

Social Media and Political Participation in the 2024 Elections: Survey on Generation Z Voters of Buddhist Society in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of social media exposure on political participation among Generation Z Buddhists in Indonesia during the 2024 elections. Elections serve as a democratic mechanism allowing the populace to make decisions through majority votes. Social media has become a primary tool for political campaigns, especially targeting Generation Z, who are more active on digital platforms than traditional media. This research employs a quantitative method by surveying 400 respondents aged 17–26 using purposive sampling. The independent variable is social media exposure, measured through dimensions such as type, frequency, and duration of media use, while the dependent variable is political participation, both offline and online. Linear regression analysis shows that social media exposure significantly influences political participation ($t = 2.779$; $\text{sig.} = 0.006 < 0.05$). Instagram and TikTok are the dominant platforms, with peak usage occurring between 7:01 PM and midnight. Offline participation primarily involves discussing political issues, while online participation focuses on consuming political information. The findings reveal that social media exposure accounts for 19% of the variance in political participation, supporting the Stimulus-Response theory. This research underscores the importance of social media in enhancing political awareness among Generation Z and recommends future studies explore additional variables such as psychological and social needs and political knowledge.

Keywords: *Social Media, Political Participation, Generation Z, Buddhist Community*

Introduction

General elections are a means of democracy to realize a system of government in a country based on people's sovereignty. Elections were first implemented in 1955 and were only intended to elect legislative institutions, namely the People's Representative Council and the Regional People's Representative Council, while other institutions were directly elected by the People's Consultative Assembly, including the president and vice president. Over time, there have been substantive changes to the Constitution, elections have increasingly spread to all institutional sectors. This shows that the position of all state institutions has the same degree, including the MPR (Rustamana et. al., 2024).

Indonesia is one of the countries that implements a democratic election system. By emphasizing the people in determining decisions through the most votes, now there is great hope that whoever is elected will be able to convey the aspirations of the people and improve their welfare. It is known that not a few in the world use a democratic system in determining people's leaders, this is in line with the concept based on the idea that the power and authority of a government comes from the people and is carried out to improve the welfare of its people (Akbar et. al., 2023). In line with the nature of democracy itself, namely the nature of decision-making that is oriented towards inclusiveness, participatory, and accountability, through an emphasis on human rights, civil liberties, and justice. social. Through democracy we are led to always remember that power comes from the people. Therefore, through this understanding, the people will certainly make regulations that will benefit and protect them rather than their personal rights.

By participating in elections, citizens are one form of citizens' rights and obligations in the political field or what is known as political participation. Citizens' political participation is an important pillar towards the development of a healthy democracy. Political participation plays a role in running the government, because the opportunity for a candidate to be elected is in the hands of the community (Putri & Damanik, 2022). On the other hand, from political participation, the community will influence the victory of the elected candidate. It is not taboo if many figures are involved in the world of politics and will struggle to lead participants through the design of work programs that are beneficial according to the needs of the community itself (Ghozali et al., 2023).

The use of the internet and social media in Indonesia shows a high level of political participation, as indicated by the large number of political content transactions, especially political *hoaxes* (Musa Karim et al., 2020). The results of *WeAreSocial's research* (2018) show that 60% of Indonesian internet users use smartphones; this shows that the majority of people in Indonesia are very mobile. According to *WeAreSocial's research*, 49% of the 130 million internet users in Indonesia use social media. This is because easy-to-use smartphones make someone closer to social media. Social media is the most frequently used media to spread campaigns because of its large reach and use by the entire community (Kalaloi, 2019). Gen Z in Indonesia is not very interested in participating in political activities, such as participating in elections, donating funds, volunteering, or joining associations. Furthermore, each group consumes different media; the younger generation no longer reads newspapers or watches the news on TV or radio. How the younger generation learns and participates in politics has been changed by the internet (Adinugroho et al., 2019).

Political participation is grouped into conventional and non-conventional forms of participation. Conventional forms can be understood as normal forms and are recognized as legal in political participation such as political campaigns and voting, While non-conventional forms are only behavior and actions that are considered legal such as confrontation, strikes, and demonstrations by students or residents (Afifah, 2022) . Therefore, the pattern of political communication and socialization expressed through the mass media greatly influences the perspective, thoughts, actions, and political attitudes of a person or the public. The mass media has enormous power and a large scale. In reality, how big or small the influence of the mass media on politics depends on how a country's political system works. The mass media functions to educate, provide information, and provide entertainment. In order for the public to get all the information they need, these three functions must run in a balanced manner (Islami & Ilham Zitri, 2023) . With the rapid development of this era, society has been greatly facilitated in its space of movement, to find out trending issues related to politics can be known in an instant just by reading or watching the media, most of them consume political information, which has an impact on a person's knowledge of state politics. This knowledge makes society responsive and increases political awareness (Ardi & Yusuf, 2024) .

