

Political Strategies of Gen Z and Millennial Candidates: A Literature Review on the 2024 Election

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Abstract. The 2024 General Election marks a milestone in Indonesia's democratic history, with Generation Z and Millennials not only becoming the largest voter group but also emerging as legislative candidates at local and national levels. This shift reflects a transformation in political dynamics, where youth voices gain stronger recognition in formal politics. This study aims to examine the political strategies employed by Gen Z and Millennial candidates through a literature review of academic sources and recent data. The analysis reveals that young candidates exhibit characteristics of inclusivity, technological adaptability, and critical awareness of social issues. Social media platforms—particularly Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter—are their primary tools for building personal branding, engaging in two-way communication, and disseminating political messages widely. These digital strategies effectively enhance political participation among young voters, yet challenges remain, including digital polarization, limited funding, and misinformation threats. This research contributes by highlighting the novelty of youth-driven digital campaigning in Indonesia's electoral context. It concludes that understanding these strategies is essential for developing more effective and inclusive political campaigns in an era increasingly shaped by young generations.

Keywords: Young candidates, Gen Z, Millennials, political strategy

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 General Election marks a pivotal moment in Indonesia's political landscape, characterized by a demographic shift in the electorate. Generation Z (Gen Z) and Millennials have emerged as dominant forces, making up more than 50% of total registered voters. According to the General Elections Commission (KPU), Millennials account for around 33%, while Gen Z contributes about 23% of the more than 205 million registered voters. These figures highlight their growing political influence in shaping the country's future. Their unique characteristics—such as being highly tech-savvy, open to social change, and deeply concerned about global issues like social justice, climate change, gender equality, and anti-corruption position them as a strategically significant voter segment in any political campaign.

The political preferences of Gen Z and Millennials are strongly shaped by their digital behavior. On average, they spend over four hours a day on platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These social media platforms are not only used for entertainment but also serve as their primary sources of political information. A study by (Dewi et al., 2023) highlights how legislative candidates in West Java are beginning to adopt communication strategies tailored to the digital lifestyles of young voters such as short videos, political memes, podcasts, and interactive live streams. These approaches are designed to build more personal and relatable engagement between candidates and voters.

Furthermore, young legislative candidates are pioneering a shift toward new wave marketing a strategy emphasizing personal branding, storytelling, and community engagement. A study by (Rahmadiany & Aji, 2024) found that political parties such as Gerindra are revamping their image by adopting more

modern and creative campaigns, particularly on TikTok, to appeal to Gen Z voters in Jakarta. This strategy has proven successful in enhancing party electability by delivering relevant and relatable content rooted in the everyday experiences of young voters.

Despite their high digital competence, young voters still face challenges in active political participation. A study conducted by (Wijaya et al., 2023) in Jayapura found that while Gen Z possesses advanced digital skills, their offline political engagement such as participating in rallies or serving as election observers remains relatively low. This indicates that technological proficiency does not automatically translate into active political involvement. Thus, there is a need for more inclusive political education that leverages digital tools to transform digital skills into real-world political action.

Another pressing issue is the widespread disinformation on social media, which poses a serious threat to democratic integrity. Gen Z is particularly vulnerable to fake news or hoaxes, which often spread rapidly across digital platforms. (Mulyadi et al., 2024) emphasize that manipulative narratives targeting the emotions or identity of young users can undermine their critical thinking. As a response, political literacy and digital literacy must go hand in hand. Campaign teams and candidates should produce content that is not only engaging but also accurate, supported by collaborations with influencers and content creators who can communicate complex political issues in fun yet meaningful ways.

Interestingly, a study by (Robiyanti et al., 2024) found that social media exposure contributes around 19% to variations in political participation among Gen Z, both online and offline. This proves that social platforms can be an effective tool for raising political awareness and engagement when used wisely. In this context, candidates who can utilize digital platforms as tools for political education—not just promotion—are more likely to earn the trust and support of young voters.

