

Digital Democracy, Political Literacy, and Post-Truth Politics: A Systematic Literature Review of Their Influence on Generation Z's Political Engagement

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| Received: 14-01-2026 || Revised: 27-05-2026 || Accepted: 16-07-2026 || Published On: 31-07-2026

Abstract: This study addresses the growing challenge of understanding how digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics collectively influence Generation Z's political engagement in Indonesia amid the rapid expansion of digital media and increasing exposure to misinformation. It seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How have studies on digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics evolved? (2) What are the dominant research themes and emerging trends in this field? Furthermore, (3) How do these factors shape Generation Z's political participation in the Indonesian context? To address these questions, this study employs a systematic literature review based on the PRISMA framework combined with bibliometric analysis. A total of 1,382 publications published between 1979 and 2024 were analysed using Biblioshiny in RStudio to identify publication trends, thematic clusters, collaboration networks, and research gaps. The findings reveal that digital democracy has significantly expanded opportunities for Generation Z's political participation by facilitating access to information, political expression, and civic engagement. However, these opportunities are accompanied by challenges, including the widespread dissemination of misinformation, limited political literacy, and the growing influence of emotional narratives characteristic of post-truth politics. The analysis further emphasises the importance of political literacy and civic education in strengthening young people's ability to evaluate political information and critically resist disinformation. This study contributes to the academic literature by integrating systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis to provide a comprehensive overview of research developments, identify underexplored areas, and propose a conceptual foundation for future studies on youth political engagement in the digital era. Furthermore, the findings offer practical implications for educators, policymakers, and digital platform regulators in designing evidence-based strategies to promote informed, resilient, and democratic political participation among Generation Z in Indonesia.

Keywords: Digital Democracy; Political Literacy; Post-Truth Politics; Gen Z's Political Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed democratic practices by reshaping how citizens access political information, communicate with political actors, and participate in democratic processes¹. Social media platforms, online discussion forums, and various digital applications have reduced barriers to political participation, allowing citizens, particularly younger generations, to engage in political discourse beyond conventional institutional channels. In Indonesia, where internet penetration and social media use continue to increase, these developments have significantly altered the political landscape by enabling broader civic participation while simultaneously creating new challenges associated with information quality, political polarisation, and democratic deliberation².

Generation Z occupies a particularly important position within this digital transformation because they are the first generation to grow up entirely within an internet-based communication environment. Their political socialisation is increasingly mediated through digital platforms rather than traditional institutions such as political parties, schools, or mass media³. Consequently, digital democracy provides Generation Z with unprecedented opportunities to participate in political campaigns, express political opinions, mobilise collective action, and influence public discourse through social networking platforms⁴. Indonesian youth movements illustrate how digital platforms have become important arenas for political participation and civic mobilisation among younger citizens⁵. Nevertheless, the expansion of digital democracy has also generated complex democratic challenges because greater access to political information does not necessarily lead to better-informed political participation.

Existing studies increasingly recognise that the democratic benefits of digital participation depend heavily on citizens' political literacy. Political literacy extends beyond factual political knowledge by encompassing critical thinking

¹ Muhammad Faisal et al., 'Government Social Media Communication as a Political Public Relations Strategy for Advancing Social Welfare', *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 5, no. 1 (2026): 421–435.

² Muhammad Azam et al., 'AI-Driven Sharia Governance in Islamic Digital Payment Systems: Developing a Contemporary Islamic Law Framework for Ethical and Regulatory Compliance', *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 5, no. 2 (2026): 849–880.

³ Waluyo Handoko, Paulus Israwan Setyoko, and Denok Kurniasih, 'Youths' Digital Literacy Skills: Critical Thinking to Participate in Elections', *Journal of Local Government Issues* 6, no. 1 (2023): 19–34.

⁴ Ida Rachmah, Saud Muhammad, and Mashud Musta'in, 'An Empirical Analysis of Social Media Usage, Political Learning and Participation among Youth: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Pakistan', *Quality and Quantity* 54, no. 4 (2020): 1285–1297.

⁵ Muhammad Saud and Hendro Margono, 'Indonesia's Rise in Digital Democracy and Youth's Political Participation', *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 18, no. 4 (2021): 443–454.

skills, civic competencies, and the ability to evaluate political information objectively before making political judgments⁶. Individuals possessing higher political literacy are generally better equipped to distinguish credible information from misinformation, critically evaluate political narratives, and participate more meaningfully in democratic decision-making. Conversely, inadequate political literacy increases vulnerability to misinformation, political manipulation, and emotionally driven political communication, particularly within highly interactive digital environments where information circulates rapidly with limited verification⁷.

The growing influence of post-truth politics further complicates this relationship. Unlike conventional political communication, post-truth politics emphasises emotional appeals, personal beliefs, and identity-based narratives over objective evidence and factual accuracy⁸. Digital platforms amplify this phenomenon through algorithm-driven content distribution, echo chambers, and viral misinformation, enabling emotionally charged political narratives to spread more rapidly than verified information. For Generation Z, whose political engagement frequently occurs through social media, exposure to post-truth communication simultaneously creates opportunities for political mobilisation and risks of political manipulation⁹. Consequently, understanding political engagement among young citizens requires examining not only digital participation itself but also the interaction between digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth political communication¹⁰.

Although these three concepts have attracted increasing scholarly attention, the existing literature remains fragmented. Studies on digital democracy primarily emphasise the opportunities created by digital technologies for political

⁶ Saud and Margono; Sri Lestari Wahyuningroem et al., 'Youth Political Participation and Digital Movement in Indonesia: The Case Of# ReformasiDikorupsi And# TolakOmnibusLaw', *F1000Research* 12 (2024): 543.

⁷ Evie Ariadne Shinta Dewi, Hadi S. Arifin, and Ikhsan Fuadi, 'Nurturing Political Engagement: Political Communication Strategies for Generation Z in the Lead-up to the 2024 Election in West Java', *The Journal of Society and Media* 7, no. 2 (2023): 370–388.

⁸ Yasmine Calista and Siswantini Yenni, 'The Impact of Social Media on Climate Change Perceptions: A Case Study of Indonesian Gen-Z', *E3S Web of Conferences* 426 (2023): 1052.

⁹ Ranny Rastati, 'Media Literasi Bagi Digital Natives: Perspektif Generasi Z Di Jakarta', *Jurnal Kwangsan*, 2018; Anang Sujoko et al., 'Literasi Media Digital Bagi Gen-Z Di MAN 1 Kota Malang: Digital Media Literacy for Gen-Z in Islamic Elementary School 1 Malang City', *PengabdianMu: Jurnal Ilmiah Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 8, no. 4 (2023): 577–585.

