e-ISSN: 2745-9535
No. 105/E/KPT/2022
Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat
Member of: AJEBI
Editorial Office: Jl. Soekarno-Hatta, Rembuksari No. 1A, Malang, East Java, Indonesia, 65113
Contact: Phone: +62 (341) 478494 e-mail: jpm@asia.ac.id
The journal is published by Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Asia Malang
Website: https://jurnal.stie.asia.ac.id/index.php/jpm
Indexed in: Google Crossref neliti GARUDA Journal Dimensions

Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z

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Volume
7
Issue
2
Edition
November
Page
489-500
Year
2026

Article History

Submission: 07-09-2026
Review: 29-09-2026
Accepted: 06-11-2026

Keyword

Legal Literacy;
Narcotics;
Criminal Offenses;

How to cite

Sinabariba, D., Simbolon, N. Y., Devi, R. S., Barus, R. M., Hamonangan, A., & Zulkarnain, N. J. R. (2026). Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z. Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat, 7(2), 489–500. https://doi.org/10.32815/jpm.v7i2.3116

Abstract

Purpose: This program aims to strengthen legal literacy among Generation Z as a preventive strategy against narcotics-related criminal offenses. Specifically, it seeks to increase young people's understanding of narcotics-related criminal law, including the types of offenses, legal consequences, and risks associated with narcotics abuse, possession, distribution, and trafficking.

Method: This program employs a participatory and community-based approach to strengthen legal literacy among Generation Z as a preventive strategy against narcotics-related criminal offenses. The method is designed to actively involve participants in the learning process through legal education, discussion, digital campaigns, and evaluation activities.

Practical Applications: This program can serve as a preventive model for collaboration among universities, schools, families, communities, and relevant law enforcement institutions. Continuous collaboration and digital-based legal education can strengthen young people's legal awareness and contribute to the long-term prevention of narcotics-related criminal offenses.

Conclusion: This program contributed to improving participants' understanding of narcotics-related criminal law, increasing legal awareness, and developing more positive preventive attitudes. The use of interactive legal education, case-based learning, digital media, and peer-based communication provided an accessible and relevant approach for Generation Z.

Introduction

Narcotics abuse remains one of the serious criminal and social problems in many countries, including Indonesia (Todorovi, 2025). The distribution and misuse of narcotics not only threaten individual health and social welfare but also contribute to various forms of criminality and social disorder (Ridzuan et al., 2025). The development of digital technology has further created new opportunities for narcotics distribution, particularly through social media and online communication platforms. This situation requires preventive measures that involve not only law enforcement but also the active participation of young people and the wider community. Generation Z is one of the groups that is highly exposed to the rapid development of digital technology and social media. Their intensive interaction with digital platforms provides both opportunities and challenges in relation to legal awareness. Limited understanding of criminal law, particularly concerning narcotics-related offenses, may increase vulnerability to negative influences, peer pressure, misinformation, and illegal activities. Therefore, strengthening legal literacy among Generation Z is important to develop awareness of the legal consequences of narcotics abuse and to encourage responsible behavior.

Narcotics abuse remains a serious criminal and social problem in Indonesia. The distribution, possession, and misuse of narcotics have implications not only for individual health and social welfare but also for public security and the prevention of criminal offenses (Ulfa Mayanita, 2024). The rapid development of digital technology has further transformed the way information and communication take place, including the emergence of digital spaces that may be misused to facilitate illegal activities. Consequently, narcotics prevention requires a comprehensive approach that combines law enforcement, education, community participation, and the strengthening of legal awareness. Generation Z represents an important target group for preventive efforts because of its intensive interaction with digital technology and social media (Martadikusuma, 2025). Digital platforms provide opportunities for accessing educational information, but they may also expose young people to misinformation, peer influence, and potentially harmful or illegal content. In this context, legal literacy is important because knowledge of applicable law can help young people understand their rights and obligations, recognize the legal consequences of narcotics-related conduct, and make more responsible decisions. Legal literacy should therefore not be understood merely as knowledge of statutory provisions, but also as the capacity to apply legal knowledge when responding to situations encountered in everyday life and digital environments (Romdoni & Karomah, 2021).

