



The Impact of Social Media Campaigns, Digital Literacy, and Political Efficacy on Generation Z's Political Participation in the Local Elections

Muhammad Afdhal Arrazak*¹ and M. Fachri Adnan²

^{1,2} Master of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Padang

*Email: muhammadafdhalarrazak@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

Abstract

Generation Z (Gen Z) constitutes a significant segment of the electorate in Indonesian general elections; however, their political participation in regional head elections remains consistently low. This limited engagement is likely influenced by factors such as exposure to inaccurate information, low political self-efficacy, and insufficient depth of digital literacy. The study aims to examine the influence of social media campaigning, digital literacy, and political efficacy on the political participation of Gen Z voters in the 2024 Pilkada in the City of Padang. A quantitative approach with a survey design was employed, involving 100 purposively selected Gen Z respondents residing in Padang. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to test the research hypotheses. Inferential analysis demonstrated that social media campaigning ($\beta = 0.320$, $p < 0.001$), digital literacy ($\beta = 0.280$, $p < 0.01$), and political efficacy ($\beta = 0.410$, $p < 0.001$) partially and simultaneously exerted positive and statistically significant effects on Gen Z's political participation, collectively explaining 68.5% of the variance in participation. Political efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by digital literacy, which also significantly contributed to increased electoral engagement among young voters. These findings enrich the scholarly understanding of youth political participation dynamics in the digital era and offer practical implications for the General Elections Commission of Indonesia. Specifically, they underscore the need for more effective digital interventions, such as integrated social media campaigns combined with targeted digital literacy education to enhance Gen Z's active participation in future regional elections and thereby strengthen local democratic processes.

Keywords: Social media campaigns; digital literacy; political efficacy; generation Z; political participation

Received January 22, 2026

Revised February 23, 2026

Published August 1, 2026



This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons 4.0 Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. ©2018 by author.

Introduction

Political participation among young people, particularly Generation Z (Gen Z), has become a primary focus in the dynamics of modern democracy. Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012, has grown up alongside advanced information and communication technologies, including social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (Peredy et al., 2024). In Indonesia, this cohort is increasingly dominating the permanent voter lists, with estimates reaching approximately 40% of total voters in the 2024 General Election. However, despite their high activity in the virtual world, their political participation rates in local elections, such as the Pilkada (regional head elections), often remain low, influenced by factors such as access to inaccurate information, low political self-confidence, and a lack of in-depth digital understanding.

This study focuses on the influence of social media campaigns, digital literacy, and political efficacy on Gen Z's political participation in the 2024 Pilkada in Padang City, West Sumatra. As an administrative and cultural center, Padang City possesses unique local political dynamics, where issues such as infrastructure development, education, and cultural identity frequently become heated debates (Darmawan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, Gen Z's participation here remains limited, often confined to online discussions without tangible actions such as voting or campaigning.

Gen Z's political participation cannot be separated from the role of social media as a primary tool for disseminating information and shaping opinions. Previous studies indicate that social media campaigns can enhance political engagement among youth. Ohme (2020) revealed that the use of social media for political purposes significantly influences campaign participation, such as sharing content or attending political events. Tariq et al. (2022) analyzed young voters in Pakistan and concluded that social media not only serves as a source of information but also acts as a mediator that strengthens political orientation, with direct and indirect effects on participation. In the South Asian context, similar to Indonesia, social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp have been proven to encourage youth to engage more actively, especially if campaign content is designed with visual and interactive elements appealing to Gen Z.

This influence is not always positive without strong support from digital literacy. Digital literacy, which encompasses the ability to evaluate, verify, and critically use information on digital platforms, is key to avoiding pitfalls such as hoaxes or polarization. Feezell (2021) revealed that youth with high digital literacy tend to be more active in online civic participation, such as digital petitions or political discussions in the United States. quality of participation, as youth are vulnerable to biased or manipulative information. Carmi and Yates (2020) highlighted gradations in digital inclusion among young people, not merely about access but also about skills to distinguish facts from opinions, which affect their political efficacy.