¹⁰ Halifa Haqqi and Hasna Wijayati, 'Gen-z Local Wisdom Campaign Agenda in the Framework of Counter Hegemony, Digital Hegemony, Cultural Hegemony', *Asian Journal of Community Services (AJCS)* 2, no. 2 (2023): 191–202; Muhamad Murtadlo et al., 'Preserving the Gotong Royong Character for Indonesian Gen-Z in the Digital Era', *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education* 13, no. 3 (2024): 1631–1640.

participation, online activism, and civic engagement¹¹. Meanwhile, research on political literacy predominantly investigates civic education, political efficacy, and democratic competence among young citizens¹². Another stream of literature examines post-truth politics by focusing on misinformation, fake news, algorithmic amplification, emotional manipulation, and political polarisation¹³. While these studies substantially contribute to understanding each phenomenon, they generally examine these variables independently, providing only limited explanation of how they interact to shape Generation Z's political engagement within contemporary digital democracies.

Recent studies highlight the significant influence of digital media on Generation Z's political engagement. Social media platforms have become primary sources of political information and expression for young people¹⁴. However, concerns about data privacy and misinformation affect their online political participation¹⁵. Digital media literacy education has been shown to increase online political engagement and exposure to diverse perspectives¹⁶. Social media use is positively associated with political engagement among youth across multiple democracies, potentially reducing political inequality¹⁷. Generation Z's political literacy can be enhanced through targeted social media campaigns¹⁸. The perception of social media credibility significantly influences

¹¹ Alva Beriansyah and Mariatul Qibtiyah, 'Instagram and Political Literacy Generation Z', *Jurnal Kajian Tunggal Ika: Kajian Teori Dan Praktik Pendidikan PKN* 10, no. 1 (2023): 134–49; Edanur Gürel and Ezgi Eyüboğlu, 'Political Communication in Digital Media and Online Political Participation of Generation z', *Turkish Online Journal of Design Art and Communication* 13, no. 4 (2023): 980–994.

¹² Ertuğrul Buğra Orhan, 'Political Manipulation on Social Media: Policy Recommendations, and Potential Reactions', *Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 8, no. 16 (2023): 218–233.

¹³ Joseph Kahne, Nam-Jin Lee, and Jessica Timpany Feezell, 'Digital Media Literacy Education and Online Civic and Political Participation', *International Journal of Communication* 6 (2012): 24; Joseph Kahne and Benjamin Bowyer, 'Can Media Literacy Education Increase Digital Engagement in Politics?', *Learning, Media and Technology* 44, no. 2 (2019): 211–224.

¹⁴ Beriansyah and Qibtiyah, 'Instagram and Political Literacy Generation Z'; Gürel and Eyüboğlu, 'Political Communication in Digital Media and Online Political Participation of Generation z'.

¹⁵ Orhan, 'Political Manipulation on Social Media: Policy Recommendations, and Potential Reactions'; Gürel and Eyüboğlu, 'Political Communication in Digital Media and Online Political Participation of Generation z'.

¹⁶ Kahne, Lee, and Feezell, 'Digital Media Literacy Education and Online Civic and Political Participation'; Kahne and Bowyer, 'Can Media Literacy Education Increase Digital Engagement in Politics?'

¹⁷ Michael A. Xenos, Ariadne Vromen, and Brian D. Loader, 'The Great Equalizer?: Patterns of Social Media Use and Youth Political Engagement in Three Advanced Democracies', in *The Networked Young Citizen* (Routledge, 2014), 17–38.

¹⁸ Nuriyatul Lailiyah, Ghozian Aulia Pradhana, and Muchammad Yuliyanto, 'Youthizen Political Literacy: Educating the Generation Z', *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial* 19, no. 1 (2020): 22–39.

their political engagement¹⁹. As key demographics in elections, Generation Z's internet-dependent nature makes them both influential and vulnerable to political manipulation in the digital age²⁰.

Table 1. Categorisation of Previous Studies

No	Categorisation of Previous Studies	Explanation
1	Digital Media as a Tool for Political Engagement	Recent studies highlight the significant role of digital media in shaping Generation Z's political behaviour. Social media platforms serve as primary sources of political information and expression, with positive associations between their use and youth political engagement (Alva & Maria, 2023; Xenos et al., 2014).
2	Challenges of Misinformation and Data Privacy	Concerns about misinformation and data privacy create barriers to meaningful online political participation (E., 2023; Edanur & Ezgi, 2023). These issues highlight vulnerabilities in Gen Z's reliance on digital platforms for political activities.
3	Enhancing Political Literacy	Digital media literacy education and targeted social media campaigns have been shown to improve political literacy and increase exposure to diverse perspectives (Joseph, Nam-Jin, & Jessica, 2012; N., Ghozian, & M., 2020).
4	Social Media Credibility and Political Perceptions	The perception of social media credibility significantly influences political engagement, with both opportunities for empowerment and risks of manipulation (Ronald Alfred & Ping Wong, 2022; Annisa, Pulung, & A., 2024).

Source: authors' literature reviews

Although previous studies offer valuable insights, they present several gaps. First, a focus on specific digital platforms often overlooks the broader interplay of political literacy and misinformation. Second, most studies emphasise Western democracies or global trends, with limited exploration of Indonesian socio-political contexts. Third, there is a lack of longitudinal analyses to capture

¹⁹ Jaayne Jeevita Ronald Alfred and Siew Ping Wong, 'The Relationship between the Perception of Social Media Credibility and Political Engagement in Social Media among Generation Z', *Journal of Communication, Language and Culture* 2, no. 2 (2022): 18–33.

²⁰ Annisa Vira, Pulung Sumantri, and Abdul Azis, 'Peranan Tokoh Intelektual Muda Dalam Perkembangan Politik Di Indonesia Pada Era Digital', *Polyscopia* 1, no. 1 (2024): 20–25.

changes in Gen Z's political behaviour over time. Addressing these gaps can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities for political engagement in Indonesia.

The widespread adoption of digital platforms in Indonesia has created unprecedented opportunities for political engagement among Generation Z. However, this shift raises critical questions about the quality and sustainability of their participation in democratic processes. Despite being digitally savvy, Indonesian Gen Z faces significant challenges, including limited political literacy and susceptibility to misinformation, which hinder their ability to engage meaningfully in politics. This research is urgent because Gen Z constitutes a growing proportion of the electorate and will play a crucial role in shaping Indonesia's democratic future. Understanding the factors influencing their political behaviour is essential for designing interventions that promote informed and active citizenship.

This article argues that the intersection of digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics fundamentally shapes political engagement among Indonesian Gen Z. While digital platforms have democratised access to political discourse and participation, their transformative potential is undermined by low political literacy and the prevalence of post-truth narratives. By addressing these challenges, stakeholders can harness the strengths of digital democracy to foster a more informed and engaged Gen Z electorate.

