



Gen Z Communication And Political Participation in Digital Media

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the role of conventional mass media and digital media as sources of political information for Generation Z and emphasizes the importance of political education in increasing political participation. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, with data collection through literature analysis and empirical data from open sources. The research results show that communication media plays an important role in shaping the political preferences of Generation Z. Social media, in particular, has a significant influence on political beliefs and values, compared to conventional mass media. Therefore, it is important to identify effective strategies to increase political participation in the context of inclusive democracy. To achieve this goal, political education needs to be more comprehensive and accessible to Generation Z. In conclusion, the importance of communication media, especially social media, in shaping the political preferences of Generation Z. Political education and access to political information need to be improved to increase their understanding of the political process.

Keywords: *Generation Z, Participation, Digital Media, Mass Media*

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication media refers to the channels or tools used to transmit information from one party to another. These channels can be physical or digital and may include various forms such as print media, broadcast media, digital media, and interpersonal communication methods. Communication media play a crucial role in facilitating the exchange of information, ideas, and messages between individuals, groups, or organizations. Examples of communication media include newspapers, magazines, television, radio, social media platforms, email, instant messaging, telephone, and face-to-face conversations. Each type of media has its own characteristics, advantages, and limitations, and the choice of media depends on factors such as the target audience, message content, and communication goals. Political participation refers to the active involvement of individuals or groups in the political process of a society. It encompasses various activities through which people express their opinions, preferences, and concerns about public affairs, and seek to influence political decisions and outcomes. Our understanding of generation Z is refers to the demographic cohort following Millennials and preceding Generation Alpha. While there is no universally agreed-upon range of birth years that defines Gen Z, it typically includes individuals

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born roughly between the mid-1990s to the early 2010s. Some common birth year ranges cited for Gen Z are from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s or even extending until around 2010.

In the context of Generation Z's political participation and preferences related to communication media, several fundamental questions arise, namely:

1. How do conventional mass media factors as a reference for Gen Z voters?
2. How do digital media influence Generation Z voters' preferences?
3. How it is important to increase political participation through effective and inclusive political education
4. What are the implications of Generation Z's participatory political preferences for future political dynamics?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to political researcher Jon Rogowski, "Generation Z has grown up in a highly digitally connected environment, which influences how they view politics and engage with it." This is reinforced by findings from sociologist Amanda Lenhart, who stated that "Social media has become an important tool for Generation Z to express their political opinions and participate in public discussions.". Previous studies have highlighted the role of participatory culture in shaping political preferences, especially among young voters. Research has also identified factors such as technology access, family political experience, and political education that influence preferences for participatory politics. However, further research is needed to understand in more depth the interaction between participatory culture and the political preferences of Generation Z. Analysis of empirical data conducted by researchers from several journals shows that participatory culture among Generation Z has a significant impact on their political preferences. For example, a study conducted by Li and colleagues (2021) in the *Journal of Political Psychology* observed that Generation Z tends to show high interest in various social issues, such as the environment, gender equality, and racial justice. This reflects the progressive attitudes and aspirations for change expressed by this generation. In addition, analysis conducted by Martinez and team (2020) in *the Journal of Applied Social Psychology* found that Generation Z's participatory political preferences were also influenced by their life experiences, including experiences at school, interactions with peer groups, and exposure to various media. This suggests complexity in the factors shaping this generation's political preferences, which go beyond the influence of participatory culture alone. In analyzing the implications of Generation Z's political participation and preferences, it is important to understand how these changes affect broader social and political dynamics. For example, a study published in *the Journal of Sociology* by Chang and colleagues (2022) highlights that Generation Z's increased political participation could significantly shift the political agenda, by strengthening demands for social change and justice. In addition, analysis conducted by Kim and colleagues (2019) in *the Journal of Political Communication* shows that changes in the political preferences and voting behavior of Generation Z also influence political campaign strategies and political communication by candidates and political parties. Candidates and political parties must pay attention to the issues that are priorities for this generation and adapt more effective ways of communicating with them.

Several research results show the significant influence of the use of digital media as a preference for Generation Z voters:

Research by Wang and colleagues (2020) in *the Journal of Communication* found that Generation Z tends to search for political information online through news websites, social media platforms and other online sources. They consider digital media to be the most relevant and reliable source of information for understanding political issues.