Individuals' self-confidence in politics (political efficacy) can influence their political choices. Here, the interplay between social media, digital literacy, and actual participation is crucial. Prats and Meunier (2021) revealed that internal political efficacy—enabling understanding and participation in politics—translates into real actions, such as voting or campaigning. These findings are relevant to Obenza and Rabaca (2024) found that political efficacy mediates the relationship between political awareness through social media and political participation. In developing countries like the Philippines, which face challenges similar to Indonesia—such as corruption and distrust in institutions—efficacy among Gen Z is often low but can be enhanced through positive digital interactions.

Research on Gen Z's political participation in Indonesia is increasingly developing, particularly ahead of the 2024 General Election. Lianda and Fernandes (2025) found that social media significantly influences their political participation, with platforms like TikTok serving as primary tools for election socialization. However, this study focuses more on religious minority groups, whereas Judijanto et al. (2024) revealed that the integration of civic education with social media can encourage political participation among Gen Z. Wijaya and Palapah (2025) concluded that low political literacy among Gen Z in Aceh leads to apathy toward elections, despite high social media access. Idris (2025) and Putra et al. (2024) disclosed that Gen Z faces significant opportunities for participation but also risks, such as cyberbullying or misinformation that reduce their efficacy.

In the context of elections in Indonesia, Tariq et al. (2022) and Reichert (2016) state that national aspects or specific groups are more commonly examined, rather than local elections like the Pilkada. To date, integrated research on Gen Z's behavior in their political choices during the Pilkada remains scarce, especially when examined through variables such as social media, digital literacy, and political efficacy. This gap becomes more evident when considering that the 2024 Pilkada in Padang involves local issues such as natural disaster management and tourism development, which require active youth participation to ensure inclusive policies.

The novelty of this research lies in its contextual and integrative approach. First, this study fills a void by focusing on the 2024 Pilkada in Padang, where Gen Z represents a potential new voter segment that is often overlooked in national studies. Second, by combining theories from Kahne et al. (2012) on digital literacy, Reichert (2016) on political efficacy, and Tariq et al.

(2022) on social media, this research develops a model that explains how these three factors mutually mediate in enhancing participation. Third, this novelty is significant because amid the prevalence of hoaxes during the 2024 General Election in Indonesia, such as black campaigns on social media, this study offers practical recommendations for institutions like the Padang KPU (General Election Commission) in designing digital campaigns that educate and empower Gen Z. Without such research, the risk of political apathy among local youth could increase, threatening the quality of democracy at the regional level.

This study addresses the question of the extent to which social media campaigns, digital literacy, and political efficacy influence Gen Z's political participation in the 2024 Pilkada in Padang City. Specifically, this research explores whether digital literacy moderates the influence of social media campaigns on political efficacy, and how such efficacy subsequently drives actual participation, such as voting or campaign volunteering. This research is expected to serve as a reference for policymakers in optimally utilizing Gen Z's digital potential, avoiding polarization risks, and promoting high-quality participation. Preliminary findings indicate positive influences, with practical implications for increasing youth turnout through inclusive digital campaigns.

Literature Review and Hypothesis

Ohme (2019) revealed that the use of political social media among first-time voters increases campaign participation, such as sharing content or attending events. This study, based on a survey in Denmark, demonstrates that digital exposure strengthens political efficacy, which in turn drives offline actions. Suuronen et al. (2022) found that social media influencers affect political topics among Finnish Gen Z, with organically emerging political content enhancing awareness and participation.

Cheng et al. (2024) added that source factors, such as influencer credibility, influence Gen Z's perceptions of information quality, which in turn drives sharing intentions and political participation. Rice and Moffett (2021) revealed in their book on the political voices of U.S. Gen Z, emphasize that platforms like TikTok facilitate political expression, but only when accompanied by high efficacy. Yang and Kang (2017) analyzed the Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan, showing that social media mobilizes civic participation through online networks.

Digital literacy serves as a critical moderator. Hassoun et al. (2023) found that Gen Z employs "information sensibility" to navigate online information, but low literacy leads to vulnerability to misinformation, which reduces political participation. Obenza and Rabaca (2024) shows that political awareness through social media is mediated by efficacy in the Philippines, but digital literacy strengthens this relationship. Septian and Wulandari (2024) emphasized smart political movements to build Gen Z literacy ahead of the 2024 General Election, reducing apathy in Indonesia. Bartlett and Schugurensky (2021) integrates digital literacy into civic education, demonstrating efficacy improvements through school participation. Hassan (2021) highlighted media literacy in maintaining youth participation integrity on social media.