This study addresses the aforementioned gaps by employing a systematic literature review to synthesise findings across diverse sources. By focusing on the Indonesian context, it provides localised insights into the influence of digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics on Gen Z. The findings aim to inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders about strategies to enhance political engagement and resilience against misinformation in the digital age. The article is organised as follows: First, it outlines the methodology used for this systematic review. Secondly, the authors present findings of the literature reviews on the influence of digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics on Gen Z's political engagement. In the discussion section, we discuss the interplay of these factors and their implications for democratic participation and political engagement. Finally, we conclude with several recommendations for policy, education, and further research to enhance political engagement among Indonesian Gen Z.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) integrated with bibliometric analysis to comprehensively examine the development of research concerning digital democracy, political literacy, post-truth politics, and Generation Z's political engagement. The SLR approach was selected because it

enables a transparent, reproducible, and evidence-based synthesis of previous studies, while bibliometric analysis complements the review by mapping the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, collaboration patterns, and emerging research trends within the field. This research utilised the systematic review method proposed by Tranfield et al and some notable scholars²¹. The approach is structured around three main phases—planning, execution, and dissemination—each incorporating specific detailed steps. This structure ensures that the literature review is conducted rigorously, yielding reliable findings. To meet the objectives of this review, the study followed these steps, as has been done in previous systematic literature reviews²². The subsequent sections outline the process used to identify and select the relevant studies.

The literature search was conducted in Scopus, which was selected because it is recognised as one of the largest multidisciplinary citation databases, offering extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals, standardised indexing, and high-quality bibliographic metadata suitable for bibliometric analysis. The use of a single database also ensures data consistency during citation network analysis and minimises duplicate indexing across multiple databases. Nevertheless, restricting the search to Scopus may exclude relevant publications indexed exclusively in other databases such as Web of Science, Dimensions, or Google Scholar. Therefore, this limitation is acknowledged as a potential source of publication bias:

TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Digital Democracy” OR “Political Literacy” OR “Post-Truth Politics” AND “Political Participation”) AND “Generation Z” OR “Gen-Z”

Initially, 2,381 documents were identified through the Scopus search. Duplicate records were automatically removed using the Scopus export function and subsequently verified manually. Titles and abstracts were independently screened according to the predefined eligibility criteria. Records failing to address the research topic were excluded during this stage. The remaining articles

²¹ Tahera Kalsoom et al., ‘Impact of IoT on Manufacturing Industry 4.0: A New Triangular Systematic Review’, *Sustainability* 13, no. 22 (2021): 12506; Elisabeth Supriharyanti and Badri Munir Sukoco, ‘Organizational Change Capability: A Systematic Review and Future Research Directions’, *Management Research Review* 46, no. 1 (2023): 46–81; David Tranfield, David Denyer, and Palminder Smart, ‘Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review’, *British Journal of Management* 14, no. 3 (2003): 207–222; Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono et al., ‘Economic Transformation: A Systematic Literature Review’, *Sustainability* 16, no. 24 (2024): 11189.

²² Kalsoom et al., ‘Impact of IoT on Manufacturing Industry 4.0: A New Triangular Systematic Review’; Supriharyanti and Sukoco, ‘Organizational Change Capability: A Systematic Review and Future Research Directions’.

underwent full-text eligibility assessment to determine conceptual relevance to digital democracy, political literacy, post-truth politics, and Generation Z's political participation. Any disagreements during the screening process were resolved through discussion among the reviewers until consensus was achieved. Ultimately, 1,382 publications satisfied all eligibility criteria and were included in the bibliometric and qualitative synthesis.

Unlike conventional narrative reviews, this study follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency throughout the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion stages. Furthermore, bibliometric analysis was incorporated not merely as a descriptive visualisation technique but as an analytical tool to answer the first and second research questions by identifying publication trends, thematic evolution, keyword co-occurrence, collaboration networks, and research frontiers. The qualitative synthesis subsequently integrates these bibliometric findings to explain how digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics collectively influence Generation Z's political engagement.

This systematic literature review follows the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) to ensure a rigorous and transparent approach to identifying and analysing relevant literature²³. The PRISMA process includes four phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Each phase is carefully documented to provide a replicable research process, as demonstrated in table 2 and diagram 1. The significance of systematic literature review (SLR) methods in academic and research contexts cannot be overstated. SLRs serve as a structured approach to synthesising existing research, providing clarity and rigour in the evaluation of literature across various fields. This review method is characterised by its systematic, transparent, and replicable processes, which enhance the reliability and validity of research findings.

²³ Linda Hijriyah, Anuar Alias, and Mohd Firrdhaus Mohd Sahabuddin, 'Exploring Walkability Research Trends Based on Systematic Literature Review (SLR) by Applying PRISMA', *Open House International* 49, no. 1 (2024): 63–121; Janke B. Mains-Mason et al., 'Knowledge Retention and Clinical Skills Acquisition in Sexual and Gender Minority Health Curricula: A Systematic Review', *Academic Medicine* 97, no. 12 (2022): 1847–1853; Robbi Rendi, 'Sistematic Literature Review (SLR) And Biomectrik Analysis: SMEs Performance', *Business and Investment Review* 1, no. 6 (2023): 7–16; Poonam Sahoo, Pavan Kumar Saraf, and Rashmi Uchil, 'Identification of Challenges to Industry 5.0 Adoption in Indian Manufacturing Firms: An Emerging Economy Perspective', *International Journal of Computer Integrated Manufacturing* 38, no. 5 (2025): 649–674.