Methods

This research is included in the type of quantitative method research with a Gen Z population of Buddhist communities in Indonesia. Researchers distributed questionnaires from October 26 to November 8, 2024 to 400 respondents as samples using *purposive sampling techniques*. The age of the respondents studied was 17-26 years old. The variables tested in the study were social media exposure to political participation.

The concept of this study is media exposure according to (Azura et al., 2022) , (Susanto et al., 2021) , (Hidayat et al., 2024) , (Putri et al., 2024) , (Hasibuan et al., 2023) , and (Apriandini et al., 2024) . The independent variable in this study is social media exposure. Media exposure is the level of how much a respondent experiences exposure to political participation in the 2024 election. This variable is analyzed through three dimensions, namely the type of social media, duration and frequency. The media type dimension is measured by the type of media used as a source of information about political participation. The types of media chosen are Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Line, Telegram, TikTok and Twitter.

The frequency dimension is intended to analyze the level of frequency of respondents in using social media telegram, facebook, twitter, line, youtube, tiktok, and telegram to search for information about political participation with a time division divided into 6 times including 00.01 - 05.00, 05.01 - 09.00, 09.01 - 12.00, 12.01 - 16.00, 16.01 - 19.00, and 19.01 - 00.00. While from the duration dimension tested with the time categorization of less than 1 hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours, 4-6 hours, and more than 6 hours.

The political participation variable in this study is interpreted as the involvement of respondents in the 2024 election through various forms of activity. This dependent variable can be measured through two dimensions, namely offline *and* online *participation*. The analysis technique used in this study is a regression test to test the hypothesis that there is an influence and significance between social media exposure and political participation.

Discussion

This study has conducted a survey of 400 respondents of Generation Z of Buddhist communities in Indonesia. Of the total respondents, 44% were male and 56% were female. From the aspect of work, respondents who do not have a job are 2%, company employees are 24%, civil servants are 1%, part-time jobs are 1%, students are 51%, business owners are 1%, educators are 16%, and self-employed are 4%.

Table 1 describes the analysis of the types of social media used by respondents as a source of information on political participation in the 2024 election. The results in Table 1 show that the types of media chosen as sources of information on political participation are Facebook ($M = 5.39$), YouTube ($M = 6.38$), Instagram ($M = 7.23$), TikTok ($M = 7.17$), Telegram ($M = 4.99$), Twitter ($M = 5.63$) and Line ($M = 4.36$). The following are the test results data via SPSS, including:

Table 1. Use of Media Types as Sources of Information on Political Participation in the 2024 Election

Statistics		FACEBOOK	YOUTUBE	INSTAGRAM	Tiktok	TELEGRAM	TWITTER	LINE
N	Valid	401	401	401	401	401	401	401
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		5.39	6.38	7.23	7.17	4.99	5.63	4.36
Std. Deviation		53,858	63,716	72,234	71,588	49,823	56,198	43,548
Percentiles	25	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
	50	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	2.00	3.00	2.00
	75	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

Source: SPSS Data Processing Version 26

Table 2 describes the results of the frequency of social media use to search for information on political participation in the 2024 election. The results in table 2 show that social media access at 00.01 - 05.00 ($M = 3.54$), 05.01-09.00 ($M = 4.21$), 09.01 - 12.00 ($M = 4.99$), 12.01 - 16.00 ($M = 5.71$), 16.01 - 19.00 ($M = 6.42$), and 19.01 - 00.00 ($M = 6.84$).

Table 2. Frequency of Use of Media Types as Sources of Information on Political Participation in the 2024 Election

Statistics		00.01	-05.01	-09.01	-12.01	-16.01	-19.01	-
N	Valid	401	401	401	401	401	401	401
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.54	4.21	4.99	5.71	6.42	6.84	
Std. Deviation		35,329	42.101	49,822	57,043	64.164	68,298	
Percentiles	25	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	
	50	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	
	75	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS Version 26

Social media exposure from the duration dimension to find out the scope at what hours the use of social media access is often used by respondents, namely at 19.01 - 00.00 is the time often reached by respondents. The following are the results of data processing from SPPS, including:

Table 3. Duration of Use of Media Types as Sources of Information for Political Participation in the 2024 Election

Statistics		
Duration		
N	Valid	401
	Missing	0
	Mean	7.38
	Std. Deviation	73,677
	Percentiles	25 3.00
		50 4.00
		75 4.00

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS Version 26

Table 4 describes the results of the analysis test on the dependent variable, namely political participation. The results that have been tested according to the classification are offline political participation. There are 8 statement items, the results of each item include P1 ($M = 3.2675$), P2 ($M = 3.3200$), P3 ($M = 3.3250$), P4 ($M = 2.3675$), P5 ($M = 3.4775$), P6 ($M = 3.4800$), P7 ($M = 2.4075$) and P8 ($M = 2.4000$). The following are the results of offline political participation data processing using SPPS as follows:

Table 4. Political Participation in the 2024 Election *Offline*

Statistics		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	TOTAL
N	Valid	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
	Missing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mean		3.2675	3.3200	3.3250	2.3675	3.4775	3.4800	2.4075	2.4000	24.0450
Std. Deviation		.66863	.66987	.74550	1.21290	.71818	.69340	1.20627	1.23036	4.86746
Percentiles	25	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	1.0000	3.0000	3.0000	1.0000	1.0000	21.0000
	50	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	24.0000
	75	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	3.0000	4.0000	4.0000	3.0000	3.0000	27.0000

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS Version 26

Table 5 describes the results of the analysis test on the dependent variable, namely political participation. The results that have been tested according to the classification are that online political participation. There are 11 statement items, the results of each item include P1 ($M = 2.8675$), P2 ($M = 2.8975$), P3 ($M = 3.0600$), P4 ($M = 3.3900$), P5 ($M = 3.3625$), P6 ($M = 3.2900$), P7 ($M = 3.3300$), P8 ($M = 3.3300$), P9 ($M = 3.1875$), P10 ($M = 3.0300$), and P11 ($M = 3.0375$). The following are the results of offline political participation data processing using SPPS as follows:

Table 5. Political Participation in the 2024 Election *Online*

Statistics		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	TOTAL
N	Valid	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
	Missing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mean		2.8675	2.8975	3.0600	3.3900	3.3625	3.2900	3.3300	3.3300	3.1875	3.0300	3.0375	34.7825
Std. Deviation		.93923	.97692	.92928	.66257	.75000	.78896	.82023	.75666	.85976	.89504	.89055	7.36313
Percentiles	25	2.2500	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	32.0000
	50	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000	33.0000
	75	3.7500	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	41.0000

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS Version 26

The following data is obtained from social media variables using several predetermined indicators, it is known that the highest total score is 55 while the highest score for the political participation variable is 84. The results of the hypothesis that have been carried out indicate that there is an influence between social media exposure and political participation. Researchers can conclude by proving the results of the hypothesis test through the t-test as follows:

The significant regression coefficient of t count $>$ t table ($2.779 > 1.965$) or the significance value < 0.05 ($0.006 < 0.05$) means that H_a is accepted (there is an influence of social media on political participation) and H_o is rejected (there is no influence of social media on political participation) can be seen from the following table:

Table 6. Partial Test Results on Social Media Exposure Variables on Political Participation in the 2024 Election

Coefficients ^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		<i>t</i>	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant) 50,455	3,060			16,487	.000
	SOCIAL MEDIA .208	.075	.138		2,779	.006

a. Dependent Variable: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS version 26

Testing the influence of social media exposure on political participation shows that the t -count value is 2.779. These results indicate an influence because t count $>$ t table where the t table is 1.965 while the significance level is $0.006 < 0.05$. So it can show that the hypothesis in this study is accepted and the social media variable has a positive influence on political participation.

The following data obtained from social media variables using several predetermined indicators is known to have the highest total score of 55 while the highest score for the political participation variable is 84. The results of the hypothesis that have been carried out indicate that there is an influence between social media and political participation through the F test, the purpose of the F test is to determine whether the independent variable significantly affects the dependent variable, the test is carried out using the SPSS program. Researchers can conclude that the hypothesis is accepted if f count $>$ f table ($7.721 > 3.94$) or the significance value is < 0.05 ($0.006 < 0.05$) this means that H_a is accepted (there is an influence of social media on political participation) and H_o is rejected (there is no influence of social media on political participation) can be seen from the following table:

Table 7. Results of the f or Simultaneous Test on the Social Media Exposure Variable on Political Participation

ANOVA ^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression 888.286	1	888.286	7,721	.006 ^b
	Residual 45788.811	398	115,047		

Total	46677.098	399		
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a. Dependent Variable: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

b. Predictors: (Constant), SOCIAL MEDIA

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS version 26

Testing the influence of social media on political participation shows that the f count value is 7.721. These results indicate an influence because $f \text{ count} > f \text{ table}$ where the $t \text{ table}$ is 3.94 while the significance level is $0.006 < 0.05$. So it can show that the hypothesis in this study is accepted and the social media variable has a positive influence on political participation.