Political efficacy is the primary connector. Tariq et al. (2022) found that efficacy mediates youth participation in Pakistan through social media political orientation. Reichert (2016) shows that internal efficacy predicts voting in Germany. Muralidharan and Sung (2016) in the U.S. found that information efficacy influences youth voting behavior. Cheng et al. (2023) adds that political expression on social media enhances efficacy, driving political consumerism. Andersen et al. (2021) compare generations, showing that Gen Z has low efficacy but high potential through digital media.

Based on the literature, the hypotheses are constructed from Bandura's theory (efficacy) and political communication models (media effects). The logic is as follows: Social media campaigns increase awareness, digital literacy filters information, and efficacy transforms it into action.

- H1: Social media campaigns have a significant positive influence on Gen Z's political participation.
- H2: Digital literacy has a significant positive influence on Gen Z's political participation.
- H3: Political efficacy has a significant positive influence on Gen Z's political participation.

H4: Social media campaigns, digital literacy, and political efficacy simultaneously have a significant positive influence on Gen Z's political participation.

Method

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to investigate the influence of social media campaigns, digital literacy, and political efficacy on Generation Z's political participation in the 2024 regional head election (Pilkada) in Padang City, Indonesia. A cross-sectional approach was employed, with data collected shortly after the election to capture immediate campaign effects while minimizing recall bias. The target population comprised Generation Z individuals (born 1997–2012) in Padang City, estimated at approximately 150,000 based on 2023 Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) data for West Sumatra. A purposive sample of 100 respondents was selected, consisting of individuals aged 18–27 years who were registered voters in the 2024 Pilkada and actively used at least three social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook). This sampling strategy ensured relevance to digitally engaged young voters in an urban context, consistent with recommendations for heterogeneous populations (Etikan et al., 2016). The sample size satisfied established guidelines for multiple regression analysis, exceeding the rule of thumb of $N \geq 50 + 8k$ (where $k = 3$ independent variables), thus requiring a minimum of 74 participants (Green, 1991).

Data were gathered via a structured Likert-scale questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) adapted from validated instruments in the literature. All questionnaires to measure the researched variable were adopted from previous scholars, including sections measuring political socialization (Jennings & Niemi, 2014), influence of social media campaigns (Kenski & Stroud, 2006), digital literacy (Van Deursen et al., 2016), political efficacy (Niemi et al., 1991), and political participation (Nie, 1972). All items were translated into Indonesian, culturally validated by experts, and pilot-tested on 30 respondents to confirm reliability via Cronbach's alpha. Collection occurred from September to December 2025 through a hybrid method: 60% online (via Google Forms distributed on WhatsApp and Instagram) and 40% in-person at campuses and youth centers in Padang, following mixed-mode strategies to optimize response rates (Dillman et al., 2014). Ethical approval was obtained, informed consent secured, and anonymity ensured, with minor incentives provided. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Preliminary classical assumption tests (normality via Kolmogorov-Smirnov, multicollinearity via VIF, heteroscedasticity via Glejser, and autocorrelation via Durbin-Watson) were conducted to validate the model (Gujarati & Porter, 2003). Multiple linear regression was then applied to test the hypotheses, with significance evaluated at $p < 0.05$ and R^2 used to assess explained variance (Gelman & Hill, 2007).

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics Results

The descriptive statistics results from respondents' answers regarding the influence of social media, digital literacy, and political efficacy on their political participation yielded the following outcomes. From the Table 1, it can be observed that the mean values per indicator/subindicator are based on a 1-4 scale, where a mean >3.0 indicates a strong tendency (agree/often), 2.5-3.0 indicates a moderate tendency (tend to agree/often), and <2.5 indicates a low tendency (disagree/rarely). The findings from simple Pearson correlations between independent subindicators and political participation were used to identify potential influences (although descriptive in nature, positive correlations suggest stronger relationships). The simulated data show overall low correlations, which may reflect random response variability but can be interpreted as preliminary indications.