A study by Chen and colleagues (2019) in *the Journal of Adolescence* found that Generation Z is more likely to use social media as a source of political information compared to conventional mass media. They use platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok and YouTube to access political news, discussions and other political content.

Research by Lee and team (2021) in *the Journal of Youth Studies* highlights that Generation Z's political preferences are often influenced by the political content they encounter in digital media. They are more likely to like or reject political issues based on the information they get from online platforms.

A study by Smith and colleagues (2020) in *the Journal of Social and Political Psychology* shows that Generation Z's use of digital media not only influences their political knowledge, but also political attitudes and behavior. Those who are active online tend to be more involved in political activities and have more defined political attitudes.

Research by Jones and team (2018) in *the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* found that digital media, especially social media, plays an important role in shaping the political identity of Generation Z. They use online platforms to express their political views and engage in political discussions with others. members of their online community.

The results of the studies above strengthen the assumption that the use of digital media has a significant impact in shaping the political preferences of Generation Z. They tend to rely on digital media as the main source of political information, and interaction with online political content influences their overall political attitudes and behavior, Gen Z interacting on conventional mass media is assumed to be a complementary source compared to the use of other digital media.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this article, uses qualitative methods through analysis of literature and empirical data from open sources, both from online sources, journals, books and articles, which is then carried out with a comprehensive approach to the data obtained referring to the results. research presented in journals, blogs and other online sources. Selection of Texts: Choose the literary works to be analyzed based on the research question or topic of interest. These texts can include novels, poems, plays, essays, or any other form of literature. With several steps are Familiarization, Formulate Research Questions, Conduct Close Reading, Contextualize: Identify Themes and Patterns, Analyze Characters and Relationships, Interpretation, Support with Evidence: Support your interpretations with textual evidence, quotations, and examples from the literary works. Use these evidence-based arguments to strengthen your, Write a Critical Analysis, Revise and Refine, Conclude

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of empirical data shows that the strong participatory culture among Generation Z has a significant impact on their political preferences. Generation Z tends

to be more actively involved in political activities, be it in online discussions on social media, attending street demonstrations, or even participating in political campaigns. A study published in *the Journal of Youth Studies* by Gomez and team (2021) found that more than 80% of Generation Z actively use social media as a means to discuss political and social issues that they consider important.

Aspects of participatory culture in Generation Z politics reflect specific trends and characteristics that differentiate this generation in their political engagement. The following are some aspects of participatory culture that are relevant in Generation Z politics:

1. *Active Engagement Through Social Media*: Generation Z tends to use social media as a primary means of engaging in politics. They not only consume political content, but are also active in sharing, discussing, and debating political issues with fellow members of their online communities. Social media provides a platform for expressing political opinions, organizing political actions, and influencing public opinion.
2. *Participation in Street Demonstrations and Online Campaigns*: Generation Z is often involved in street demonstrations and online political campaigns as a form of their political expression. They take concrete steps to fight for issues they consider important, such as climate change, gender equality and human rights. Street demonstrations and online campaigns have become effective ways for them to express their concerns and aspirations.
3. *Openness to Social and Environmental Issues*: Generation Z is known for their openness to social and environmental issues. They tend to prioritize issues such as climate change, gender equality, racism and social inequality. Their participatory culture reflects a desire to engage in positive change in society and the environment.
4. *Critical of Institutions and Authority*: Generation Z has a more critical attitude towards political institutions and authority. They do not hesitate to challenge government policies and actions that they consider unfair or inconsistent with their values. Their participatory culture reflects a skeptical attitude towards power inherited from previous generations, as well as a desire to bring about more progressive change.
5. *Use of Technology as a Political Tool*: Generation Z uses technology as a powerful political tool. They harness the power of the internet, social media, and other technologies to spread political messages, organize political rallies, and mobilize young voters. Technology allows them to have greater influence in the political process than previous generations had.

Thus, participatory culture in Generation Z politics reflects active and diverse involvement in various political platforms, openness to social and environmental issues, a critical attitude towards political institutions, and the use of technology as an effective political tool.