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

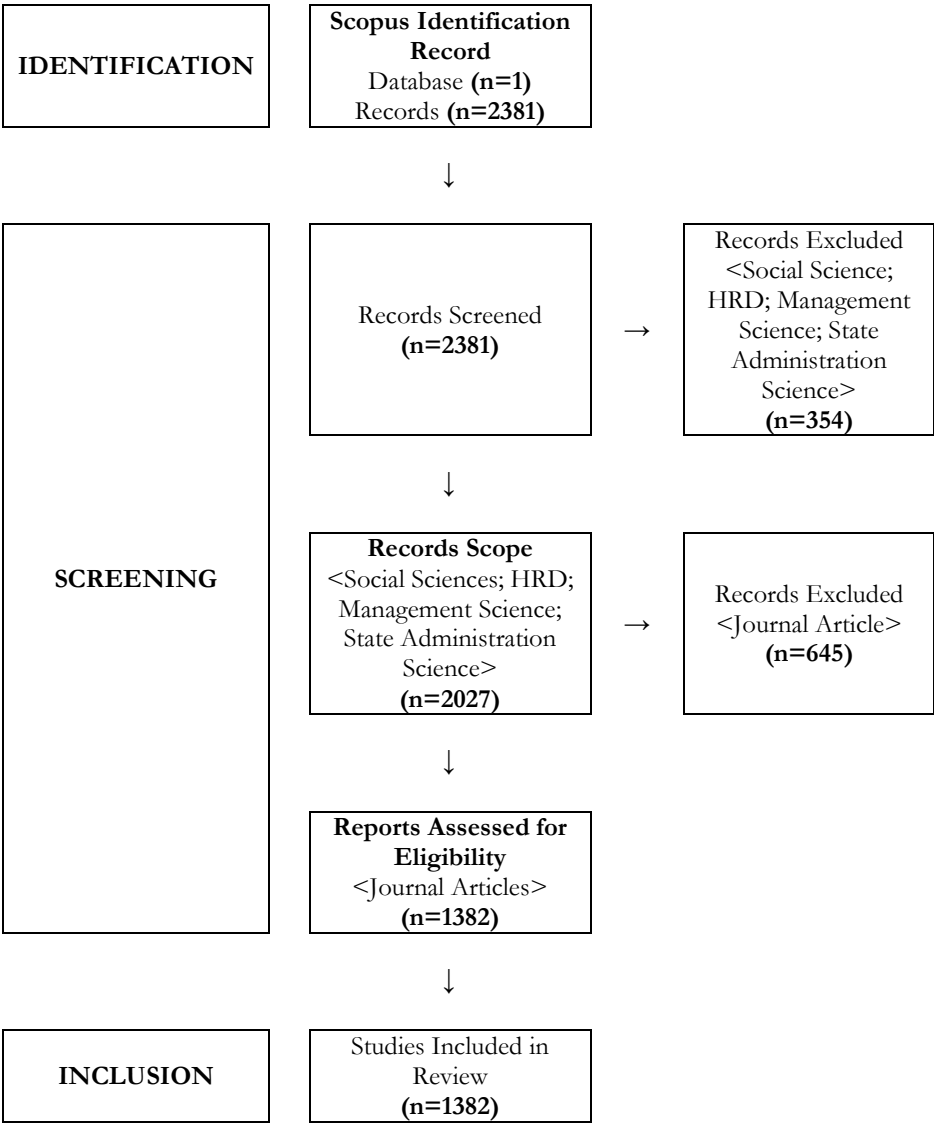
Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Source Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles	All other sources
Subject(s) and/or Topic(s)	Discussed in the field of Social Science; HRD Management Science; State Administration Science.	Not in the field of HRD Management Science; State Administration Science.
Language	English	All other languages
Search Parameter	Contain search string keywords in the title, abstract, and keywords	Not contain search string keywords in the title, abstract, and keywords
Relevance	Discussing Gen Z political participation in the context of the digital democracy era	Not discussing Gen Z political participation in the context of the digital democracy era

Source: author’s interpretation

One of the primary advantages of SLRs is their ability to comprehensively identify, evaluate, and synthesise relevant studies related to a specific research question or topic area. According to Mahood et al., SLRs facilitate the identification of grey literature, which is often overlooked in traditional reviews, thereby enriching the evidence base and providing a more holistic view of the research landscape²⁴. This comprehensive approach is essential for researchers seeking to understand the breadth of existing knowledge and identify gaps that warrant further investigation.

²⁴ Quenby Mahood, Dwayne Van Eerd, and Emma Irvin, ‘Searching for Grey Literature for Systematic Reviews: Challenges and Benefits’, *Research Synthesis Methods* 5, no. 3 (2014): 221–234.

Diagram 1. Bibliometrics Data Identification, Screening, and Inclusion



Bibliometric analysis was performed using Biblioshiny for Bibliometrix (R-Studio). Rather than functioning solely as a visualisation tool, bibliometric analysis was employed to address the first and second research questions by identifying:

- annual publication trends;
- most influential journals;
- productive authors;

- country scientific production;
- keyword co-occurrence;
- thematic evolution;
- thematic maps;
- collaboration networks.

These analyses enabled the identification of the intellectual structure of the field, dominant research themes, and emerging research directions.

Moreover, SLRs are guided by established protocols, such as the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), which enhance the transparency and reproducibility of the review process²⁵. By adhering to these guidelines, researchers can ensure that their reviews are methodologically sound and that their findings are credible. This is particularly important in fields where the integrity of research is paramount, as it allows for critical appraisal and comparison of studies²⁶.

Table 3. Bibliometrics Data Main Information

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	1979:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	803
Documents	1382
Annual Growth Rate %	11.29
Document Average Age	7.36
Average citations per doc	20.54
References	61856
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	2133
Author's Keywords (DE)	2697
AUTHORS	
Authors	2575
Authors of single-authored docs	448
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	508

²⁵ Maftuhatul Muna et al., ‘Association between Parental Variables and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy: A Systematic Literature Review’, *Proceedings of International Conference on Psychological Studies (ICPsyche)* 4 (2023): 404–411.

²⁶ Choirul Saleh, Firda Hidayati, and Nur Halim Rasyid, ‘Public Human Resources Development Systematic Literature Review’, *International Conference of Public Administration and Governance (ICOPAG 2022)*, 2023, 249–262.

Co-Authors per Doc	2.2
International co-authorships %	14.62
DOCUMENT TYPES	
Article	1099
Book	34
Book Chapter	134
Conference Paper	39
Conference Review	7
Editorial	13
Erratum	2
Note	5
Retracted	1
Review	47
Short Survey	1

Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

Table 2 provides a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of a dataset spanning from 1979 to 2024. It presents key information across four categories: Main Information About Data, Document Contents, Authors, and Authors Collaboration. Additionally, it categorises the dataset into various document types. The dataset spans 45 years (1979–2024) and consists of 1,382 documents sourced from 803 different journals, books, and other sources. The annual growth rate of documents is substantial at 11.29%, indicating an increasing trend in publications. The average document is 7.36 years old and has been cited 20.54 times, with a total of 61,856 references indicating high academic engagement and comprehensive citation activity. A significant number of unique keywords are used, with 2,133 Keywords Plus (ID) and 2,697 Author's Keywords (DE), suggesting a diverse and multidisciplinary dataset. There are 2,575 unique authors, with 448 contributing single-authored documents. This suggests a mix of individual and collaborative efforts in the dataset. Single-authored documents account for 508 entries, while the average number of co-authors per document is 2.2. International co-authorship stands at 14.62%, demonstrating moderate global collaboration in the research field. Articles dominate the dataset (1,099 documents), followed by book chapters (134) and reviews (47). Other types such as conference papers (39) and editorials (13) are present but less common.