Legal literacy refers to an individual's ability to understand basic legal principles, recognize rights and obligations, and make decisions based on applicable laws. In the context of narcotics prevention, legal literacy can serve as an important preventive instrument. Young people who understand the legal consequences of possessing, using, distributing, or facilitating narcotics-related activities are expected to have greater awareness of the risks associated with such behavior. Legal education can also help young people distinguish between legitimate information and misinformation concerning narcotics and criminal law. A preventive approach is particularly important because efforts to combat narcotics-related crimes should not rely solely on punitive measures after an offense has occurred (Lee et al., 2025). Prevention through legal education can strengthen individual awareness and build a culture of law-abiding behavior. Interactive and accessible legal education, particularly through digital media, can provide an effective means of reaching Generation Z. Such an approach can include educational videos, social media campaigns, digital modules, discussions, and other forms of participatory legal education (Azisa et al., 2024).

Based on these considerations, “Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z” aims to strengthen the legal understanding and awareness of young people regarding narcotics-related criminal offenses. The program is expected to contribute to the development of a preventive model based on legal literacy, enabling Generation Z to recognize the dangers and legal

consequences of narcotics abuse and to actively participate in efforts to prevent narcotics-related crimes in their communities. Narcotics abuse remains one of the serious criminal and social problems in many countries, including Indonesia. The abuse, distribution, and trafficking of narcotics not only threaten individual health and social welfare but also contribute to various forms of criminality and social disorder (Barut et al., 2025). The rapid development of digital technology has further created new opportunities for narcotics-related activities, particularly through social media and online communication platforms. This situation requires preventive measures that involve not only law enforcement institutions but also the active participation of young people, educational institutions, families, and the wider community.

Generation Z is one of the groups most exposed to the rapid development of digital technology and social media. Their intensive interaction with digital platforms provides both opportunities and challenges in strengthening legal awareness. Limited understanding of criminal law, particularly regarding narcotics-related offenses, may increase young people's vulnerability to negative influences, peer pressure, misinformation, and illegal activities. Therefore, strengthening legal literacy among Generation Z is essential to develop awareness of the legal consequences of narcotics-related activities and encourage responsible decision-making (Nurhadiyanto, 2018). Legal literacy refers to an individual's ability to understand basic legal principles, recognize rights and obligations, and make decisions based on applicable laws. In the context of narcotics prevention, legal literacy can function as an important preventive instrument. Young people who understand the legal consequences of possessing, using, distributing, or facilitating narcotics-related activities are more likely to recognize the risks associated with such behavior (Mccreery et al., 2025). Legal education can also equip young people with the ability to distinguish accurate legal information from misinformation concerning narcotics and criminal law (Djamal & Sommaliagustina, 1999).

A preventive approach is particularly important because efforts to combat narcotics-related criminal offenses should not rely solely on punitive measures after an offense has occurred. Prevention through legal education can strengthen individual awareness, promote responsible behavior, and contribute to the development of a law-abiding culture. Interactive and accessible legal education, particularly through digital media, provides an opportunity to reach Generation Z effectively (Zaqiya Alfi Mansyuri, 2024). Such approaches may include educational videos, social media campaigns, digital modules, case studies, discussions, and other forms of participatory legal education. Based on these considerations, the program entitled “Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z” aims to strengthen the legal knowledge and awareness of young people concerning narcotics-related criminal offenses. The program seeks to develop a preventive model based on legal literacy that enables Generation Z to recognize the dangers and legal consequences of narcotics-related activities, make responsible decisions, resist negative social influences, and actively participate in preventing narcotics-related criminal offenses within their communities (Gunawan et al., 2021).

