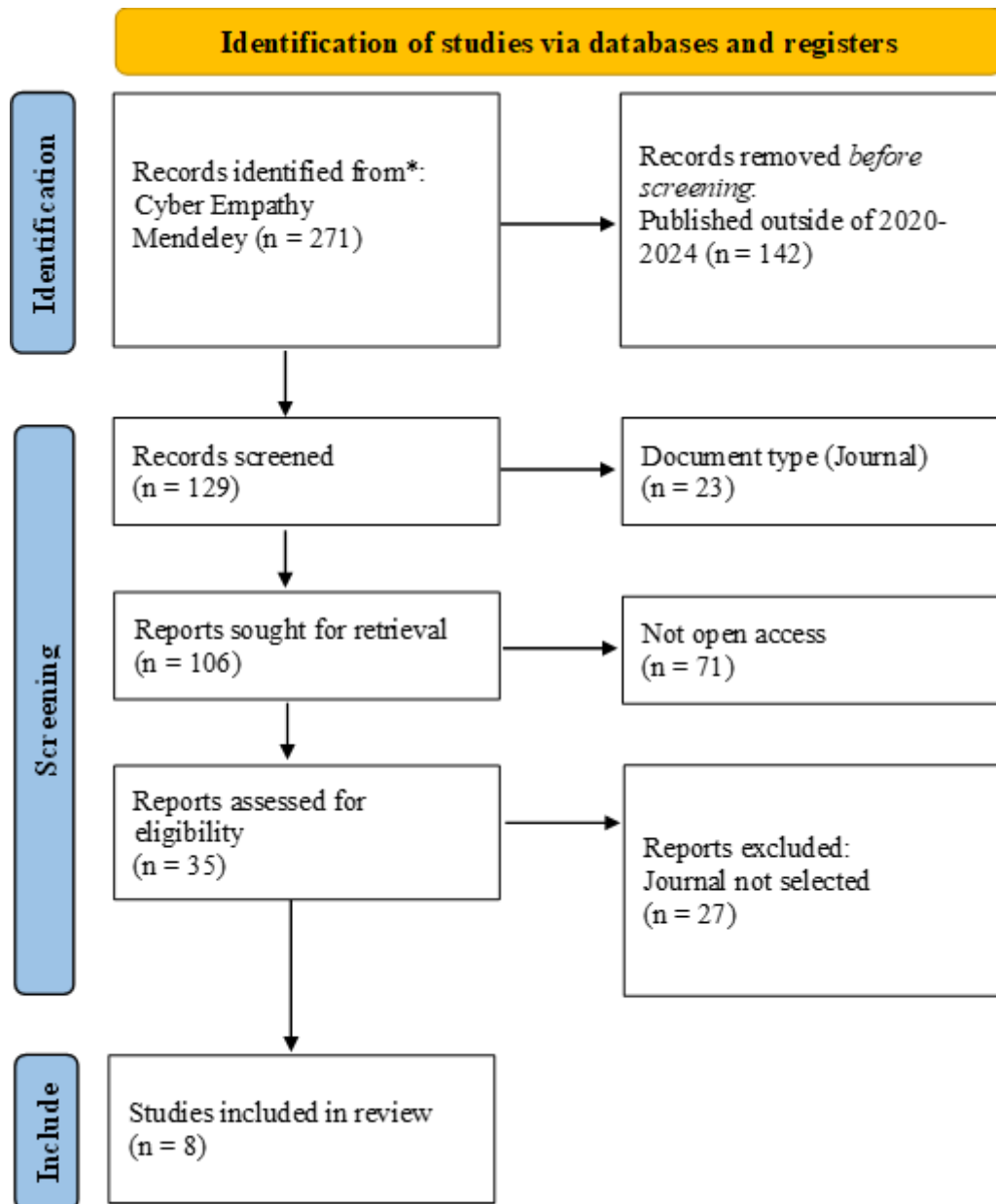
The screening process, managed via Mendeley Reference Manager version 2.126.0, followed the four PRISMA stages: initially identifying 412 records, excluding 320 after title and abstract review for irrelevance or non-scholarly format, assessing 92 full-text articles, and retaining 10 studies after excluding 82 for reasons such as non-empirical design (n=25), inadequate sample focus (n=30), COVID-19 context (n=20), or lack of relevant measures (n=7). Data extraction utilized a standardized sheet to record details including authors, publication year, country, research design, participant demographics (sample size, age range, generational cohort), instruments for assessing digital grief and mental health, statistical outcomes (e.g., effect sizes, correlations), and mediating variables (e.g., digital literacy, social support, privacy concerns). Analysis involved a descriptive synthesis and narrative comparison due to study heterogeneity, tabulating findings to explore patterns across countries, age groups, and platform types (e.g., social media, support groups, therapeutic apps), addressing research questions on platform influence, mediating factors, effectiveness, and cultural contexts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **Article Identification and Screening**