The dataset reflects a steadily growing and evolving research field, as evidenced by its annual growth rate of 11.29% and the substantial timespan from 1979 to 2024. This growth, coupled with an average of 20.54 citations per document and a total of 61,856 references, indicates the field's academic impact and relevance. The diversity in research topics is apparent from the extensive use

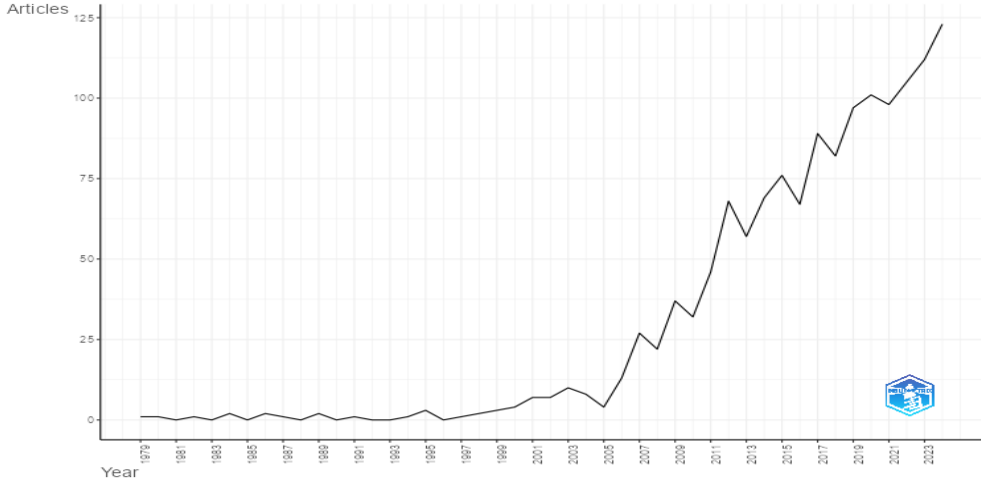
of Keywords Plus (2,133) and Author's Keywords (2,697), highlighting the multidisciplinary and complex nature of the studies included. This dataset showcases a rapidly growing research area with a mix of individual and collaborative contributions, moderate international cooperation, and a broad thematic scope. Enhancing global collaboration and focusing on newer document types, such as conference papers and editorials, could further enrich the field.

RESULT AND DISCCUSION

Gen Z Political Engagement: Publication Trends

Figure 1 illustrates the annual scientific production of articles from 1979 to 2024. The graph shows a steady increase in the number of publications over the decades, with a significant surge occurring after 2007. In the earlier years, from 1979 to the late 1990s, the number of articles published annually remained relatively stable, with minimal fluctuations and a low baseline of production. Starting in the mid-2000s, the trend shifted dramatically, as the number of published articles began to increase rapidly. This period marked the onset of exponential growth, reaching over 125 articles per year by 2024. The growth rate aligns with advancements in digital technologies, increased global collaboration, and heightened academic interest in the subject matter. This trend reflects the increasing importance and relevance of the research area. The earlier period of low production suggests that the topic was either nascent or lacked widespread academic attention. The post-2007 surge may indicate the emergence of new methodologies, theoretical frameworks, or societal events that spurred scholarly interest. Overall, the graph demonstrates that scientific production in this field has become increasingly dynamic and influential over time.

Figure 1. Annual Scientific Production



Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

The annual scientific production depicted in the figure reveals several critical insights into the evolution of scholarly work in this field. The sharp rise in article production after 2007 suggests a pivotal moment that transformed the field, possibly driven by global phenomena such as the rapid digitalisation of research methods, increased access to online academic resources, or emerging socio-political challenges that demanded scholarly attention. The steady acceleration from this point onward highlights not only an expanding researcher base but also a greater institutional and funding focus on topics related to the field. Global data analysis from databases like Scopus and Web of Science shows an exponential increase in the volume of articles published annually. This phenomenon coincides with the widespread adoption of high-speed internet, the digitisation of archives, and academic referencing software (such as Mendeley and Zotero), which have drastically accelerated the literature process.

Global crises and challenges largely drive the increase in publications. For example, studies on topics like climate change, renewable energy, and digital transformation (such as AI) have seen a sharp increase in publications, as they require collaboration between scientists from the pure sciences, social sciences, and engineering. Data from major publishers empirically demonstrates a sharp increase in the number of Open Access journals. For example, a report from Springer Nature found that half of its primary research publications have adopted an open access model, facilitating visibility and citation. The presence of digital repositories and international collaboration networks has reduced geographical barriers for researchers.

The exponential production growth may also indicate a shift towards interdisciplinary approaches, where the field intersects with other domains, such as technology, governance, or environmental studies. This is particularly evident as global challenges such as climate change, political instability, or digital transformation have become focal points of academic inquiry, providing fertile ground for research in related areas.

The sustained increase in annual publications also points to advancements in publication infrastructure. The rise of open-access journals, digital repositories, and international conferences has likely contributed to the dissemination and visibility of research. Furthermore, the upward trend reflects the intensification of global collaboration and the growing emphasis on publishing in peer-reviewed journals as a metric for academic success.

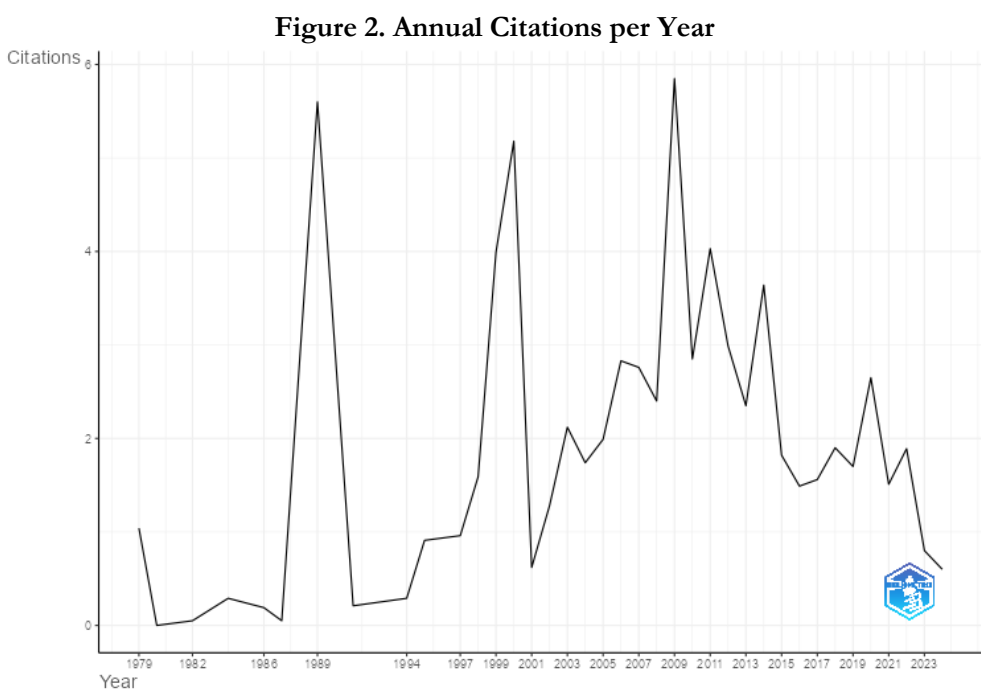
However, this growth also raises questions about quality versus quantity. While the increase in production suggests progress, it also highlights potential issues such as the dilution of research quality, oversaturation of specific topics, or redundancy in findings. Additionally, the figure underscores the need for a systematic review or bibliometric analysis to identify critical knowledge gaps,

emerging trends, and future research directions within this expanding body of work.