Communication style also plays a significant role. According to (Ath-Thariq & Arliansyah, 2024), presidential candidates who use a relaxed, inclusive, and open tone on social media are more favorably received by Gen Z voters. This communication approach fosters a sense of closeness and trust, which are key factors in building voter loyalty among younger demographics. Therefore, political campaigns targeting Gen Z and Millennials must avoid rigid or formal language and instead emphasize two-way communication and transparency.

The implications of these findings suggest that political parties and legislative candidates must design campaign strategies that are not only digital-first but also grounded in values and issue relevance. Gen Z and Millennials want to know not just “who” is running, but also “what” they stand for and “how” they plan to solve pressing issues such as employment, corruption, education, and environmental sustainability. If candidates fail to convey their ideas authentically and meaningfully, they risk losing the support of this influential voter base.

In conclusion, the demographic shift toward a younger electorate in the 2024 election demands a transformation in political strategy—one that is responsive to technological trends and the social values held by Gen Z and Millennials. Effective use of social media, fresh communication styles, digital literacy, and sensitivity to contemporary issues are key to winning the hearts and minds of young voters. Today’s youth are no longer passive political observers; they are active participants who are shaping the nation’s political future.

With distinctive characteristics including high dependence on technology, openness to social change, and a tendency to prioritize issues such as social justice, diversity, and climate change, these two generations show different patterns of political behavior from previous generations (Politik, 2024). The presence of Gen Z and Millennials in Indonesian elections makes it important for candidates to have the right strategies to win their support. In particular, candidates need to understand how political communication can be carried out in a way that is relevant and attractive to these young voters. In addition, candidates should also utilize social media as a key tool in delivering their campaign messages, as this generation is very familiar with digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Twitter. Political campaigns that do not make good use of social media will risk losing connection with this increasingly influential group of young voters (Zindy, 2024).

Digital culture makes it easier for young people to access information from various sources. They become more conscientious and active in understanding political issues. Not only relying on traditional media, they also use social media, online forums, and information sharing applications to expand their knowledge (Nasrullah et al., 2023). As a result, young people are now not only voters, but also active as legislative candidates, campaign activists, and disseminators of political information through digital media (Setyawan, 2023). This active involvement of the younger generation provides new hope for Indonesian politics. With high technological capabilities and advanced views on various issues, they bring a political

style that is more open, fair, and concerned with social justice. The issues they raise are also in line with today's problems, such as climate change, gender equality, human rights, corruption eradication, and economic equality. They dare to criticize policies that are not pro-people and push for changes in various fields (Haryanti, 2024).

Political strategy in Indonesia has undergone a significant transformation in the past five years, especially with the increasing role of social media in political campaigns. According to Hutabarat (2023), social media has become an effective tool for politicians to promote themselves, disseminate information and interact directly with voters. Afrita (2024) added that digital campaigns are able to increase people's political participation, especially the younger generation who are active on digital platforms. This research focuses not only on current political trends, but also on fundamental changes in the way political communication is conducted to reach young voters. By using a literature review approach, it is hoped that this research can provide a more in-depth understanding of the campaign strategies that can be used by candidates in the 2024 elections to capitalize on the great potential possessed by Gen Z and Millennials.

METHOD

This research uses the literature review method, which relies on existing literature sources to gain an understanding of the topics discussed. This literature review was conducted by searching, reading, and analyzing various relevant sources related to candidate campaign strategies, young voter behavior, and the use of social media in political campaigns (Sugiyono, 2016). The literature review method has the advantage of providing a comprehensive overview of the topic being discussed. By relying on existing sources, this research can provide a broad perspective on political theories, voter behavior, and analysis of developing trends in politics. In addition, the literature review allows this research to examine previous studies, thus strengthening the argument on how candidates should design their campaign strategies to reach young voters. In this study, the sources used include scientific journals, books, articles, and reports from various institutions relevant to the topics of voter behavior, political communication strategies, and digital campaign dynamics (Marzali, 2016). These sources will be analyzed to identify the latest trends in political campaigns, as well as how they can be applied in the context of the 2024 elections, with a focus on Gen Z and Millennial voters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Social Media Usage by Gen Z and Millennial Candidates