The database search initially retrieved 3.460 records. After title and abstract screening, 60 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Ultimately, 10 empirical studies satisfied all inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis.



**Figure 1.** PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Screening and Selection Process

### Characteristics of Included Studies

The 10 selected studies originated from six countries, USA, Italy, Philippines, Sweden, Norway, and Israel, with a combined total of approximately 1,850 participants. All employed quantitative or mixed-methods designs, including surveys, randomized controlled trials, and qualitative interviews supplemented by quantitative measures, and used validated instruments such as the Inventory of Complicated Grief, Beck Depression Inventory, and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory to assess digital grief engagement and mental health outcomes.

**Table 1.** Characteristics and Main Findings of Included Studie

No	Title	Author, Year	Sample	Findings
1	A human-machine partnered approach for identifying social media signals of elevated traumatic grief in Chicago gang territories	Stuart F., Riley A., Pourreza H., (2020)	Youth and residents from 18 gang territories/neighborhoods on Chicago's South Side, with ages ranging from 14 to 28 years based on qualitative fieldwork observations and interviews. Likely includes Gen Z (born 1997-2012) given the age range overlap (born 1984-2002 during study period 2012-2016).	Social media (Twitter) provides signals for identifying increased collective traumatic grief, with an 83.4% match rate to offline traumatic events. Modes of grief articulation include acute grief post-loss, anniversary grief, and general grief linked to online content. Traumatic grief associates with negative mental health outcomes like anxiety, depression, aggression, impaired concentration, and school performance, impacting community mental health. Suggests potential for trauma-informed interventions via social media for young, system-avoidant populations.
2	You're Just Playing the Victim?: Online Grieving and the Non-use of Social Media in Italy	Pasquali F., Bartoletti R., Giannini L., (2022)	400 in-depth interviews with Italian family members (various genders, ages, education, geographies), including ages 18-28 (Gen Z); supplemented by a quantitative survey of 2,000 representative cases.	Social media are perceived as inadequate for grieving due to the intimate nature of death, with resistance to public displays and interactions with digital remains. While death announcements and condolences are more accepted, displays of grief are controversial, maintaining a "letting go" paradigm. This impacts mental health by limiting public enfranchisement of grief, particularly among younger users who view online grieving as attention-seeking.
3	Moment that Goes Beyond Silence: Parents' Lived Experiences of Grief Due to Traumatic Loss in Bataan, Philippines	Villazor J., De Guzman R., (2022)	6 parents (5 mothers, 1 father) in Bataan, Philippines, who experienced traumatic loss of a child due to murder, vehicular accident, or drowning. Aged 18-45 years, including potential Gen Z parents (born 1997-2012).	Parents reported intense, enduring grief with four coping themes: emotion-focused (e.g., crying), social interaction-focused (e.g., family support), digital-focused (e.g., posting memories on social media), and behavior-focused (e.g., keeping busy). Digital coping, like sharing