The figure illustrates the maturation and dynamism of the field, showcasing its responsiveness to global and technological shifts. It also calls for careful examination of the trends to ensure that the rapid growth translates into meaningful contributions and impactful knowledge creation.

Gen Z Political Engagement Relevance: Annual Citation

Figure 2 represents the annual citation trends of articles from 1979 to 2024, indicating fluctuations in the impact of scholarly works over time. Initially, citations were minimal, reflecting the limited academic output and influence of the field during its early years. A notable spike in citations occurred in the late 1980s, followed by intermittent peaks and troughs up to the early 2000s, suggesting occasional landmark studies that garnered significant attention within the academic community.



Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

From the mid-2000s to the mid-2010s, there was a period of relative stability, characterised by consistent citation activity and intermittent peaks. This trend corresponds with the rise of digital access to academic resources and an overall increase in research visibility. However, the gradual decline in

accumulated citations observed after 2015, with a more significant decline after 2020, does not reflect a decline in the quality or relevance of scientific output during that period. Empirically, this phenomenon indicates a citation time-lag effect inherent in the academic dissemination cycle. A manuscript typically requires an estimated circulation time of between two and five years from the date of formal publication to be reviewed, integrated into new methodologies, and ultimately cited in the secondary literature. Furthermore, the decline in the citation curve after 2020 is suspected to be an indirect impact of the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which massively reallocated research funding and journal editorial priorities to the health sector, thereby delaying citation multiplication in non-medical domains.

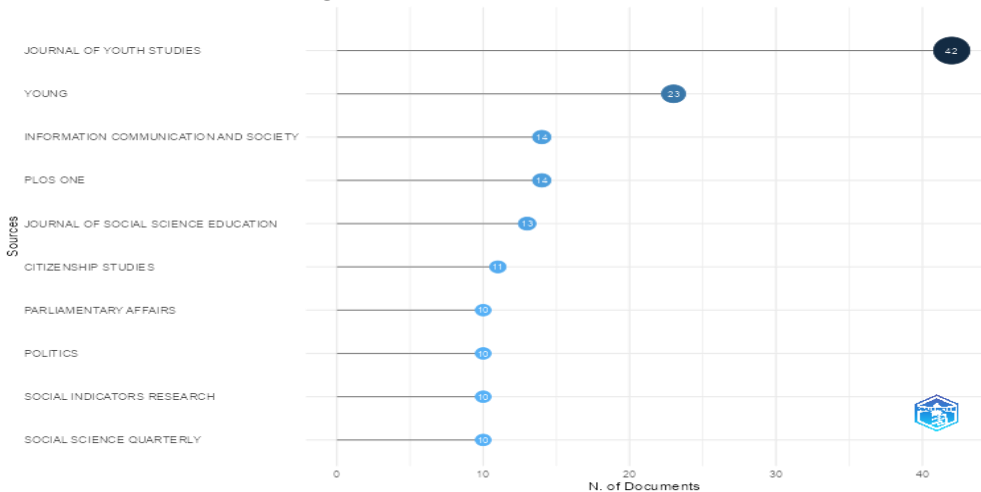
The fluctuations in the citation curve, with periodic citation spikes, particularly in the late 1980s and mid-2000s, confirm the existence of intellectual turning points in the development of this field. Methodologically, these spikes marked the introduction of landmark papers, both in the form of new theoretical frameworks and radical methodological innovations. These pioneering works at the temporal epicentre had a high resonance in the academic community, serving as conceptual foundations for subsequent replicative and expansive studies, as evidenced by the long-lasting citation domino effect. In contrast, the relative stability in citation activity spanning from the mid-2000s to the mid-2010s indicates that the discipline has entered a phase of theoretical maturity. The consistency of citation metrics without extreme fluctuations indicates the occurrence of scientific consolidation, where the academic community tends to adopt and apply established theoretical consensus homogeneously. Within this corridor, the research produced is generally applicative, namely testing or replicating previous universal theories in new empirical loci or contexts, without triggering a disruptive paradigm shift.

The integration of digital technology and the expansion of open access since the mid-2000s have proven to consolidate citation stability by increasing the global visibility of research. However, this phenomenon has also triggered a visibility paradox. The democratisation of academic information simplifies the literature search process, but the exponential growth in publication volumes has fragmented researchers' attention. As a result, citation distribution in the modern era has become more decentralised across a variety of new, micro-scale articles, in contrast to the pre-digital academic landscape of the late 1980s, where citation accumulation tended to be centralised exclusively in a handful of mainstream works.

Gen Z Political Engagement References: Authors, Sources, and Relevant Affiliations

The figure highlights the most relevant sources contributing to the academic field under study, based on publication and citation counts. Among these, the Journal of Youth Studies emerges as the most influential, with 42 contributions. This prominence suggests that this journal is a pivotal platform for research on topics related to youth engagement, likely including digital democracy and political literacy. Following is the journal Young, which has 23 contributions, further underscoring the focus on generational and developmental perspectives in the literature. Other notable sources include Information, Communication & Society and PLOS ONE, each with 14 contributions. These journals indicate the interdisciplinary nature of the field, combining communication studies, societal impacts, and broader scientific research. Similarly, the Journal of Social Science Education (13 contributions) and Citizenship Studies (11 contributions) reflect the educational and civic dimensions of the research focus. Meanwhile, journals like Parliamentary Affairs, Politics, Social Indicators Research, and Social Science Quarterly, each with 10 contributions, highlight the intersection of political science, sociology, and broader societal trends. The distribution of relevant sources reflects the interdisciplinary foundation of the field, which spans youth studies, political science, communication, education, and social indicators. The prominence of journals like the Journal of Youth Studies and Young suggests a central focus on the younger demographic, particularly Generation Z, as a key area of inquiry. This aligns with the increasing academic interest in how digitalisation and evolving political landscapes influence youth engagement.

