



Digital Literacy Generation Z of Samarinda in Electoral Participation

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Abstract. As a growing demographic group in the digital age, Generation Z has a significant role in the political dynamics of 2024. The study aims to study Generation Z's digital literacy in the context of their participation in the general election. The main focus of the study is to analyse how Generation Z's digital literacy level affects their understanding of political issues, the electoral process, and, finally, their active involvement in democracy. The study uses a qualitative approach by collecting data through in-depth interviews with eight informants representing Generation Z purposefully active at extra campus organizations at four colleges in Samarinda, besides documentation analysis from journal articles. The analysis results show that the Z-generation digital literacy in electoral has influenced how they obtain, filter, and disseminate political information. Their ability to critically evaluate the hot and cool media in McLuhan's views and participate in the discussion plays a key role in shaping their political views. The research also highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by Generation Z in developing their digital literacy related to the political context. These challenges involve the risk of receiving biased or inaccurate information, while opportunities include using digital platforms to mobilize support and increase election participation. In conclusion, this study can look at the digital literacy of Generation Z, which affects their involvement in the elections by not adding the number of ballots (golput).

Keywords: Digital literacy, Electoral participation, Generation Z

1 Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital literacy is important in receiving information related to COVID-19, apart from age characteristics being a determining factor in digital literacy levels in terms of their ability to learn quickly and be easily influenced by technology [1]. In research by G. Yotolembah, Tyas, & Bismawati (2023), digital literacy in learning using information technology was 79% effective. Apart from that, according to Ariastika (2023), digital literacy in learning also supports the development of the scientist's character, namely being diligent and hard-working [2]. This clarifies the results of bibliometric research on digital literacy, which mentions the number of 320 publications for research on digital literacy carried out in the educational realm in

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the first place. Meanwhile, the communication domain is number three with 87 publications, after library and information science in second place with 120 publications. The United States is the country that is in first place in the category of countries that contribute to digital literacy, while Indonesia is still at number 54 [3]. This means that research on digital literacy has been widely used as a research topic by experts abroad to determine the literacy abilities of a particular group of people about their interactions with currently developing digital media [4]. Meanwhile, the condition of digital literacy in Indonesia is still low and inversely proportional to the number of registered media, which is increasing, but those registered with the Press Council are still below five percent [5].

So, what about Generation Z's digital literacy in 2024, a political year in Indonesia? Elections start from the president, the people's representatives in the legislature, to the governor, and the mayor and regent. This election moment is important in determining the direction of politics and development. Based on information from the Public Relations of the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU) (2021), it is stated that the level of voter participation in several elections tends to fluctuate every five years. This happens because of the low level of political literacy and information the public receives [6].

In this complex political dynamic, all parties must play a role. This is because community participation in all fields, including politics, will accelerate the development of a prosperous and just society [7, 8]. The role of the younger generation, especially Generation Z, is quite significant. Generation Z is known to be dependent on technology and is active on social media [9]. Because they are a native of the digital era [10–16], and loves web series [17] According to KPU data (2023), this percentage should be considered when discussing political involvement and participation. In the 2014 legislative election records, only 49.8 percent of Generation Z were active in politics [18]. However, research in Malang in 2014 [19] although political education from political parties is minimal, young people still want to improve their quality by becoming members of political parties, and there is still a visible gap between seniors and young people. What about the capital city of East Kalimantan Province? Will the current development of the National Capital Region (IKN) of the Archipelago in East Kalimantan bring many changes and impact various aspects, namely the economy, the environment, and politics? This article will look at the digital literacy of Generation Z in Samarinda with specifications determined to see their participation in the general election held on February 14 and the simultaneous regional head election on November 27, 2024.

Based on the website kpu.go.id, the younger generation dominates voters in the 2024 elections. In Samarinda, the capital of East Kalimantan province, the list of permanent voters has been increased based on the kaltim.antaranews.com (2024) report, one of which comes from first-time voters. As IKN, East Kalimantan is also a province with heterogeneous ethnic groups [20] It is important to maintain an attitude of tolerance and political maturity among all citizens so that regional elections can run conductively.

2 Literature Review

Generation Z, who are close to the internet, experience an abundance of information that can quickly spread through the media. With the massive dissemination of information, digital literacy is expected to increase. This means that media plays an important role in digital literacy. Because without media, digital literacy can't occur [21]. So, it is not uncommon for digital literacy to be associated with computer literacy, internet literacy, media literacy, and information literacy [22].