This condition reveals a gap between young people's intensive exposure to digital information and their capacity to assess narcotics-related information from a legal perspective. Although young people may encounter information concerning narcotics through digital platforms, such exposure does not necessarily correspond with adequate understanding of criminal law, legal consequences, or appropriate preventive responses. Therefore, a preventive intervention should be designed according to the characteristics and information needs of Generation Z. Interactive and accessible legal education through digital media can provide an appropriate mechanism for addressing this gap. Educational videos, digital modules, case-based discussions, social media content, quizzes, and participatory discussions can be used to present legal information in a form that is relevant to young people's daily experiences (Amanda et al., 2024). From a preventive perspective, strengthening legal literacy is important because narcotics prevention should not depend exclusively on punitive measures after an offense has occurred. Legal education can

contribute to the development of awareness, responsible decision-making, and law-abiding behavior. It can also strengthen young people's ability to identify risks, understand the legal consequences of narcotics-related activities, resist negative peer influence, and respond appropriately to misleading information. Involving schools, families, and the wider community can further strengthen the sustainability of these preventive efforts.

Based on the identified problem, this program, entitled “Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z,” is designed to address the specific legal-literacy needs of the target community. The program aims to strengthen students' knowledge and awareness of narcotics-related criminal offenses, improve their ability to identify legal risks and misinformation in digital environments, and encourage responsible decision-making. The program will employ participatory and interactive legal education through [legal-literacy workshops/digital learning modules/case studies/pre- and post-tests/social media-based educational materials]. The expected outcome is an increase in participants' legal knowledge and awareness and the development of a practical preventive legal-literacy model that can be adapted by educational institutions and communities facing similar challenges.

Method

This program employs a participatory and community-based approach to strengthen legal literacy among Generation Z as a preventive strategy against narcotics-related criminal offenses. The method is designed to actively involve participants in the learning process through legal education, discussion, digital campaigns, and evaluation activities (Mazzeo, 2026). The target participants are members of Generation Z SMA Negeri 1 Medan, particularly senior high school students, university students, and young people who are active in digital communities. Participants are selected based on their relevance to the program's objectives and their potential to become agents of legal awareness within their peer groups and communities. The implementation consists of several stages:

a. Preliminary Stage: The preliminary stage involves identifying participants' level of understanding of narcotics-related criminal offenses and their awareness of the legal consequences of narcotics abuse. A preliminary survey and pre-test are conducted to identify the participants' knowledge and educational needs.
b. Legal Education Stage: Participants receive legal education concerning the definition and classification of narcotics, forms of narcotics-related criminal offenses, legal consequences of narcotics abuse and distribution, and the importance of prevention. The materials are presented in an accessible and interactive manner using presentations, case studies, videos, and discussions.
c. Interactive Discussion and Case Study: Participants are provided with relevant cases involving narcotics-related criminal offenses. Through group discussions, they are encouraged to analyze the legal issues, identify potential criminal acts, understand the applicable legal consequences, and formulate preventive measures.
d. Digital Legal Literacy Campaign: The program utilizes digital platforms commonly used by Generation Z to disseminate legal information. Participants are encouraged to develop educational content, including infographics, short videos, posters, and social media campaigns concerning narcotics prevention and legal awareness.

Data are collected through questionnaires, pre-tests, post-tests, observations, interviews, and documentation. Quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test are used to measure changes in participants' legal literacy, while qualitative data are used to evaluate their understanding, participation, and responses to the program. Quantitative data are analyzed descriptively by comparing the participants' pre-test and post-test scores. An increase in post-test scores indicates an improvement in participants' understanding of narcotics-related criminal law. Qualitative data from observations, discussions, and interviews are analyzed descriptively to identify changes in participants' legal awareness and attitudes

toward narcotics prevention (Kasim et al., 2021). The method is expected to produce measurable improvements in legal literacy among Generation Z. In addition to increasing knowledge of narcotics-related criminal offenses, the program aims to encourage preventive behavior and strengthen the role of young people as agents of legal awareness in their schools, universities, families, and communities. The expected outcome of the program is measurable improvement in legal literacy among Generation Z in the target community. Beyond increasing knowledge, the program is intended to strengthen participants' capacity to make responsible decisions, respond critically to narcotics-related information in digital environments, and contribute to preventive legal-awareness activities within their schools, families, peer groups, and communities

