

The Impact of Media Consumption Intensity on The Dynamics of Public Opinion Formation Among Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to measure the extent to which the intensity of media consumption influences the formation of public opinion among Gen Z. Through a survey of several Gen Z respondents, it was found that the higher the intensity of media consumption, the stronger the influence on opinion formation. Social media was found to be the most important platform for shaping public opinion among Generation Z. The study also identified other factors that moderate the relationship, such as digital literacy and trust in information sources. This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey design. This research has important practical implications for various parties, including policy makers, media industry players and educators. The findings show that Generation Z is highly susceptible to the influence of social media in forming opinions. In addition, the results of this study highlight the importance of media literacy in dealing with the rapid flow of information in the digital age. It is therefore important for policymakers to develop better regulation of social media content. For media industry players, the results of this study can be used as a reference to develop more effective communication strategies. Meanwhile, educators need to equip young people with adequate media literacy skills to be critical consumers of information.

keyword: Generation Z, Media consumption, Public Opinion



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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of its civilisation, mankind has travelled through a very long history and certainly does not forget to produce various complexities in architecture, culture, government, social and various other achievements achieved in each of its civilisation eras and of course one of them is technology. Thanks to the development of technological advances, man today can of course be more capable and easier in performing various activities that previously might have been said to be difficult or even impossible for him to do.

One of the earliest technologies created by man was the 'wheel', this is the first or earliest teknologi created. The wheel was first created by the Sumerians around 5,500 BC in the region of Mesopotamia (Iraq), they are considered to be the first nation to invent the wheel. At that time, wheel technology was used as a tool to facilitate work whether it was used as a means of transport for war, making pottery, boats, making woven fabrics, agriculture and various other fields (Edwin, 2015).

With the rapid development of technology today, it is not surprising that the technology that continues to emerge is increasingly futuristic, coupled with the presence of digital technology, which is one of the revolutionary innovations for today. Digital technology, especially in the field of information and communication, is one of them, proving that technology is becoming increasingly sophisticated with the presence of various innovative technologies. In the context of communication, communication can take place through the message conveyed by the communicator to the communicant, followed by feedback from the communicant as a reciprocal of the message conveyed by the communicator. Today, communication takes place not only through physical contact, but also by telephone or through various digital media platforms.

Digital communication technology is developing in a very massive way, accompanied by various new innovations. One of the digital technologies that is currently considered quite revolutionary, especially in the field of information and communication, is the digital technology of social media platforms. One of the first platforms to emerge was Facebook, launched on 4 February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his colleagues. Initially, this application was only accessible to students at Harvard University. However, due to its revolutionary and interesting features, it has attracted many people and continues to grow, becoming one of the largest social media platforms in the world to date.

The emergence of digital media such as Facebook as one of the revolutionary digital information and communication technologies made various other developers not want to be left behind. This triggered the emergence of various other social media platforms, including social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Tiktok, and also various other digital technologies. The presence of these digital platforms is proof that technology continues to evolve very rapidly, creating an increasingly broad and heterogeneous digital dynamic.

Digital media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and various other platforms are not only a tool for finding the latest trend information and means of communication. But more than that, social media is used by different groups with different purposes, especially by those interested in either campaigning or shaping public opinion.

The use of social media as a realm of political communication has an influence in determining a person's political direction and behaviour in order to create public opinion for the users of the platform. The mass media, for example, has an important role to play in disseminating opinions, and in fact, the media can help build different public opinions (Ade, 2022). This media function is related to the agenda setting theory, which is the ability of the mass media to direct the public's awareness and opinions on issues that are said to be important by the mass media (Choiriyati, 2015).

The presence of digital technology, such as social media platforms, has become a medium of information and daily communication for the global community, whether it is simply to search for information or to communicate with colleagues or relatives. However, the pattern of social media consumption among people today can be described as excessive. Coupled with the variety of information they share, sometimes the information is not true and can lead to hoaxes and different public opinions that can create echo chambers.

One of the most massive users of social media today is Generation 'Z'. Generation Z is a group of people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s who exhibit distinctive behavioural patterns in an urban context. According to popular opinion, a characteristic of Generation Z is their high level of understanding of technology. This is because they have been exposed to gadgets since birth and, of course, gadget technology and the internet have become an inseparable part of their daily lives (Zis, 2021).

Born after 1995 and growing up in the digital age with very high access to digital information technology, so called 'digital citizens' (digital natives), Generation Z accesses digital media or internet-based mass media more intensively to obtain information. In contrast, previous generations tended to access information through conventional media. The difference in access to information media between the previous generation and Generation Z indicates a shift in information consumption patterns from conventional media to digital media in society (Putri, 2024).