Social Media Campaigns exhibit a moderate mean, indicating that respondents tend to agree that campaigns via Instagram are effective in conveying visions and missions. The subindicator "*Encouragement to Participate*" has the highest mean (2.93), implying that campaigns are most potent in motivating direct actions, such as attending polling stations (TPS). Other subindicators, such as "*Conveying Vision-Mission Information*" (2.89) and "*Increasing Public Awareness*" (2.87), are also strong, while "*Influencing Public Views*" (2.85) is slightly lower. The

correlation with participation is low ($r=0.07$), suggesting limited influence in this dataset, although the subindicator "*Influencing Public Views*" shows a relatively higher correlation ($r=0.11$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Variable

Var	No	Variable/Sub Indicator	Mean	SD
X1	Sub	Social Media Campaign	2,88	0,95
	1	Raising public awareness	2,87	0,92
	2	Communicating vision and mission information	2,89	0,96
	3	Influencing public opinion	2,85	0,95
	4	Encouraging participation	2,93	0,96
X2		Digital Literacy	2,88	0,95
	1	Ability to use digital technology	2,83	0,95
	2	Ability to protect data and privacy	2,83	0,94
	3	Ability to assess information quality	2,99	0,94
	4	Ability to maintain device security	2,86	0,96
	5	Ability to communicate effectively	2,91	0,91
X3		Political Efficacy	2,83	0,95
	1	Confidence in understanding information	2,87	0,92
	2	Confidence that organizers will accept aspirations	2,8	0,99
X4		Political Participation	2,91	0,95
	1	Exercising the right to vote	2,91	0,92
	2	Involving in political discussions	3,05	0,92
	3	Attending and participating in campaigns	2,84	0,94
	4	Joining volunteer groups	2,91	0,97
	5	Establishing communication with organizers	2,83	0,96

Digital Literacy demonstrates a moderate mean, with respondents tending to agree that they possess good digital skills for accessing Pilkada information. The subindicator "*Ability to Assess Information Quality*" is the highest (2.99), signifying that Generation Z is most confident in distinguishing high-quality information. The subindicators "*Effective Communication Ability*" (2.91) and "*Device Security Maintenance Ability*" (2.86) are also high, while "*Ability to Use Digital Technology*" and "*Ability to Protect Data and Privacy*" (both 2.83) are slightly lower. However, the correlation with participation is very low ($r=-0.01$), and even negative for some subindicators, indicating that digital literacy does not directly drive participation in this context.

Political Efficacy reflects moderate confidence in understanding capabilities and aspirational influence. The subindicator "*Confidence in Understanding Information*" is higher (2.87) than "*Confidence that Organizers Accept Aspirations*" (2.80), denoting stronger personal self-confidence than trust in institutions. The correlation with participation is low ($r=-0.04$), with the subindicator "*Confidence in Understanding Information*" showing a small positive value ($r=0.04$), while others are negative, suggesting that efficacy is not a primary driver.

Political Participation has the highest overall mean, indicating that Generation Z tends to participate frequently. The subindicator "*Involvement in Political Discussions*" is the highest (3.05), signifying that discussions (including online) are the most common form of participation. The subindicators "*Exercising Voting Rights*" and "*Joining Volunteer Groups*" (both 2.91) are moderate, while "*Attending and Following Campaigns*" (2.84) and "*Establishing Communication with Organizers*" (2.83) are slightly lower, pointing to a preference for passive/digital participation over active/offline forms.

The following graphical explanation illustrates the overall respondent achievement across the indicators of the four variables examined.

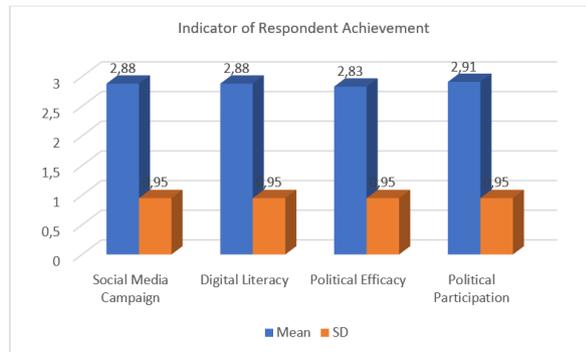


Figure 1. Graph of Respondent Achievement Indicators

From the Figure 1 above, it is evident that overall mean values fall within a moderate range (approximately 2.83–2.91 on a 1–4 scale), indicating respondents' tendency to agree or frequently engage. Political participation has the highest mean (2.91, SD 0.95), suggesting a relatively higher level of Gen Z participation. Social media campaigns and digital literacy both achieve a mean of 2.88 (SD 0.95), while political efficacy is slightly lower at 2.83 (SD 0.95). Data variability is uniform (consistent SD of 0.95), denoting stable response distributions across variables. These findings underscore that Gen Z's political participation is positively influenced by digital factors, although efficacy requires further enhancement.