Result

In addition to the improvement in legal knowledge and preventive attitudes, the implementation of the program demonstrated several important dynamics during the mentoring and training process. The activities were conducted through interactive legal education, case-based discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and digital legal literacy activities. These methods encouraged participants to become actively involved rather than merely receiving legal information (Arinda et al., 2025). The program generated active participation through discussions, questions, case analysis, and educational content development, with participants showing greater interest when legal concepts were presented through practical cases and digital media rather than conventional lectures alone. During the initial sessions, some participants demonstrated limited understanding of the classification of narcotics, the forms of narcotics-related criminal offenses, and the legal consequences of possession, use, distribution, and trafficking. This condition became an important starting point for the mentoring process. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and relate the legal materials to situations that could occur in their social and digital environments. Through case studies, they were guided to identify potentially unlawful conduct, distinguish between different forms of narcotics-related activities, and discuss appropriate preventive responses. This process gradually encouraged participants to become more confident in expressing their opinions and analyzing legal problems.

The participants' responses became more active as the training progressed. Rather than relying solely on theoretical explanations, participants showed greater engagement when the facilitators presented practical cases and digital content. Group discussions encouraged participants to exchange views concerning peer pressure, offers to use narcotics, exposure to negative social environments, and the circulation of information through digital platforms. The participants were also encouraged to formulate preventive measures based on the legal information they had received. This interactive process supported the development of more positive preventive attitudes and strengthened their ability to recognize situations that may expose them to narcotics-related criminal activities (Azisa et al., 2024).

Several challenges were encountered during the implementation of the program. One of the main challenges was the different levels of participants' initial legal knowledge. Some participants were already familiar with general information about narcotics, while others had limited understanding of the distinction between narcotics abuse and narcotics-related criminal offenses. Another challenge was maintaining participants' attention when legal concepts were delivered through conventional explanations. To overcome these challenges, the implementation team adapted the learning process by using simpler explanations, practical examples, case studies, interactive questions, and digital media. The use of educational videos, infographics, posters, and social media content made the legal information more accessible and relevant to participants' everyday communication habits.

The mentoring process also demonstrated a gradual transformation in the participants' roles. Initially, participants primarily acted as recipients of legal information. During the subsequent stages, however, they were encouraged to become active contributors by

analyzing cases, discussing preventive measures, producing educational content, and sharing information with their peers. The use of digital platforms therefore expanded the function of the program beyond the training sessions themselves (Wicaksana et al., 2020). Participants were encouraged to disseminate preventive messages concerning the dangers of narcotics, legal consequences, and the importance of avoiding involvement in narcotics-related criminal activities within their peer environments.

The implementation of the legal literacy program demonstrated that strengthening legal knowledge can play an important role in preventing narcotics-related criminal offenses among Generation Z. The program focused on increasing participants' understanding of narcotics-related criminal law, developing legal awareness, and encouraging preventive attitudes and behaviors. The educational activities showed an improvement in participants' understanding of the legal aspects of narcotics (Yusviq Andito et al., 2022). Before participating in the program, some participants had limited knowledge regarding the classification of narcotics, forms of narcotics-related criminal offenses, and the legal consequences associated with the possession, use, distribution, and trafficking of narcotics.