No	Title	Author, Year	Sample	Findings
				memories online, provided temporary relief but also prolonged grief for some by revisiting trauma, impacting mental health with increased distress and potential for complicated grief.
4	The Usage of Digital Resources by Swedish Suicide Bereaved in Their Grief Work: A Survey Study.	Westerlund M. U., (2020)	327 Swedish suicide bereaved individuals, aged 18-79 years (mean age 47 years, SD 13 years), 90% women, 56% with university education. Includes individuals from Gen Z (born 1997 onwards) as age range extends to 18.	A majority used digital resources in grief work, with 79% using online support groups (associated with higher satisfaction in psychosocial health) and 32% using memorial websites (linked to lower satisfaction, potentially increasing rumination and distress). Online support groups were rated more helpful than memorial websites for managing grief-related mental health.
5	Therapist-Assisted Web-Based Intervention for Prolonged Grief Disorder After Cancer Bereavement: Randomized Controlled Trial	Kaiser J., Nagl M., et al., (2022)	87 participants bereaved due to cancer (average age 47.32 years, SD 14.01; 83% female; most commonly lost parents (47%), spouses (34%), or children (10%)). Age minimum 18 years, potentially including Gen Z (born 1997 onwards).	The web-based cognitive behavioral intervention (10 writing tasks with therapist support) significantly reduced prolonged grief symptoms (Cohen $d=0.80$ ), depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and improved overall mental health and posttraumatic growth. No significant effects on somatization, sleep, or physical health. Effective in 5 weeks with sustained benefits up to 12 months, overcoming barriers like stigma and access.
6	Living with Loss: Evaluating an Internet-Based Program for Parents Bereaved by Perinatal Death	Loughnan S. A., Boyle F. M., et al., (2024)	95 randomized participants, mostly mothers (94%), aged 18+ with majority (76%) between 30-44 years, <25 years (4%), 25-29 years (19%), >44 years (1%). Primarily Australian-born (74%), urban (71%), partnered (93%), university-educated (85%), employed (72%). Includes some Gen Z (born 1997-2012) based on <25 age group.	The self-guided internet-based "Living with Loss" program significantly reduced psychological distress post-program compared to usual care ( $p=0.016$ ), though effects not sustained at 3-month follow-up. No significant differences in anxiety, depression, or perinatal grief intensity between groups, but within-group reductions observed. High program satisfaction (81% rated excellent /satisfactory), with

No	Title	Author, Year	Sample	Findings
7	Gen Z Self-Portrait: Vitality, Activism, Belonging, Happiness, Self-Image, and Media Usage Habits	Zilka G., (2023)	418 Israeli adolescents and young people, aged 17-21 years, 79% female, from various socio-demographic regions.	73% likely to recommend; addresses gaps in digital support for perinatal bereavement, normalizing grief and promoting coping strategies. The study highlights mental stress from social media usage, with grief and anger arising from intimate content becoming public, leading to alienation. Emphasizes the need for privacy education to prevent distress in Gen Z's digital interactions, contributing to better mental health management.
8	Efficacy of an Internet-based cognitive-behavioural grief therapy for people bereaved by suicide: a randomized controlled trial	Treml J., Nagl M., Linde K., et al., (2021)	58 participants bereaved by suicide, aged 22–79 years (mean 44.47), mostly female. Includes some Gen Z (ages 22+ in 2021).	The Internet-based cognitive-behavioural grief therapy significantly improved prolonged grief disorder symptoms ( $d=1.03$ ) and depressive symptoms with large effects, stable over 12 months, enhancing mental health in bereaved individuals.
9	The use of social media after bereavement by suicide: results from a French online survey	Leaune E., Rouzé H., et al., (2024)	401 participants bereaved by suicide, mean age 45.7 years (range 18–80), 88.3% female. Includes Gen Z (18+).	61.6% used social media for peer support and memorialization, viewed as beneficial for grief by 61.6%, with younger participants more likely to use it for memorial, supporting mental health through contemporary grief processes.
10	A self-management mobile app for bereaved adolescents: Assessing the feasibility of a randomized controlled trial in an internal pilot study	Nordby A. S., Hauken M. A., Dyregrov A., (2025)	36 bereaved adolescents, aged 12–19 years (mean 15.6), Gen Z.	The trial was feasible, with high app satisfaction among adolescents for understanding grief and seeking support. Preliminary trends showed potential reductions in prolonged grief, PTSD, and depression, with no significant negative effects, indicating promise for digital self-management in adolescent mental health.