The changing pattern of political communication in the 2024 elections, especially involving legislative candidates from Generation Z (Gen Z) and Millennials, is strongly influenced by the role of social media. Social media, as a platform that connects individuals quickly and effectively, allows young candidates to reach voters in a more personalized, transparent and direct manner (Candraningrum et al., 2024).

This is in line with research conducted by (Nugroho & Syarif, 2022), which revealed that social media has become the main channel for the younger generation to convey political messages and interact with legislative candidates. Along with the increasing use of social media among young voters, Gen Z and Millennial candidates utilize digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook to communicate directly with voters. Based on the findings of (Enli & Moe, 2020), political communication through social media provides opportunities for young candidates to introduce themselves in a more humanistic and authentic manner. In contrast to traditional campaign strategies that tend to be rigid and formal, digital campaigns allow candidates to showcase their personal side, share their life experiences, and address issues relevant to society.

TikTok and Instagram are the two platforms most used by young candidates in the 2024 elections. Content in the form of short videos, viral challenges, or the use of political influencers are considered effective to attract the attention of young audiences who spend more time on these platforms. Research by (Smith, 2023) shows that social media offers an opportunity for candidates to transform politics that was previously considered monotonous into something more creative and engaging. Gen Z and Millennial candidates, who tend to be more familiar with digital technology, not only rely on social media as a political promotion tool, but also as a means to interact with voters, respond to current issues, and share their views on social change. In a study conducted by (Liu et al., 2021) it was found that issues such as climate change, gender equality, social justice, and economic empowerment were the main topics in the campaigns of young candidates. Gen Z and Millennial candidates tend to raise issues that are relevant to young voters, who are

more concerned about social and environmental issues in their daily lives.

2. Effective Digital Campaign Strategy

One of the key findings in this research is how Gen Z and Millennial candidates use various digital campaign strategies to expand their reach and influence public opinion. Research by (Yuliana & Rizki, 2022) emphasizes that young candidates prefer to utilize content that is based on values and ideas that match the political views of the younger generation. They mostly use video or image-based approaches to deliver political messages, which are easier for audiences to digest. Based on the findings (Siahaan et al., 2023), in digital campaigns, visual content such as memes, infographics and short videos are used to evoke emotions and make political messages easier to receive. TikTok videos, for example, which are a few seconds long, are particularly effective in building emotional connections with young voters. These videos serve not only to convey political messages but also to create a personal image of legislative candidates, who are considered closer to the daily lives of young voters (Tandoc et al., 2020).

3. Challenges of Disinformation and Opinion Manipulation

Disinformation is one of the major challenges faced by Gen Z and Millennial candidates in their digital campaigns. According to research (Limbu et al., 2024), social media is often a means of spreading false information that can change public perception of a candidate. In Indonesia, as noted by (Siahaan et al., 2023), the spread of hoaxes and fake news is common during political campaigns, and this can be detrimental to candidates who do not have full control over the narratives that develop on social media. The spread of disinformation is not only detrimental to candidates' political image, but it can also degrade the quality of democracy by confusing voters into making informed choices. For this reason, digital literacy is very important, both for candidates and voters. Low digital literacy among young voters often causes them to be caught up in the flow of inaccurate information. For example, (Nugroho & Syarif, 2022) showed that although young voters are highly connected to the internet, they often lack the ability to distinguish between credible and non-credible information.

Addressing this issue is crucial in digital political campaigns. Gen Z and Millennial candidates should strive to strengthen their online presence by providing accurate, transparent and accountable information. This is not only important to build a good image, but also to ensure that voters are not swayed by false information that can damage elections.