After receiving legal education, participants demonstrated a better understanding of the distinction between narcotics abuse and narcotics-related criminal activities. They were also able to identify several behaviors that may constitute violations of narcotics laws and recognize the potential criminal consequences of such conduct (Venerdi & Edrisy, 2025). The program contributed to strengthening participants' awareness of the importance of complying with narcotics laws. Participants became more aware that narcotics-related offenses can have serious consequences not only for individuals but also for families and communities. The discussions indicated that participants increasingly recognized the importance of refusing offers to use or distribute narcotics and understood the need to seek appropriate assistance when encountering narcotics-related problems.

The results also showed the development of more positive preventive attitudes among participants. Through case studies and interactive discussions, participants were encouraged to identify potential risks, analyze legal consequences, and determine appropriate preventive actions. This approach helped participants understand that preventing narcotics-related criminal offenses requires not only knowledge of legal sanctions but also the ability to make responsible decisions and resist negative social influences (Wijaya & Ruslie, 2024). Digital media proved to be an effective instrument for delivering legal information to Generation Z. Educational materials presented through short videos, infographics, posters, and social media content were considered more accessible and relevant to participants' daily communication habits. The use of digital platforms also encouraged participants to become active disseminators of legal information. Participants were encouraged to share preventive messages concerning the dangers of narcotics and the legal consequences of narcotics-related offenses with their peers.

The program generated active participation through discussions, questions, case analysis, and educational content development. Participants demonstrated greater interest when legal concepts were presented through practical cases and digital media rather than through conventional lectures alone. This finding suggests that participatory legal education can provide a more engaging approach to strengthening legal literacy among Generation Z (Azisa et al., 2024). Overall, the program indicates that strengthening legal literacy can support the prevention of narcotics-related criminal offenses among Generation Z (Harianja et al., 2023). Increased understanding of narcotics law, greater legal awareness, and the development of preventive attitudes demonstrate the potential of legal education as a preventive instrument. The combination of legal education, case-based learning, interactive discussions, and digital literacy campaigns provides an accessible approach to strengthening the capacity of Generation Z to recognize, avoid, and prevent involvement in narcotics-related criminal activities.

The implementation of Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against

Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z resulted in several significant outcomes related to legal knowledge, legal awareness, and preventive attitudes among participants.The program demonstrated that legal literacy can serve as an effective preventive instrument in increasing young people's understanding of narcotics-related criminal offenses. Participants gained a better understanding of the types of narcotics-related offenses, the legal consequences of narcotics abuse and distribution, and the importance of avoiding activities that may lead to criminal involvement (Edrisy, 2025). Furthermore, participants showed increased awareness of the legal and social risks associated with narcotics. Through interactive discussions and case-based learning, participants were able to identify situations that could potentially involve narcotics-related criminal offenses and understand appropriate preventive responses. The use of digital media also strengthened the effectiveness of the program. Educational videos, infographics, and social media content made legal information more accessible and relevant to Generation Z. Participants were not only recipients of legal information but also actively contributed to disseminating preventive messages among their peers (Putri Lidia Damayanti, 2024).

Figure 1. Legal Literacy for Gen Z and Narcotics Prevention



Source: Author's Work, 2026.

Discussion

The findings of this community service program indicate that strengthening legal literacy can contribute to improving young people's understanding of narcotics-related criminal offenses, legal awareness, and preventive attitudes. However, these changes should not be understood merely as the result of transferring legal information. The dynamics of the mentoring process indicate that the combination of interactive education, case-based learning, discussion, and digital media created a learning environment that enabled participants to connect legal concepts with situations that may occur in their everyday social and digital environments (Fikrie & Prasetyo, 2024).