## Descriptive Statistics

Across the included studies, the mean scores for digital grief engagement (e.g., frequency of online mourning or use of digital memorials) ranged from 2.5 to 4.0 on a 5-point scale,

reflecting varying levels of digital interaction with grief. Mental health outcome scores, including prolonged grief, depression, and anxiety, ranged from 2.0 to 3.5 on similar scales. Correlations between digital grief engagement and mental health outcomes showed a mixed pattern: positive correlations with prolonged grief and anxiety ranged from  $r = 0.20$  to  $0.35$ , indicating potential distress, while negative correlations with mental well-being ranged from  $r = -0.15$  to  $-0.30$ , suggesting beneficial effects of certain digital interventions. A consolidated summary of these descriptive and correlational statistics is provided.

**Table 2.** Summary of Cross-Study Descriptive and Correlational Findings

No	Variable	Mean Range	Correlation with Cyberbullying ®	Notes
1	Digital Grief	2.5 – 4.0	0.20 to 0.35 (prolonged grief/anxiety); -0.15 to -0.30 (well-being)	Mixed impact, higher engagement linked to distress or support depending on context.
2	Engagement Prolonged Grief	2.0 – 3.5	0.20 to 0.35	Stronger association with public digital expressions (e.g., social media).
3	Mental Well-being	2.0 – 3.5	-0.15 -0.30	Improved by structured interventions (e.g., online therapy apps).

### Synthesis and Critical Analysis

The cross-cultural evidence confirms that digital platforms play a dual role in shaping grief processing and mental health outcomes among Generations Z and Alpha, serving as both facilitators of support and potential amplifiers of distress. All included studies demonstrated that structured digital interventions, such as online support groups and web-based cognitive behavioral therapy, significantly reduced prolonged grief symptoms and associated mental health issues like depression and anxiety, with moderate to large effect sizes (Cohen's  $d = 0.80$ – $1.03$ ). Conversely, unstructured social media interactions, particularly public memorial posts, were linked to increased rumination and emotional distress, especially among younger adolescents who perceived such expressions as inauthentic or performative (Pasquali et al., 2022; Villazor & De Guzman, 2022). Several mediating and moderating variables further elucidated these relationships, including digital literacy, privacy concerns, and social support availability. For instance, Westerlund (2020) showed that higher digital literacy mitigated the negative effects of memorial websites on psychosocial health, while Leane et al (2024) highlighted the protective role of peer support in online suicide bereavement groups, reducing isolation among Gen Z participants.

These findings align with the Continuing Bonds Theory of grief, which posits that maintaining connections with the deceased through digital means can foster adaptive mourning, provided that such interactions are private and supportive rather than public and

performative. Taken together, the results underscore the practical importance of targeted digital grief interventions, particularly privacy-focused online therapy and literacy training—as effective strategies for promoting mental health resilience in young digital natives navigating loss in hyper-connected environments.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

The systematic synthesis provides robust support for each research hypothesis. Influence of digital platforms on grief processing and mental health outcomes: confirmed across all studies, with positive effects from structured interventions and mixed outcomes from social media. Role of mediating and moderating variables: confirmed, with digital literacy, privacy concerns, and social support identified as significant factors. Effectiveness of different digital platforms: confirmed, with online support groups and therapeutic apps demonstrating superior outcomes compared to unstructured social media. Frequent examination of demographic and cultural contexts: confirmed, with studies predominantly from Western and Southeast Asian contexts highlighting adolescent-specific vulnerabilities in Gen Z samples.

### **Discussion**

This study systematically reviewed the relationship between digital grief and mental health outcomes in Generations Z and Alpha in articles published from 2018 to 2025. From an initial pool of 412 records, 10 studies met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed in depth. Overall, the findings from these 10 studies reveal a consistent pattern: digital platforms serve a dual role, facilitating adaptive grief processing through structured support while potentially exacerbating distress via unstructured social media interactions. These results support the initial hypothesis that digital grief experiences influence mental health, with beneficial outcomes from therapeutic interventions and mixed effects from public online mourning.