The presence of communication technology such as smartphones has provided instant access to various information. It is possible for them to stay connected with their peers around the world through various social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and TikTok. This generation is certainly more accustomed to digital multitasking, being able to efficiently manage multiple tasks at once. As one of the most active and frequently connected generations, it certainly tends to have unique consumption patterns. The intensity of digital media consumption among Gen 'Z' includes not only its use, but also its duration, the type of content viewed and the type of platform used by them (Wiramaya, 2024).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey design. The research sample was randomly drawn from the generation Z population. Data was collected through an online questionnaire containing questions about media consumption intensity, level of public opinion formation, and demographic variables as the main approach. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression analysis. In addition to using the questionnaire method as a data collection method, this research also involves observing or analysing data regarding the influence of media consumption intensity on the dynamics of public opinion formation, especially among Generation Z. This includes referring to a number of journals discussing the intensity of media consumption.

This includes referring to a number of journals that discuss the effect of excessive media consumption on the mindset of public opinion. By using quantitative methods, the results of data collection can be used to analyse responses and reaction rates. This response is written to find out

other people's responses regarding the Effect of Media Consumption Intensity on the Dynamics of Public Opinion Formation among Generation Z. This questionnaire sheet is structured using a Likert scale with scores (1-4) including score 1: strongly disagree, score 2: disagree, score 3: agree, score 4: strongly agree.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This study aims to analyse the influence of the intensity of media consumption on the dynamics of public opinion formation among Generation Z. Based on the data collected through an online questionnaire survey, the results of the study can be summarised that the majority of respondents are individuals aged 18-25 years old who belong to Generation Z. The media they use most are social media such as tiktok, instagram and whatsapp, followed by online news platforms and traditional media such as television and radio, with an average media consumption duration of 4-6 hours per day. The influence of social media consumption on Generation Z tends to form public opinion based on social media trends. Visual content and direct interaction are the most important factors in shaping their perceptions.

While the influence of traditional media such as TV and radio tends to be less than that of digital media, it still plays a role in providing more verified information. However, the high intensity of media consumption, especially social media, has a major impact on the speed of opinion formation, although it often lacks depth. Therefore, the results of this study show that the intensity of media consumption has a significant influence on the formation of public opinion among Generation Z. With some important points that can be discussed, namely, the media consumption patterns of Generation Z have a strong preference for digital media compared to traditional media. This shows a paradigm shift in information consumption. Social media becomes the main space for opinion formation because of its interactive and fast nature.

The results of the percentage effect of media consumption intensity on the dynamics of public opinion formation among Generation Z can be seen in Figure 1.

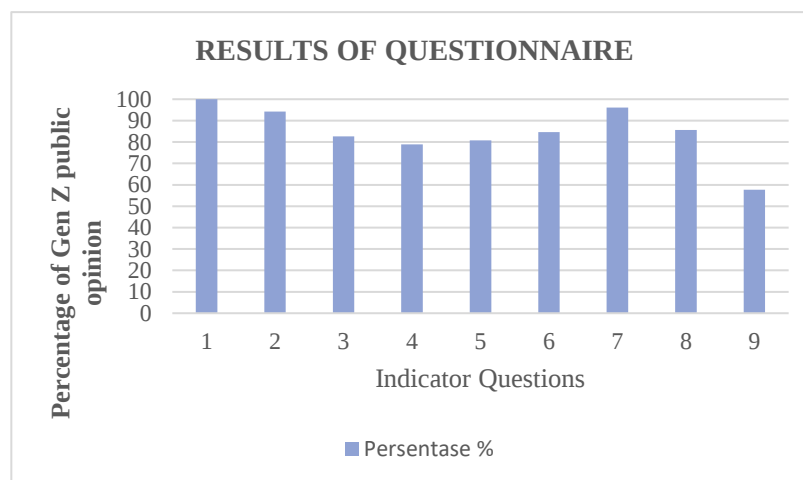


Fig 1. Percentage results of Gen Z opinion forming

Description:

1. User Index: Questions 1, 2, 3
2. Influence Index: Questions 7, 8, 9, 10
3. Improvement Indicator: Questions 4, 5, 6

The results of the 30 respondents' responses to the 10-question survey on the formation of public opinion among Generation Z showed a percentage of 94.23% for the strongly agree category. Research into the influence of the media on public opinion has long been a concern of academics. Research shows that mass media have a significant power in shaping individual perceptions and attitudes towards various issues. It has been added that the intensity of media consumption is one of the factors that determine the extent of the influence.

3.2 Discussion

Therefore, it is important for Gen Z to always be critical and seek information from multiple reliable sources before making a decision. With easy and quick access to information through social media, Generation Z has become a group that is highly aware of issues and politics in the public media. They are not just passive spectators, but also active in finding solutions and taking action (Naninsih et al., 2024).

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the intensity of media consumption plays an important role in shaping the dynamics of public opinion among Generation Z, which has unique characteristics as a digital native generation. With a tendency to spend hours on social media, Gen Z shows a pattern of information consumption that can be heavily influenced by the speed, visuality and interactivity of digital media. This research also highlights the importance of media literacy in meeting this challenge. Media literacy is not only the ability to access information, but also the ability to analyse, evaluate and verify the information received. Without adequate media literacy, Generation Z risks becoming 'victims' of uncontrolled information flows, which could ultimately affect the stability of public opinion as a whole.

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