The program also encouraged the development of preventive attitudes. Participants demonstrated greater willingness to reject narcotics-related activities, avoid negative peer influences, and share information concerning the legal and social dangers of narcotics. Overall, the results indicate that a combination of legal education, interactive case studies, digital literacy, and peer-based communication can strengthen legal literacy among Generation Z (Pambudi et al., 2022). This approach has the potential to support broader preventive efforts against narcotics-related criminal offenses. The implementation of the legal literacy program demonstrated positive outcomes in strengthening legal knowledge, legal awareness, and preventive attitudes toward narcotics-related criminal offenses among Generation Z (Kurniawan et al., 2024). The program focused on increasing participants' understanding of narcotics-related criminal law while encouraging responsible and preventive behavior (Salwa, 2024).

The educational activities resulted in improved understanding of the legal aspects of narcotics. Prior to the program, some participants had limited knowledge regarding the classification of narcotics, forms of narcotics-related criminal offenses, and the legal consequences associated with the possession, use, distribution, and trafficking of narcotics.

Following the legal education sessions, participants demonstrated a better understanding of narcotics-related criminal offenses and their potential legal consequences (Ahmad Fauzi, 2022). Participants were also better able to distinguish between narcotics abuse and other forms of narcotics-related criminal activities and to identify behaviors that may constitute violations of applicable narcotics laws.

The program contributed to strengthening participants' awareness of the importance of complying with narcotics laws. Participants demonstrated greater awareness that narcotics-related offenses may have serious consequences not only for individuals but also for families and communities. Through interactive discussions, participants increasingly recognized the importance of refusing offers to use or distribute narcotics, avoiding environments that may increase exposure to narcotics, and seeking appropriate assistance when encountering narcotics-related problems (Nasadi et al., 2023).

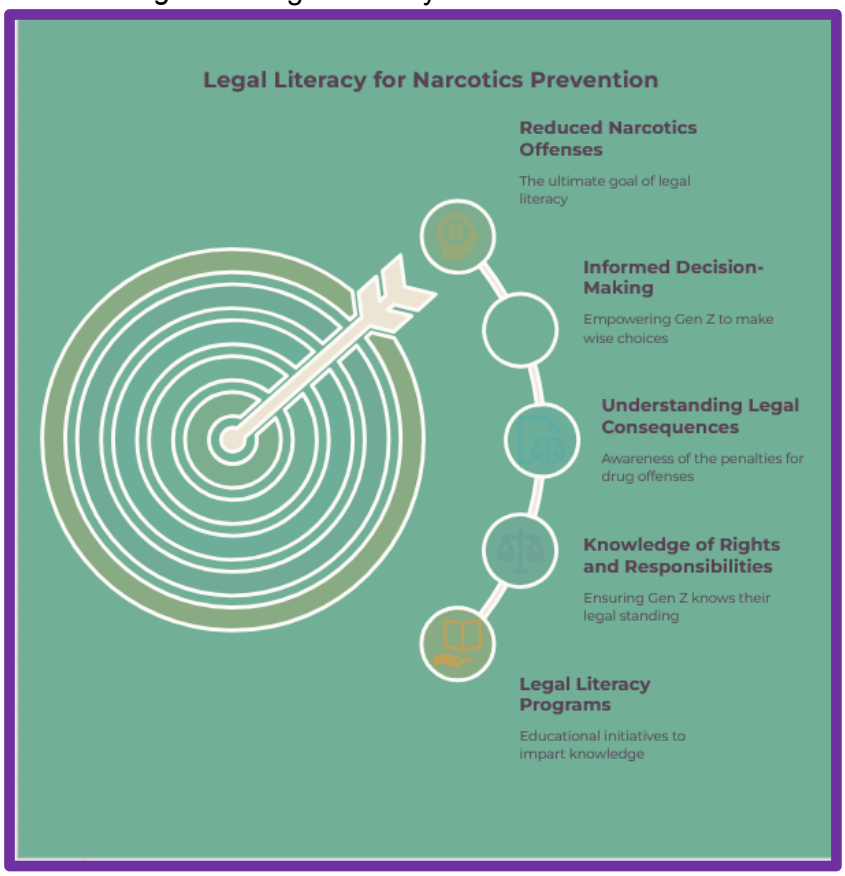
The results also indicated the development of more positive preventive attitudes among participants. Case studies and interactive discussions encouraged participants to identify potential risks, analyze the legal consequences of narcotics-related activities, and formulate appropriate preventive responses. The activities demonstrated that effective prevention requires more than knowledge of criminal sanctions. Young people also need the ability to make responsible decisions, resist negative peer influence, and recognize situations that may expose them to narcotics-related criminal activities.