Will the explosion of information, especially related to general elections and regional head elections, be able to increase Generation Z's participation in democratic activities in 2024? Before answering that, we will look at community participation, according to Conyers (1981), as a form of voluntary community involvement based on determining factors and community self-awareness in development programs. Meanwhile, according to Arif (2012), participation is a form of spontaneous involvement based on full awareness and responsibility for the interests of a group to achieve common goals. According to Isbandi (2007), community participation is the participation of the community in the process of identifying problems and potential that exist around the community, then in the process of selecting and making decisions regarding alternative solutions to problems, the process of implementing efforts to overcome these problems and their involvement in the process of evaluating changes that occur in the community. public. Where Yadav (in UNAPDI, 1980) explains that four activities can show community participation in development activities: participation in decision-making, participation in implementing an activity, participation in monitoring and evaluation, and participation in utilizing the results of activities. In simple language, participation, according to Cornwall (2001), is the act of participating. In politics, political participation is the activity of a person or group of people to participate actively in political life, including by electing state leaders and directly or indirectly influencing government (public) policies [23]. If it is related to general and regional head elections, the action taken is to come to the polling place (TPS) to use their voting rights. Interesting actions to examine this time are the actions taken by Generation Z as first-time voters in 2024, both in the presidential election and for people's representatives in the DPR, DPD, DPRD, and candidates for Governor, Mayor candidates, and Regent candidates.

According to Mc Luhan, media impacts individuals and society regardless of content. Media is an extension of the human mind, so communication media is the essence of civilization, and therefore, history is directed by the dominant media in each era [24, 25]. The changes occurring in various communication methods will also shape human existence. Technology shapes how individuals think and behave in society, and ultimately, technology directs humans to act [26]. Therefore, there is a media classification, according to Luhan, namely hot media and excellent media. Hot media is media that has little involvement from viewers, listeners, or readers, while cool media is the opposite [27].

3 **Methods**

The approach in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data analysis technique used is thematic analysis, which, according to Holloway & Todres (2003), is a generic skill for most qualitative analysis methods where thematic analysis, mentioned in Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006), can explain the extent to which a phenomenon occurs through the researcher's eyes [28].

This research used purposeful interviews with eight informants active in extra-campus organizations, namely the Muhammadiyah Student Association, registered as active students at four universities in Samarinda, as seen in Table 1. In addition to documentation obtained from previous research.

Table 1. Informants

No	Name	Semester
1	Dw	7
2	A	5
3	F	3
4	K	7
5	H	1
6	Ad	5
7	I	3
8	De	5

4 **Results and Discussion**

The 21st century, the digital era, is a century of a massive transformation from an agrarian society to an industrial society and continues to become a knowledge society. This century demands changes in skills and expertise to survive in life. Skills that must be possessed include digital literacy, inventive thinking, communication and collaboration, and global connections. Meanwhile, the results of the PIRLS and PISA research show that the level of literacy in Indonesia is still low [29]. The condition for keeping up with current developments to not be left behind is that each individual must drive their progress.

As a generation that has interacted with technological advances since birth, generation Z is a generation that tends to choose specific forms of information that are easier to digest, such as video, photo, or image-based, and few like information in the form of articles. This is like giving away the fact that Generation Z is the leading consumer of

social media [30], one of the most popular media today because it provides convenience and speed that allows someone to create and distribute information [31]. So Generation Z's cultural emphasis on literacy must be adapted to their daily life habits, namely approaches via internet technology and social media promotion [32].

If we refer to the definition of digital literacy according to Gilster (1997) [33] - the ability to understand and use information from various digital formats. The emphasis is on dealing with digital media rather than technical competence and critical evaluations of what is discovered through digital media.

The results of this research state that all research informants will do the same thing as they did on February 14. They will exercise their right to vote by coming to the polling station. They will not increase the percentage of 19.24% of the white group (abstentions) who do not exercise their right to vote [34]. This is in line with the survey results from tsurvey.id (2024) stated that people's assessment of their involvement in the political process was critical at 46%, 33%, and 16%. Only 5% answered that involvement was not important. They participate because the candidates in the election who are elected will later adopt policies that will have an impact on them, too. They are also good enough to filter and sort out which political information can be disseminated and which cannot.

tsurvey.id further stated that social media is considered to have a positive influence in increasing awareness of politics. This is in line with the results of this research, where the informants used hot and cool media to complete information related to elections, as summarized in Table 2. For those who live with their parents, they have informal discussions during their leisure time at home, then use the home television to watch candidate debates. Meanwhile, apart from organizational friends, those far from their parents choose to discuss with boarding house friends. High participation in excellent media makes them use Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and seminars to get information and create light educational content. Only two informants used hot media, such as Twitter, because of the minimal involvement of readers, viewers, and listeners. Even though the use of hot and cool media, according to Morlino et.al (2017), is included in micro-level political participation, it is citizen activity that is used to influence the political process [27].

Table 2. Hot and Cool Media Used

No	Name	Hot	Cool
1	Dw	v	v
2	A	v	v
3	F		v
4	K		v
5	H		v
6	Ad		v
7	I		v
8	De		v

5 **Conclusions**

One of the elements in digital literacy is critical and responsible. If it is related to the consumption and production of content in the media, the informants belonging to Generation Z already have digital literacy in politics. They implement it by actively participating in elections by coming to the polling place and not increasing the number of ballots without voting (golput).

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