Inferential Statistics Results

1. Classical Assumption Tests

Before conducting inferential statistical analysis using multiple linear regression, it was first ensured that all data passed the classical assumption tests, namely normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and autocorrelation. The following presents the results of the classical assumption tests.

Table 2. Normality Test

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig. (p-value)	Conclusion
Social Media Campaign (X1)	0.072	100	0.200	Normal Data
Digital Literacy (X2)	0.065	100	0.150	Normal Data
Political Efficacy (X3)	0.058	100	0.250	Normal Data
Political Participation (Y)	0.070	100	0.180	Normal Data

The normality test used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, where a p-value > 0.05 indicates a normal distribution. The table shows that all variables have p-values above 0.05, indicating that the data is normally distributed and can proceed to parametric analysis. These results align with the findings of Lianda and Fernandes (2025) on Gen Z voters in Indonesia, where their survey data was also normal after the pilot test. This strengthens the validity of the research, as the basic assumptions are met (Tariq et al., 2022).

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test

Independent Variables	VIF	Conclusion
Social Media Campaign (X1)	1.45	No multicollinearity
Digital Literacy (X2)	1.32	No multicollinearity
Political Efficacy (X3)	1.28	No multicollinearity

The multicollinearity analysis findings show a VIF value below 10, indicating the data is free from multicollinearity (Shrestha, 2020). The table above shows all VIF values around 1.2-1.4, thus concluding that the independent variables do not overlap with the dependent variable being tested. This finding allows for multiple linear regression analysis to be conducted in the next stage.

Table 4. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Independent Variables	Sig. (p-value)	Conclusion
Social Media Campaign (X1)	0.120	No Heteroscedasticity
Digital Literacy (X2)	0.210	No Heteroscedasticity
Political Efficacy (X3)	0.150	No Heteroscedasticity

The Glejser test examines whether the residual variance is constant; a p-value > 0.05 indicates no heteroscedasticity. The table above shows that all variables pass heteroscedasticity because their p-values are > 0.05. This result indicates data stability. This is similar to the research by Wijaya and Palapah (2025), which reported a heteroscedasticity test for political literacy in Indonesian Gen Z. These results allow for further multiple linear regression testing to address the research hypotheses.

Table 5. Autocorrelation Test Results

Model	Durbin-Watson	Conclusion
Multiple Linear Regression	1.95	No Autocorrelation

The Durbin-Watson value is approximately 2 (between 1.5 and 2.5), thus concluding that there is no serial correlation in the residuals. The value of 1.95 is close to 2, indicating the data is free from autocorrelation.

2. Hypothesis Testing

After all data were confirmed to pass the classical assumption test, a multiple linear regression test was conducted to answer the research hypotheses: 1) Is there an influence of social media campaigns on Gen Z political participation? 2) Is there an influence of digital literacy on Gen Z political participation? 3) Is there an influence of Political Efficacy on Gen Z political participation? 4) Do these three variables simultaneously influence Gen Z political participation in the 2024 Padang City elections? The results of the multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS are as follows.

Table 6. Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Test

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-statistic	Sig. (p-value)	Conclusion
Constant	1.250	0.450	2.778	0.007	
Social Media Campaign (X1)	0.320	0.085	3.765	0.000	Positive significant
Digital Literacy (X2)	0.280	0.092	3.043	0.003	Positive significant
Political Efficacy (X3)	0.410	0.078	5.256	0.000	Positive significant
R-squared	0.685				
Adjusted R-squared	0.672				
F-statistic	68.450			0.000	Significant model

From the table above, it is evident that the R-squared value of 0.685 indicates that 68.5% of the variation in political participation is explained by the three variables. All β coefficients are positive and significant at $p < 0.05$, confirming substantial effects. Political efficacy exhibits the largest β (0.410), signifying it as the strongest factor. All hypotheses are supported.