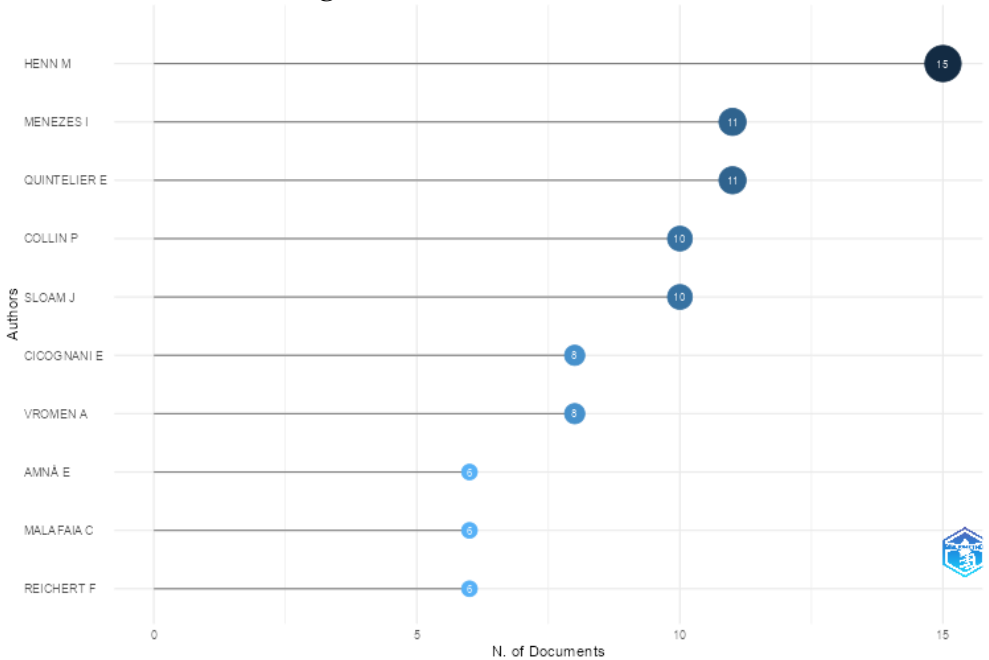
Figure 3. Most Relevant Sources



Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

The presence of highly interdisciplinary journals, such as PLOS ONE, indicates a growing emphasis on cross-domain approaches that integrate methodologies and perspectives from diverse fields. The inclusion of educational and citizenship-oriented journals suggests that political literacy and civic education are recurring themes, reinforcing the role of education in shaping digital democracy. However, the relatively low representation of traditional political science journals might signal either a research gap or the field's orientation towards applied and societal issues rather than theoretical developments. This observation opens avenues for further exploration into how political theories and frameworks could be better integrated into studies on digital democracy and youth engagement. The figure illustrates the broad yet concentrated nature of the field's academic foundation, with certain journals playing a disproportionately influential role. This distribution offers researchers a roadmap to target key journals for disseminating their findings, while also highlighting underrepresented areas that warrant greater scholarly attention.

Figure 4. Most Relevant Authors

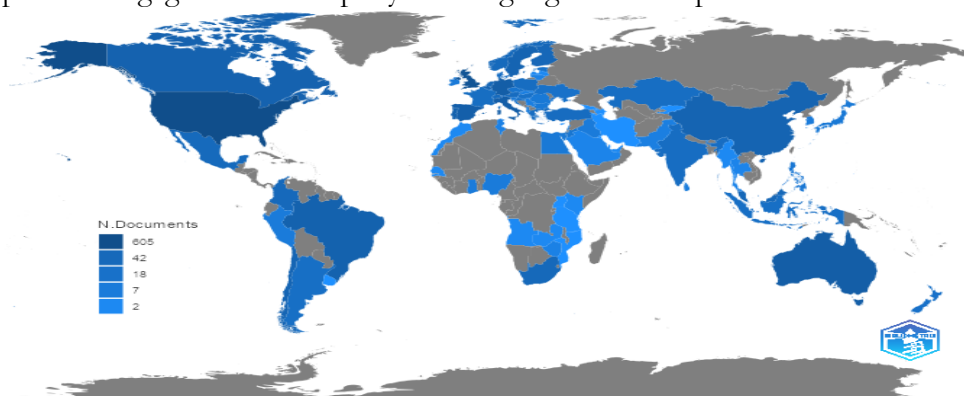


Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

Figure 4 highlights the most relevant authors contributing to the literature on digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics, specifically related to Generation Z's political engagement. The chart shows that

Henn M stands out as the most prolific author with 15 published documents, followed by Menezes I and Quintelier E, each contributing 11 documents. Other notable contributors include Collin P and Sloam J, with 10 publications each. The remaining authors, such as Cicognani E, Vromen A, Anna E, Malafaia C, and Reichert F, have made smaller but valuable contributions, with document counts ranging between 3 and 8. The prominence of Henn M indicates their significant influence in shaping this field of study, likely focusing on topics such as youth engagement, digital platforms, or political behaviour. Similarly, the contributions of Menezes I and Quintelier E suggest their active engagement in research closely aligned with the themes of your study. The distribution of contributions, with a few authors publishing extensively while others contribute fewer documents, reflects a concentrated yet diverse pool of expertise. The variety of names in the chart also hints at interdisciplinary approaches, potentially combining perspectives from political science, communication, sociology, and other fields.

This ranking of authors provides valuable insights for your research on Gen Z's political engagement in Indonesia. The works of Henn M, Menezes I, and Quintelier E are worth prioritising as they likely offer robust theoretical foundations and relevant empirical insights. Similarly, Collin P and Sloam J, known for their analyses of youth political behaviour, may provide useful methodologies for studying digital democracy and post-truth politics. However, while these authors dominate the field globally, their work might not directly address the Indonesian context, necessitating an adaptation of their findings to local cultural and political dynamics. Additionally, the contributions of authors with fewer publications, such as Cicognani E and Malafaia C, may point to emerging or underexplored perspectives in the field. Examining their works could help identify potential research gaps and enrich the contextualisation of your study. Overall, this analysis underscores the need to integrate global insights with Indonesia-specific studies to understand better the dynamics of Gen Z's political engagement in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.



Picture 1. Country Scientific Production
Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

Picture 1 provides a visualisation of the global distribution of scientific production on topics related to digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics, measured by the number of documents produced by each country. The map reveals significant disparities, with the United States emerging as the leading contributor, producing 605 publications, as indicated by the darkest shade of blue. Other countries with substantial contributions include the United Kingdom, Germany, France, China, and Australia, highlighting a concentration of research activity in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia-Pacific.

In contrast, Indonesia, the focus of this study, is represented with a lighter shade of blue, corresponding to a moderate level of research output, likely between 7 and 18 documents. This relatively limited contribution underscores the underrepresentation of Indonesian perspectives in the broader discourse on digital democracy and youth political engagement, particularly in the context of Generation Z. Large portions of Africa and South America are shown in grey, indicating little to no scientific output, further emphasising global research disparities. The concentration of academic output in developed countries can be attributed to stronger research infrastructure, higher investment in social science research, and established scholarly networks. Meanwhile, the lower output from developing regions, including Indonesia, highlights the challenges of resource constraints and differing academic priorities.