4. Digital Literacy as Key to Campaign Success

Digital literacy is one of the key elements in digital political campaigns. Young voters who are active on social media must have the skills to evaluate the information they receive. Research by (Nugroho & Syarif, 2022) revealed that young voters who have high digital literacy tend to be more critical in evaluating political information circulating on social media. Digital literacy allows voters to sort out valid information and minimize the negative impact of disinformation. On the other hand, Gen Z and Millennial candidates also need to improve their digital literacy, not only to understand how to use social media platforms effectively, but also to manage potential crises that may arise during the campaign. This includes how to respond to allegations or smear campaigns circulating online and safeguard their reputation. Research by (Liu et al., 2021) shows that voters who have good digital literacy skills are more likely to engage in politics actively, not only by voting, but also by discussing political issues, disseminating useful information, and participating in healthy political debates.

Discussion

The Influence of Social Media on the Campaign Strategy of Gen Z and Millennial Candidates. Social media has proven to be a very effective tool in political campaigns, especially for candidates from younger generations such as Gen Z and Millennials, who are more connected to the digital world. Based on research conducted by (Enli & Moe, 2020) social media provides a platform that allows candidates to directly interact with voters, without the time and space limitations of conventional media. This phenomenon has a significant impact on the way political campaigns are conducted, especially in attracting the attention of young voters who tend to avoid more formal traditional political approaches. The use of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube, which are more familiar to Gen Z and Millennials, has changed the way political messages are delivered. Gen Z and Millennial candidates often utilize short video formats, memes and infographics, which have proven to be effective in appealing to younger audiences with shorter

attention spans. Research by Smith (2023) confirms that young voters are more responsive to visual and interactive content, so digital campaigns involving visual content are more successful in influencing their political attitudes.

The content presented by young candidates tends to focus on issues that are highly relevant to the lives of young voters, such as climate change, gender equality, education, and economic empowerment. As found by (Yuliana & Rizki, 2022), these issues are highly resonant among young voters, who tend to be more sensitive to social and sustainability issues. Gen Z and Millennial candidates raise these themes to build their image as candidates who care about the issues facing their generation, while also showing a more inclusive and progressive vision of the future.

Digital Campaigns: Strategies and Challenges, While social media provides many opportunities for young candidates, the use of digital platforms in political campaigns also comes with significant challenges. One of the biggest challenges faced by Gen Z and Millennial candidates is the issue of disinformation. Research conducted by (Lim, 2020) shows that social media is often a means of spreading fake news that can damage a candidate's image. Fake news, hoaxes and rumors often circulate online, and this can have a negative impact on candidates' reputation, especially if they are not sufficiently vigilant against information manipulation. This disinformation phenomenon is even more complex when it comes to identity politics, where various parties try to build narratives that can influence public perceptions of certain candidates. Research by (Siahaan et al., 2023) explains that this phenomenon is particularly strong in Indonesia, where social media is used by certain groups to spread narratives aimed at reducing the popularity of certain candidates. Gen Z and Millennial candidates, who lack experience in traditional politics, are often easy targets in this information war.

To overcome this challenge, digital literacy is of key importance for both candidates and voters. Candidates need to have a better understanding of how to manage their digital content and ensure that the information they share is always accurate and accountable. Young voters, on the other hand, must also improve their skills in sorting out the right information and avoiding the spread of disinformation. This is in line with the findings of (Nugroho & Syarif, 2022), who emphasize the importance of media education and digital literacy in improving the quality of democracy.