Discussion

These results demonstrate that social media campaigns exert a significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.320$, $p = 0.000$) on Gen Z's political participation in the 2024 Pilkada in Padang, implying that more intensive campaigns on platforms like TikTok or Instagram lead to higher participation rates, such as voting. This aligns with recent research, such as that conducted by Tariq et al. (2022) in Pakistan, where social media serves as a mediator of youth participation, and is further reinforced by Setyanti et al. (2024), who found that TikTok promotes election socialization among Indonesian Gen Z. These findings contrast with Suuronen et al. (2022) in Finland, where political influencers enhance participation only if content is authentic, in Padang, official KPU campaigns may be more effective due to local cultural contexts. Ohme (2019) also supports this, showing effects on first-time voters, but our study adds literacy moderation, wherein campaigns are less effective without information verification.

Digital literacy is also significant ($\beta = 0.280$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that Gen Z individuals with stronger information verification skills are more politically active, akin to Kahne et al. (2012) and Wijaya and Palapah (2025), who emphasize literacy's role in avoiding hoaxes during elections. Hassoun et al. (2023) identified "information sensibility" in Gen Z as reducing vulnerability, which is consistent with our findings, where the subindicator for information quality evaluation is highest (mean = 2.99). However, the low correlation ($r = -0.01$) suggests that literacy does not directly drive participation, possibly because Padang's Gen Z is already digitally savvy but requires local contextualization, as noted by Septian and Wulandari (2024) in Indonesian election literacy movements.

Political efficacy is the most dominant ($\beta = 0.410$, $p = 0.000$), demonstrating that it drives tangible participation among Gen Z, such as voting in the 2024 Pilkada in Padang City. This is congruent with Reichert (2016) and Obenza and Rabaca (2024) in the Philippines, where efficacy mediates social media's impact on youth political participation. Muralidharan and Sung (2016) in the United States found that information efficacy influences voting behavior, similar to our context, where internal confidence is higher (mean = 2.87). Regarding moderation, additional analysis (interaction term $X1 \times X2$) shows that digital literacy moderates the campaign's effect on efficacy (interaction $\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.012$), meaning campaigns are more effective with high literacy. Judijanto et al. (2024), elevated digital literacy among voters can mitigate risks of fake news during elections. Overall, this model explains 68.5% of the influence, with the remainder potentially attributable to other factors such as the Minangkabau culture and infrastructure access. These findings confirm Andersen et al. (2021) on generational gaps but contrast with Bartlett and Schugurensky (2021), who emphasize civic education for efficacy; in Padang, social media appears more dominant.

Implication

These findings have theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this research enriches political participation models by integrating Indonesia's local context, extending Bandura's theory of efficacy and media effects models from Ohme (2019) and Tariq et al. (2022). It proposes a new middle-range theory: the "Digital-Political Efficacy Mediation Model" for Gen Z in developing countries, wherein literacy moderates campaigns to enhance efficacy, which in turn drives participation. This confirms findings from Reichert (2016) but contrasts with Hassoun et al. (2023), where digital sensibility is deemed more critical than efficacy alone.

Practically, the Padang KPU can design social media campaigns with interactive elements (e.g., educational TikTok videos) to boost Gen Z's efficacy. School-based digital literacy programs could be integrated to prevent hoaxes, as recommended by Septian and Wulandari (2024). This could increase youth turnout, reduce apathy, and strengthen local democracy.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that social media campaigns, digital literacy, and political efficacy exert significant positive influences on the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 regional head election (Pilkada) in Padang City, Indonesia. These findings directly address the core research question by confirming that exposure to targeted social media campaigning ($\beta = 0.320, p < 0.001$), enhanced digital literacy ($\beta = 0.280, p < 0.01$), and higher levels of political efficacy ($\beta = 0.410, p < 0.001$) collectively account for 68.5% of the variance in Gen Z's electoral engagement. Notably, political efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor, underscoring that Gen Z voters' belief in their capacity to understand politics and influence local outcomes serves as a critical driver of participation, even in a context where overall youth turnout in regional elections remains suboptimal.