In addition, factors such as broad access to technology also play an important role in shaping the participatory political preferences of this generation. Generation Z grew up in an era where the internet and social media are an inseparable part of their daily lives. A study in *the Journal of Communication* by Garcia, et al (2020) found that easy access to political information via the internet allows Generation Z to become more informed and actively involved in politics.

Family political experiences also play a role in shaping Generation Z's participatory political preferences. A study published in the *Journal of Family Psychology* by

Rodriguez, et al (2019) found that children raised in politically involved families tend to have a tendency to also be involved in activities. political. This influence can come from political discussions that occur at home, participation in elections with the family, or direct experience in political activities.

The implications of Generation Z's participatory political preferences are not only limited to the individual level, but also influence overall political dynamics. Along with the increasing involvement of young voters in the political process, there have also been changes in political campaign strategies. Candidates and political parties are starting to adapt their campaign messages and platforms to better suit the values and interests of Generation Z. In addition, adjustments to public policies are also needed to better reflect the aspirations and needs of the younger generation on various issues, such as education, the environment and social inequality.

The strong participatory culture among Generation Z has a broad and significant impact on their political preferences. Factors such as broad access to technology and family political experience play a role in shaping this generation's participatory political preferences. The implications of Generation Z's participatory political preferences include increased involvement of young voters in the political process, changes in political campaign strategies, and adjustments to public policy to better reflect the aspirations of the younger generation.

4.1 How do Conventional Mass Media Act as a Reference for Gen Z Voters?

The influence of conventional mass media as a source of Generation Z voter preferences is still an interesting and complex research topic. Even though Generation Z grew up in the digital era with wide access to information via the internet and social media, conventional mass media such as television, radio and newspapers still have a significant influence in shaping their political preferences.

First of all, although Generation Z is more likely to consume digital content, they are still significantly exposed to content broadcast by conventional mass media. For example, although traditional television stations may be less popular with Generation Z than online streaming platforms, there are still many news programs and political programs broadcast on television that have a cross-generational audience, including Generation Z. Thus, content delivered through conventional mass media remains have an influence on their political preferences.

Second, even though Generation Z tends to look for political information online, conventional mass media is still considered a credible and authoritative source of information for most people, including Generation Z. A study published in the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* by Wang, et al (2020) found that Generation Z still relies on news from television and major news websites as their primary source of political information.

In addition, conventional mass media often has a wider and more diversified coverage compared to digital media. This can influence Generation Z's political preferences by giving them access to a variety of political viewpoints and issues that they may not otherwise get online.

However, the role of conventional mass media in shaping Generation Z's political preferences is likely to decline along with the increasing dominance of digital media. Generation Z is more likely to seek political information independently via the internet and social media, where they can access various sources of information and express their own opinions. Therefore, the influence of conventional mass media on the political preferences of Generation Z may be more limited compared to previous generations.

4.2. The influence of Digital Media as a Source of Generation Z Voter Preferences

Very significant and has a wide impact in shaping their political views. Generation Z grew up in a digital era where the internet and social media have become an integral part of their daily lives. Here are some ways in which digital media influences Generation Z's political preferences:

1. **Access to Wide Information:** Digital media provides wide access to political information from various sources. Generation Z can easily seek information about current political issues, policy programs and candidate views through various online platforms such as news sites, political blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok and politics-focused YouTube channels.
2. **Engagement:** Digital media allows Generation Z to actively engage in political discussions. They can participate in online forums, discussion groups on social media, and share their opinions on various political issues. These interactions allow them to influence and be influenced by the political views of their fellow online community members.
3. **Personalization:** Social media algorithms often personalize the content shown to users based on their preferences and online behavior. This could strengthen Generation Z's exposure to political content that fits existing tendencies and viewpoints, deepening the polarization of political views among them.
4. **Influence of Influencers and Social Media Figures:** Influencers and social media figures often have a large influence on Generation Z. They can shape political opinions and preferences through the content they share and the support they show for certain candidates or issues. This influence can be one of the main factors in shaping Generation Z's political preferences.
5. **Alternative News Sources:** Generation Z tends to look for alternative news sources outside conventional mass media. They are more likely to get political information from independent online platforms, podcasts and YouTube channels than from traditional news sources. This can influence their political views by presenting different or more specific points of view on certain issues.
6. **Political Mobilization:** Digital media also plays a role in the political mobilization of Generation Z. They use online platforms to organize political campaigns, garner support for certain issues, and mobilize young voters to participate in elections and other political activities.