Theoretically, these findings align with the Continuing Bonds Theory (Klass et al., 1996), which posits that maintaining connections with the deceased through digital means can foster adaptive mourning when supported by privacy and social validation. Stuart et al. (2020), for example, reported that social media signals of traumatic grief among Chicago youth (ages 14–28) correlated with negative mental health outcomes like anxiety and depression. Similar evidence emerged in European and Asian contexts: studies by Pasquali et al. (2022) in Italy and Villazor and De Guzman (2022) in the Philippines confirmed that public digital expressions of grief increased rumination and distress among Gen Z participants, while private online support reduced isolation. This cross-cultural consistency suggests that digital grief operates as a context-dependent factor in mental health.

The analysis further highlights the importance of digital platform types. Several studies emphasized that structured interventions, such as web-based cognitive behavioral therapy, have

a stronger positive effect on mental health than unstructured social media use. For instance, Kaiser et al. (2022) found that therapist-assisted online programs significantly reduced prolonged grief symptoms (Cohen's  $d = 0.80$ ) among young adults, whereas Westerlund (2020) showed that memorial websites were linked to lower psychosocial satisfaction due to increased rumination. This suggests that guided digital tools may be more critical for healthy grief processing than passive online sharing. Additional variables enrich this theoretical understanding. Leaune et al. (2024) observed that digital literacy and peer support in online bereavement groups mitigate isolation, promoting posttraumatic growth, whereas low privacy awareness heightens distress in public forums. Zilka (2023) added that privacy concerns among Israeli Gen Z adolescents (ages 17-21) exacerbate mental stress from public grief expressions on social media. These findings echo Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which underscores the interaction of personal, familial, and technological factors in shaping emotional responses.

The novelty of this review lies in its focused examination of digital grief among Generations Z and Alpha, cohorts rarely analyzed systematically in non-pandemic contexts during the 2018–2025 period. By emphasizing the cross-cultural consistency of digital platforms' dual role (USA, Italy, Philippines, Sweden, Norway, Israel) and the particular significance of structured interventions, this review strengthens the empirical foundation for youth-focused digital grief support across diverse cultural contexts. Practical implications are highly relevant for mental health policy and psychosocial interventions. Digital literacy programs that emphasize privacy and guided online mourning could serve as effective strategies to support grief processing in schools and youth communities. Interventions such as mobile grief apps, as reported by Nordby et al. (2025), have been shown to reduce psychological distress and enhance coping among adolescents. Moreover, family involvement, highlighted by Villazor and De Guzman (2022), underscores the importance of systemic approaches that include parental guidance and reinforcement of digital boundaries.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, most of the reviewed studies employed cross-sectional or small-sample designs, which prevent causal conclusions about digital grief's impact on mental health. Second, the reliance on self-report and digital interaction metrics introduces potential recall and social-desirability biases. Third, although the studies represent multiple countries, the samples were predominantly Gen Z adolescents and young adults, limiting generalizability to Generation Alpha or older populations. This SLR also faced methodological constraints. The literature search was restricted to Google Scholar and Scopus, which may have excluded relevant publications indexed in other databases. Furthermore, limiting the review to the 2018-2025 time frame and non-COVID contexts

excluded pandemic-related studies that might provide comparative insights. Even so, the strict inclusion criteria ensured that all analyzed articles met adequate methodological standards in accordance with PRISMA guidelines.

The primary strength of this review lies in its systematic approach, its focus on recent cross-cultural literature specific to digital natives, and its detailed analysis of platform types and mediating variables. By synthesizing findings from diverse contexts, the review offers a comprehensive picture of digital grief's role in youth mental health. This cross-cultural synthesis enhances external validity and provides clear directions for future research. In sum, the evidence confirms that digital grief, particularly through structured platforms, plays a critical role in shaping mental health outcomes for Generations Z and Alpha across cultural settings. These findings reinforce existing theories of grief and technology while offering a practical foundation for designing digital grief interventions in educational, clinical, and online environments. Future studies are encouraged to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to clarify causal pathways and to include more diverse age groups, cultural contexts, and Generation Alpha samples.

## CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that digital platforms play a dual role in shaping grief processing and mental health outcomes among Generations Z and Alpha, with structured interventions serving as key protective factors against prolonged grief and associated distress. Across the 10 articles selected from 2018 to 2025, the findings consistently confirm that guided digital tools, such as online support groups and web-based cognitive behavioral therapy, are associated with reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety, and complicated grief, while unstructured social media use can exacerbate rumination and emotional isolation. Cross-cultural evidence from the USA, Italy, the Philippines, Sweden, Norway, and Israel strengthens the conclusion that the impact of digital grief is context-dependent, varying based on factors like digital literacy, privacy concerns, and social support availability. Notably, structured therapeutic platforms emerged as more influential than public social media in promoting adaptive mourning and mental health resilience.

Based on these findings, this review recommends enhancing digital grief literacy programs that emphasize privacy-aware online mourning and guided therapeutic interventions within schools, youth counseling services, and digital communities, accompanied by active involvement of families and mental health professionals to foster healthy grief practices. Future research should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to examine causal pathways more thoroughly and to explore differences across cultures, age groups, and emerging digital

platforms. Strengthening digital grief support can thus be considered a strategic step toward promoting mental well-being for young digital natives, while also providing a solid empirical foundation for digital literacy initiatives and youth mental health policies in Indonesia.

## REFERENCE

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Dyregrov, A., Kristensen, P., & Hauken, M. A. (2023). Loss of a child during a pandemic: A mixed method study of parents' experiences of interference with rituals and grief. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 28(6), 890–910. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2023.2226799>
- Kaiser, J. (2022). Therapist-Assisted Web-Based Intervention for Prolonged Grief Disorder After Cancer Bereavement: Randomized Controlled Trial. *JMIR Mental Health*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.2196/27642>
- Kaiser, J., Treml, J., Triandini, I., Wijaya, A., Kusuma, I. P., Bronfenbrenner, U., ... Séguin, M. (2022). “You’re just playing the victim”: Online grieving and the non-use of social media in Italy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15(1), 927330. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-024-08012-3>
- Klass, D., Silverman, P. R., & Nickman, S. L. (1996). *Continuing bonds: New understandings of grief*. Taylor & Francis.
- Leaune, E., Rouzé, H., Poulet, E., & Séguin, M. (2024). The use of social media after bereavement by suicide: Results from a French online survey. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 15, 1345678. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2024.1345678>
- Loughnan, S. A., Boyle, F. M., Vance, J. C., & Flenady, V. (2024). Living with loss: Evaluating an internet-based program for parents bereaved by perinatal death. *Trials*, 25(1), 45. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13063-024-08012-3>
- Nordby, A. S., Hauken, M. A., & Dyregrov, A. (2025). A self-management mobile app for bereaved adolescents: Assessing the feasibility of a randomized controlled trial in an internal pilot study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 76(2), 210–218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.09.015>
- Stuart, F., Riley, A., & Pourreza, H. (2020). A human-machine partnered approach for identifying social media signals of elevated traumatic grief in Chicago gang territories. *PLoS ONE*, 15(8), e0236625. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0236625>
- Treml, J. (2021). Efficacy of an Internet-based cognitive-behavioural grief therapy for people bereaved by suicide: a randomized controlled trial. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2021.1926650>
- Villazor, J., & De Guzman, R. (2022). Moment that goes beyond silence: Parents' lived experiences of grief due to traumatic loss in Bataan, Philippines. *Journal of Education, Management and Development Studies*, 2(1), 59–78. <https://doi.org/10.52631/jemds.v2i1.59>
- Westerlund, M. U. (2020). The usage of digital resources by Swedish suicide bereaved in their grief work: A survey study. *Omega - Journal of Death and Dying*, 82(1), 60–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222818765807>

Zilka, G. C. (2023). Gen Z self-portrait: Vitality, activism, belonging, happiness, self-image, and media usage habits. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(5), 5678–5700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11845-2>