Based on the results of the processing *output*, the correlation or relationship value (R) was obtained at 0.138 and the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.19. So from these results, it can be concluded that variable X (media exposure) influences variable Y (political participation) by 19% and the rest is influenced by other variables not in this study. The following are the results of data processing through SPSS:

Table 8. Test of Determination Coefficient on Social Media Exposure Variables on Political Participation

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.138 ^a	.019	.017	10,726

a. Predictors: (Constant), SOCIAL MEDIA

b. Dependent Variable: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Source: Researcher Data Processing from SPSS version 26

Based on the results of data analysis through regression techniques with the help of the SPSS program, it is known that media exposure has an effect on political participation (sig. 0.006). This can be proven from the results of the hypothesis test through the t-test as follows:

H_0 = The regression coefficient is not significant ($t \text{ count} < t \text{ table}$) or significance > 0.05 .

H_a = Significant regression coefficient ($t \text{ count} > t \text{ table}$) or significance < 0.05 .

It is known that the significance of the regression coefficient ($t \text{ count} > t \text{ table}$) with the test results obtained results ($7.721 > 3.94$) with a significance of ($0.006 < 0.05$) which means H_0 is rejected, ($df = 398$) (table 7). The magnitude of the influence is 19% (*Adjusted R Square*), meaning that the social media exposure variable is able to predict political participation by 19% (table 8), while the remaining 81% is explained by other causes.

In table 7, the results of the ANOVA test or F test can be seen, where the calculated F result is 7.721 with a significance level of 0.006 because the probability (0.006) is a value smaller than 0.05, so the regression model can be used to determine the effect of social media exposure on political participation by using the linear regression equation formula $Y = a + bX$.

The results of the hypothesis test show that this study supports the SR theory that exposure to social media as a stimulus influences the level of political participation as a

response. Several important findings have also been obtained in accordance with the concept of social media exposure by Aulia & Evawani (2022), Agus et al. (2021), Dien et al. (2024), Indah & Bunga (2024), Khoirun (2023), and Rosy & Riza (2024). The results of the data analysis show that, compared to Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, Twitter and Line, social media exposure is a source of political information for the community. This is indicated by the high level of use of social media as a source of political information.

The research findings are different from Adhitya's (2021) research on "The Influence of Instagram Social Media @Racunshopeecheck on Followers' Purchase Interest". The following are the findings that Instagram social media as variable X influences purchase interest as variable Y on Instagram @racunshopeecheck. The results of Aulia & Evawani's (2022) research are that the Instagram Social Media variable influences the Purchase Interest variable on @racunshopeecheck followers. This can be concluded from the output in the table above, where the calculated F value = 267.210 with a significance level of 0.000. Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of significance obtained is 0.000 which is less than 0.05.

The results of Agus et al.'s (2021) research on "The Relationship Between Media Exposure and Level of Knowledge About Covid-19" showed that most respondents indicated that they sought information about COVID-19 through online media; the number of respondents who used online media was more than 50%, or 63.9%, and only 19.8% of respondents used electronic and online media. The following are the results of the longest media exposure time test, which was less than one hour; 242 people, or 77.3% of respondents, accessed the media for less than one hour. In addition, 17 people never accessed the media to get information about COVID-19. Meanwhile, research from Dien et al. (2024) examined "Exposure to Political Information on Social Media on the Level of Political Participation of Mothers in the 2024 Presidential Election". The results of this study indicate that, with an R Square of 27.6%, media exposure has a significant influence or contribution to increasing political participation of the community in South Jakarta today.

Researchers Indah & Bunga (2024) also studied with one of the same variables, namely "The effect of exposure to social media information on the level of public trust in the 2024 general election". The results of data processing carried out from reliability testing showed that both variables were considered reliable because the Cronbach's Alpha value was greater than 0.6. The normality test analysis showed that the data had a normal distribution because the Asymp. Sig. value was greater than 0.05. A simple linear regression test showed a correlation between the independent variable (exposure to social media information) and the dependent variable (level of public trust in the general election), with a certain regression equation. The results of the T test showed the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis because the t-count value was smaller than the t-table, and the significance level was smaller than alpha.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that social media exposure tested with political participation significantly affects the level of political participation in the 2024 election. The results of the R square in the Regression test explain the contribution of social media

exposure to political participation by 19%, the remaining 81% is influenced by other factors. From this study, it can be seen that the online media that are often visited and used are Instagram and TikTok.

Other findings from offline political participation that are predominantly carried out by respondents are as access to discussions on the 2024 election issues with friends, coworkers/family and searching for and reading various information on the 2024 election issues in the media. SR theory is a theory used by researchers as a reference in testing the variable of social media exposure to political participation in the 2024 election in Gen Z Buddhist communities in Indonesia.

The researcher also recommends that further researchers can conduct research by evaluating additional variables that can help increase people's political participation, such as psychological and social needs and political knowledge; develop dimensions of *offline political participation*, both conventional and unconventional, with *online political participation*; and evaluate *online participation* by measuring instrumental, informative, and strategic aspects, and comparing youth political participation in cities and rural areas.

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