The Importance of Authenticity in Gen Z and Millennial Candidates' Campaigns One of the main advantages that Gen Z and Millennial candidates have is their ability to present a more authentic image and relate to young voters. Campaigns conducted through social media often showcase the personal side of legislative candidates, which is considered more transparent and accessible to voters. For example, many young candidates share their personal stories, life experiences and views on various social issues that are relevant to voters' daily lives. This allows candidates to build stronger emotional connections with their voters. Research by (Liu et al., 2021) found that young voters pay close attention to how legislative candidates present themselves on social media. They prefer candidates they perceive as authentic, who can speak honestly and openly about their political views, rather than candidates who are too formal or too distant from voters. Therefore, social media allows Gen Z and Millennial candidates to showcase their personalities in a more casual and informal way, which is in line with the values of the younger generation.

However, while authenticity is key in digital campaigns, there are risks to be aware of. Candidates who are too open in sharing personal information or too casual in their messaging may risk losing their political credibility. Research by (Yuliana & Rizki, 2022) shows that the balance between showing a personal side and maintaining professionalism in politics is very important for young candidates. **Influencer Strategy and Collaboration with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs),** In addition to using social media to deliver their messages directly, many Gen Z and Millennial candidates also work with influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) to expand their campaign reach. This collaboration is particularly effective, given the popularity of influencers among young voters. Research by (Siahaan et al., 2023) states that young voters tend to trust recommendations from influencers they follow more than political messages delivered through traditional advertising. Young candidates use influencers to introduce them to a wider audience, as well as to gain legitimacy in the eyes of voters. Influencers, who are often perceived as having great influence on social media, can help introduce candidates on a more personal level and connect their political messages with young voters. Therefore, working with influencers who have values and audiences that align with legislative candidates is crucial to creating an effective campaign.

However, this collaboration also demands caution. Not all influencers have high integrity, and if they choose the wrong influencer, candidates may experience backlash from voters who feel that they are too tied to paid advertisements or promotions. Therefore, it is important for Gen Z and Millennial candidates to

carefully select influencers, who not only have a wide audience but also have credibility in the eyes of the public.

This discussion confirms that social media has become a very powerful tool in political campaigns, especially for Gen Z and Millennial candidates in the 2024 elections. Social media provides opportunities for young candidates to interact directly with voters, deliver more personalized and authentic political messages, and raise issues that are relevant to the younger generation. However, the use of social media also brings challenges, especially related to disinformation and opinion manipulation, which can damage the political image of candidates. For this reason, good digital literacy is needed by candidates and voters to ensure that campaigns remain transparent and the information conveyed can be accounted for. In addition, collaboration strategies with influencers and KOLs can also increase campaign effectiveness, although it must be done with caution so as not to damage the credibility of legislative candidates

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the study of Gen Z and Millennial Candidates' Political Strategies in the 2024 Elections, it can be concluded that social media plays a very important role in how they communicate and interact with young voters. Social media has provided a more personalized and direct platform, allowing young candidates to introduce themselves, deliver more authentic political messages, and build emotional connections with voters, especially through visual content such as short videos, memes, and infographics. The importance of social issues relevant to young voters, such as climate change, gender equality and economic empowerment, characterize the campaigns of Gen Z and Millennial candidates. These digital campaigns have proven effective in reaching a wider audience, given the tendency of young voters to spend more time on digital platforms. However, the use of social media also brings great challenges, especially related to disinformation and opinion manipulation that can damage the reputation of legislative candidates.

The disinformation that often circulates online poses a real threat to political campaigns, requiring more careful communication strategies based on credibility and transparency. Digital literacy, both for candidates and voters, is key to overcoming this challenge, where voters must be able to sort out the right information and candidates must be able to manage their digital image well. In addition, collaboration with influencers and Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) is also an important strategy in expanding campaign reach. These collaborations provide opportunities for young candidates to introduce their political messages to a larger and more diversified audience. Overall, while social media offers great opportunities for Gen Z and Millennial candidates to win elections, the challenges associated with disinformation and online image management require more in-depth attention. Therefore, skills in digital communication, maintaining credibility, and managing information crises will be crucial to the success of their campaigns in the 2024 elections.

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