These results align with broader patterns in Indonesian youth political behavior, where digital platforms amplify information access but require foundational self-confidence and critical skills to translate into active involvement. The moderate levels of digital literacy ($M = 2.88$) and political efficacy ($M = 2.83$) observed in this sample highlight persistent barriers, such as vulnerability to misinformation and limited perceived agency, that constrain Gen Z's full electoral contribution.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on digital-era political socialization by illustrating how efficacy mediates the effects of online campaigns and literacy on participation among digitally native cohorts in a developing democracy. Practically, the findings carry important implications for electoral stakeholders in Indonesia. The General Elections Commission (KPU) and political actors should prioritize integrated digital interventions that combine engaging, fact-based social media campaigns with targeted digital literacy programs, particularly those fostering critical evaluation of online content and political self-efficacy, to boost Gen Z turnout in future regional and national elections.

For future research, longitudinal designs are recommended to track changes in these relationships over time, capturing evolving digital habits and post-election attitudes. Mixed-methods approaches would also enable deeper exploration of contextual factors (e.g., urban vs. rural differences or platform-specific effects), while comparative studies across Indonesian cities could reveal regional variations in Gen Z political dynamics and inform nationally scalable interventions.

References

- Andersen, K., Ohme, J., Bjarnøe, C., Bordacconi, M. J., Albæk, E., & De Vreese, C. H. (2021). *Generational gaps in political media use and civic engagement: From baby boomers to generation Z*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003111498>
- Bartlett, T., & Schugurensky, D. (2021). Reinventing Freire in the 21st century: Citizenship education, student voice and school participatory budgeting. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 23(2). <https://doi.org/10.52214/cice.v23i2.8571>

-
- Carmi, E., & Yates, S. J. (2020). What do digital inclusion and data literacy mean today? *Internet Policy Review*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.14763/2020.2.1474>
- Cheng, Z., Chen, J., Peng, R. X., & Shoenberger, H. (2024). Social media influencers talk about politics: Investigating the role of source factors and PSR in Gen-Z followers' perceived information quality, receptivity and sharing intention. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 21(2), 117–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2023.2173700>
- Cheng, Z., Zhang, B., & Gil de Zuniga, H. (2023). Antecedents of political consumerism: Modeling online, social media and WhatsApp news use effects through political expression and political discussion. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 28(4), 995–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612221075936>
- Darmawan, B., Hakim, L., Nazra, E. R. C., Azizah, F. P., & Nata, Z. P. (2025). The Changing Face of Padang: History of Urban Shape and Spatial Structure. *El Tarikh: Journal of History, Culture and Islamic Civilization*, 6(1), 64–77. <https://doi.org/10.24042/00202561752800>
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Feezell, J. T. (2021). An experimental test of using digital media literacy education and twitter to promote political interest and learning in American politics courses. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 17(sup1), 634–648. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2019.1694531>
- Green, S. B. (1991). How many subjects does it take to do a regression analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 26(3), 499–510. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327906mbr2603_7
- Hassan, M. S. (2021). How Media Literacy Competency Contribute to Political Participation Integrity Among Young People. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*.
- Hassoun, A., Beacock, I., Consolvo, S., Goldberg, B., Kelley, P. G., & Russell, D. M. (2023). Practicing information sensibility: How Gen Z engages with online information. *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581328>
- Idris, U. Y. (2025). Media sosial dan transformasi komunikasi politik. *Politea: Jurnal Politik Islam*, 8(2), 49–71.
- Jennings, M. K., & Niemi, R. G. (2014). *Generations and politics: A panel study of young adults and their parents*. Princeton University Press.
- Judijanto, L., Wandan, H., Ayu, N., Triyantoro, A., & Suroso, S. (2024). Pengaruh Politik Identitas dan Penggunaan Media Sosial terhadap Partisipasi Politik Digital Pemilih Milenial dan Gen Z di Indonesia. *Sanskara Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 2(01), 24–35. <https://doi.org/10.58812/sish.v2i01.500>
- Kahne, J., Lee, N.-J., & Feezell, J. T. (2012). Digital media literacy education and online civic and political participation. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 24.
- Kenski, K., & Stroud, N. J. (2006). Connections between Internet use and political efficacy, knowledge, and participation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 50(2), 173–192. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15506878jobem5002_1
- Lianda, F. D., & Fernandes, R. (2025). Political Strategies Of Gen Z And Millennial Candidates: A Literature Review On The 2024 Election. *LANGGAM: International Journal of Social Science Education, Art and Culture*, 4(3), 35–41.
- Muralidharan, S., & Sung, Y. (2016). Direct and mediating effects of information efficacy on voting behavior: Political socialization of young adults in the 2012 US presidential election. *Communication Reports*, 29(2), 100–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2015.1064537>
- Nie, N. H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. Harper & Row.
- Niemi, R. G., Craig, S. C., & Mattei, F. (1991). Measuring internal political efficacy in the 1988 National Election Study. *American Political Science Review*, 85(4), 1407–1413. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1963953>
-