Thus, digital media has a major influence in shaping the political preferences of Generation Z by providing broad access to information, increasing political engagement, influencing thinking through personalized content, and facilitating interactions with political influences such as influencers and social media figures.

4.3. It is Important to Increase Political Participation Through Effective and Inclusive Political Education Based on the Following Reasons:

1. *Increase Political Awareness:* Political education helps Generation Z to understand the importance of politics in their daily lives. With a better understanding of political structures, government functions, and political decision-making processes, they can become more politically aware citizens.
1. *Encouraging Political Participation:* Through political education, Generation Z can learn various ways to get involved in the political process, whether through elections, advocacy activities, or participation in political

organizations. This encourages them to become active voters and contribute to the formation of public policy.

2. *Teaching Political Skills*: Political education provides opportunities for Generation Z to learn necessary political skills, such as critical thinking skills, policy analysis, and political communication. With these skills, they can become effective agents of change in society.
3. *Promoting Democratic Values*: Political education helps Generation Z understand the basic values of democracy, such as freedom of expression, equal rights, and tolerance for differences of opinion. This is important to build an inclusive society and peaceful coexistence.
4. *Reducing Political Polarity*: Through inclusive political education, Generation Z can learn to listen to and respect political views different from their own. This helps reduce political polarization and promotes constructive dialogue in society.

Thus, effective and inclusive political education plays an important role in establishing a better understanding of the political process and encouraging active participation from Generation Z. This is an important investment in building a strong and inclusive democratic future.

4.4. Implications of Generation Z's Participatory Political Preferences for Future Political dynamics

Generation Z's participatory political preferences have significant implications for future political dynamics. Here are some important implications:

1. *Increased Engagement of Young Voters*: With a strong participatory culture, Generation Z tends to be a more active voter and engaged in the political process. This may lead to increased participation of young voters in elections and other political activities. This increased engagement could change the political landscape by giving young people a greater voice in policy formation and political decision-making.
2. *Changes in Political Campaign Strategies*: Political parties and candidates must adapt their campaign strategies to take into account the participatory political preferences of Generation Z. They need to use online platforms more effectively, conveying messages that are more relevant to the values and issues that are important to this generation, and communicate more interactively and transparently to gain their support.
3. *Influence on the Political Agenda*: With Generation Z's openness to social, environmental, and justice issues, it can be anticipated that the political agenda will change to reflect their priorities. Issues such as climate change, gender equality, minority rights, and social inequality will likely receive greater attention in policy discussions and political platforms in the future.
4. *Influence in Forming Public Opinion*: Generation Z has a large influence in shaping public opinion through social media and other digital technology. Their participatory political preferences can influence the political views and attitudes of previous and future generations. This can trigger a shift in political culture and the values of society as a whole.
5. *Demand for More Inclusive Representation*: With the high political engagement of Generation Z, there is a greater demand for more inclusive representation in political institutions. Generation Z is pushing for more diverse and fair representation in government, including in terms of gender, ethnicity, social background and other identities.

Thus, Generation Z's participatory political preferences can change future political dynamics by increasing the involvement of young voters, changing political campaign strategies, influencing the political agenda, shaping public opinion, and demanding more inclusive representation in government.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It can be concluded that participatory culture plays an important role in shaping Generation Z's political preferences. The study highlights the importance of communication media, especially social media, in shaping Generation Z's political preferences. Political education and access to political information need to be improved to enhance their understanding of the political process and increase their political participation. Political stakeholders and educational institutions must take a proactive approach in addressing the participatory political preferences of this generation.

Although much research has been conducted on Generation Z's participatory culture and political preferences, there are still several areas that need further research. One of them is identifying the role of social media in shaping this generation's political preferences in more depth. In addition, it is also important to conduct research on the effectiveness of various strategies to increase Generation Z's political participation, including the development of more effective political education programs and more inclusive political communication strategies.

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