Digital media served as an important instrument for delivering legal information to Generation Z. Educational videos, infographics, posters, and social media content made legal information more accessible and relevant to participants' everyday communication habits. The use of digital platforms also encouraged participants to become active disseminators of legal information. Participants were encouraged to share preventive messages concerning the dangers of narcotics, legal consequences, and the importance of avoiding involvement in narcotics-related criminal activities among their peers.

The program generated active participation through discussions, questions, case analysis, and educational content development. Participants demonstrated greater interest when legal concepts were presented through practical cases and digital media rather than through conventional lecture-based methods alone (Tambunan, 2023). This finding indicates that participatory legal education can provide a more engaging approach to strengthening legal literacy among Generation Z. Active involvement also enables participants to internalize legal information and apply it to situations that they may encounter in their social and digital environments.

Overall, the results indicate that strengthening legal literacy can support the prevention of narcotics-related criminal offenses among Generation Z. The improvement in legal knowledge, increased awareness of legal consequences, and development of preventive attitudes demonstrate the potential of legal education as a preventive instrument. The combination of legal education, case-based learning, interactive discussions, digital literacy, and peer-based communication provides an accessible and relevant approach to strengthening the capacity of Generation Z to recognize, avoid, and prevent involvement in narcotics-related criminal activities (Marcelino Donato A.F Lokollo, 2023).

Figure 2. Legal Literacy Narcotics Prevention



Source: Author's Work, 2026.

Conclusion

The implementation of the "Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z" program demonstrates that legal literacy can serve as an important preventive instrument in addressing narcotics-related criminal offenses among young people. The program contributed to improving participants' understanding of narcotics-related criminal law, increasing legal awareness, and developing more positive preventive attitudes. The use of interactive legal education, case-based learning, digital media, and peer-based communication provided an accessible and relevant approach for Generation Z. Participants were able to better recognize narcotics-related criminal offenses, understand their potential legal consequences, identify risks, and develop greater awareness of the importance of avoiding involvement in narcotics-related activities.

The findings further indicate that narcotics prevention should not rely solely on punitive law enforcement. Preventive efforts through continuous legal education and digital literacy are also necessary to strengthen young people's capacity to make responsible decisions and resist negative social influences. Generation Z can therefore be positioned not only as the target of prevention programs but also as agents of legal awareness who can disseminate accurate legal information within their peer groups and communities. Therefore, strengthening legal literacy should be developed as a continuous and collaborative preventive strategy involving educational institutions, families, communities, legal practitioners, and young people. Sustainable digital-based legal education is recommended to broaden the reach and long-term impact of narcotics prevention programs among Generation Z.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all parties who contributed to the implementation and completion of the program entitled “Strengthening Legal Literacy as a Preventive Strategy against Narcotics-Related Criminal Offenses among Generation Z.” The authors gratefully acknowledge the support and assistance provided by the university, lecturers, students, and partner institutions who contributed to the implementation of the legal literacy activities. Special appreciation is also extended to all participants from Generation Z for their active participation, enthusiasm, and valuable contributions throughout the program. The authors also thank the individuals and institutions who provided guidance, facilities, and administrative support, which enabled the program to be conducted effectively. Their cooperation and commitment were essential to achieving the objectives of this program. Finally, the authors appreciate everyone who contributed directly or indirectly to this work. It is hoped that the results of this program will contribute to strengthening legal awareness and supporting preventive efforts against narcotics-related criminal offenses among young people.

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