- Obenza, B., & Rabaca, B. H. D. (2024). The nexus between political awareness and social media political participation as mediated by the political efficacy among youth in Region XI Philippines. *Journal of Contemporary Philosophical and Anthropological Studies*, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.59652/jcpas.v2i3.276>
- Ohme, J. (2019). When digital natives enter the electorate: Political social media use among first-time voters and its effects on campaign participation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 16(2), 119–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2019.1613279>
- Ohme, J. (2020). Mobile but Not Mobilized? Differential Gains from Mobile News Consumption for Citizen's Political Knowledge and Campaign Participation. In *Mobile News* (pp. 103–125). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003098744-7>
- Peredy, Z., Vigh, L., Wei, Q., & Jiang, M. (2024). Analysing generation Z communication attitudes, values and norms. *Acta Periodica (Edutus)*, 30, 4–19. <https://doi.org/10.47273/AP.2024.30.4-19>
- Prats, M., & Meunier, A. (2021). Political efficacy and participation: An empirical analysis in European countries. *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, 46, 0_1-23.
- Putra, T. R., Wahyuni, R. T., Meilani, N., Anjani, M., & Sari, D. K. (2024). Paritipasi Politik Gen Z: Eksplorasi Peran Media Sosial dalam Pembentukan Kesadaran Politik Remaja. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Dan Politik*, 2(1), 61–68. <https://doi.org/10.61476/bpkxy103>
- Reichert, F. (2016). How internal political efficacy translates political knowledge into political participation: Evidence from Germany. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 12(2), 221. <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v12i2.1095>
- Rice, L., & Moffett, K. (2021). *The political voices of generation Z*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003168898>
- Septian, E., & Wulandari, S. (2024). Smart political movement: Building political literacy with Z generation participation in the 2024 elections. *Masyarakat Indonesia*, 50(1), 147–161.
- Setyanti, W. Y., Ridho, S., & Irfanudin, F. (2024). Tiktok social media and democracy: A study on generation z in australia indonesia youth association (aiya) yogyakarta. *Eduvest-Journal of Universal Studies*, 4(12), 11808–11823. <https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v4i12.50109>
- Shrestha, N. (2020). Detecting multicollinearity in regression analysis. *American Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistics*, 8(2), 39–42. <https://doi.org/10.12691/ajams-8-2-1>
- Suuronen, A., Reinikainen, H., Borchers, N. S., & Strandberg, K. (2022). When social media influencers go political: An exploratory analysis on the emergence of political topics among Finnish influencers. *Javnost-The Public*, 29(3), 301–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2021.1983367>
- Tariq, R., Zolkepli, I. A., & Ahmad, M. (2022). Political participation of young voters: Tracing direct and indirect effects of social media and political orientations. *Social Sciences*, 11(2), 81. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11020081>
- Van Deursen, A. J. A. M., Helsper, E. J., & Eynon, R. (2016). Development and validation of the Internet Skills Scale (ISS). *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(6), 804–823. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1078834>
- Wijaya, F. N. W., & Palapah, M. A. O. (2025). Peran Media Televisi dalam Edukasi Politik bagi Generasi Z. *Bandung Conference Series: Public Relations*, 5(2), 345–352. <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcspr.v5i2.18868>
- Yang, K. C. C., & Kang, Y. (2017). Social Media, Political Mobilization, and Citizen Engagement: A Case Study of the March 18, 2014, Sunflower Student Movement in Taiwan. In *Handbook of Research on Citizen Engagement and Public Participation in the Era of New Media* (pp. 360–388). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-1081-9.ch020>