This study addresses a critical gap by focusing on Indonesia's context, where the interplay of digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics in shaping Generation Z's political engagement remains underexplored. By synthesising insights from global literature and applying them to the Indonesian setting, this research contributes to diversifying the academic discourse and deepening the understanding of youth political behaviour in a rapidly digitising democracy. Furthermore, it highlights the need for increased scholarly attention and collaboration to amplify research output from underrepresented regions, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive global perspective on these pivotal issues.

Themes and Topics Analysis

Picture 2 presents a word cloud generated from the most frequently occurring keywords in the literature on digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics, with a specific focus on Generation Z's political engagement. The visualisation highlights "political participation" as the most prominent term, emphasising its centrality to the body of research. This aligns with the overarching theme of understanding the dynamics of youth engagement in political processes, particularly in the digital era.



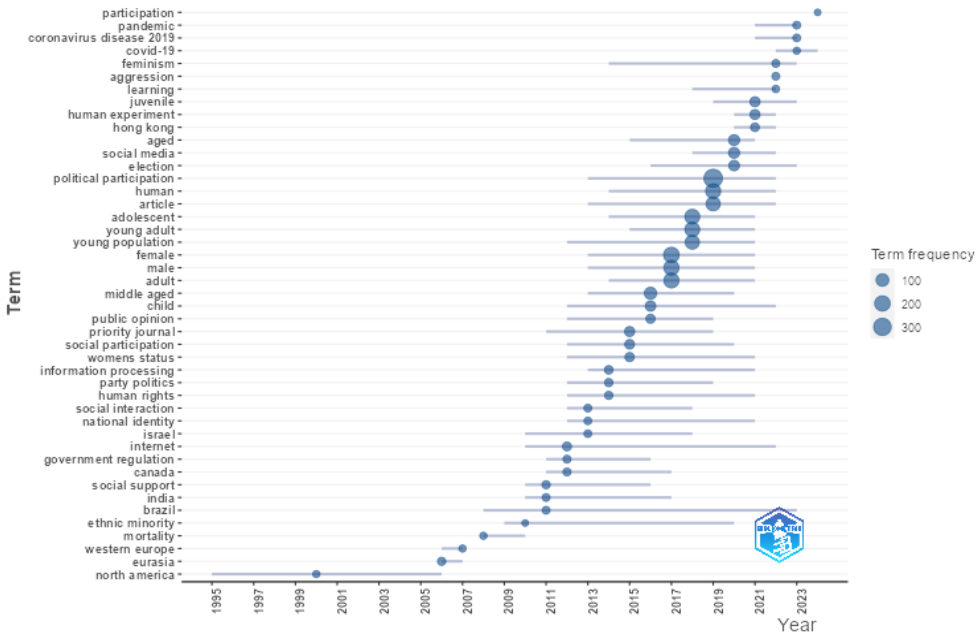
This word cloud analysis underscores the multi-dimensional nature of the research landscape, encompassing aspects of demographics, digital transformation, and societal structures. For this study, the emphasis on "political participation" validates its focus on understanding how digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics influence youth engagement in Indonesia. Moreover, the recurring mention of "social media" aligns with the study's exploration of digital platforms as a pivotal space for Gen Z's political expression. By situating this research within the broader discourse reflected in the word cloud, it contributes to filling the gaps in understanding these dynamics in the Indonesian context.

<https://doi.org/10.66325/nusantaralaw.v5i2.336>

larger bubbles indicating more frequently discussed topics. The topics displayed evolve, reflecting shifting research priorities and societal contexts. Earlier years (1995-2005) show limited emphasis on topics, such as "ethnic minority," "mortality," and "social support," with relatively low term frequencies. As the years progress, particularly post-2010, terms like "social media," "political participation," and "human rights" gain prominence, coinciding with technological advancements and increasing global connectivity.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic marks a significant spike in terms like "coronavirus disease 2019," "pandemic," and "COVID-19," highlighting the immediate academic response to a global crisis. Other recurring terms, such as "adolescent," "young adult," "feminism," and "social participation," suggest sustained interest in demographic-specific issues and societal engagement. This visualisation reveals a dynamic shift in research focus, with recent years dominated by digitalisation-related topics ("social media," "internet"), health crises ("COVID-19," "pandemic"), and political engagement ("political participation"). The consistent presence of terms like "human rights" and "government regulation" points to enduring themes of governance and societal values. The figure also indicates geographical and cultural contexts, with terms like "North America," "Western Europe," and "Eurasia" reflecting regional analyses. This regional focus aligns with broader sociopolitical trends and localised studies, suggesting that research often tailors its focus to specific global or regional issues.

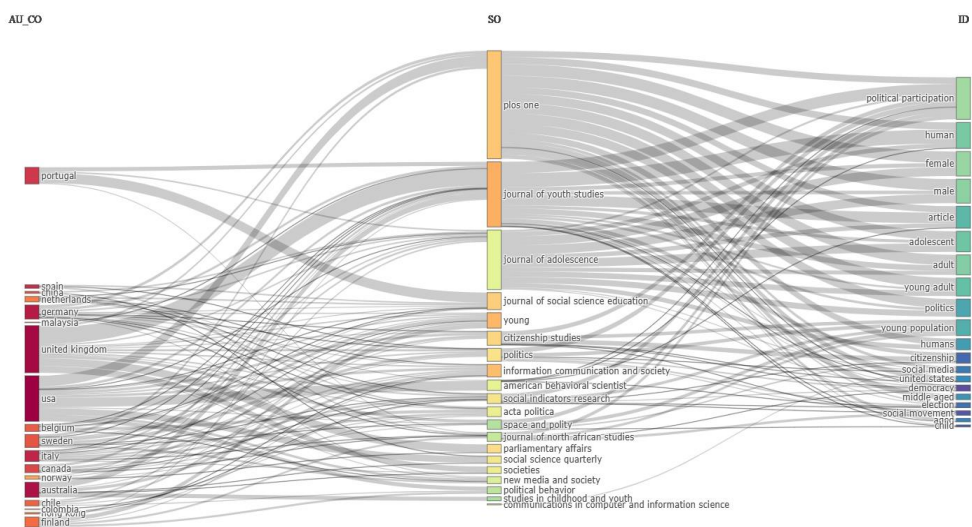
Figure 5. Research Trending Topics



Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

The temporal pattern underscores academia's responsiveness to societal changes, with spikes in certain terms correlating with global events like the pandemic. The increasing frequency of digital-related terms suggests a growing academic interest in technology's role in shaping society and governance. The persistent emphasis on younger demographics ("adolescent," "young population") hints at a focus on understanding how youth engage with societal challenges and opportunities. In summary, the figure encapsulates a dynamic academic landscape shaped by evolving societal concerns, global events, and technological progress. It highlights both continuity in foundational themes and adaptation to emerging challenges, offering a roadmap for future research directions.

Figure 6. Three-field Plots Analysis



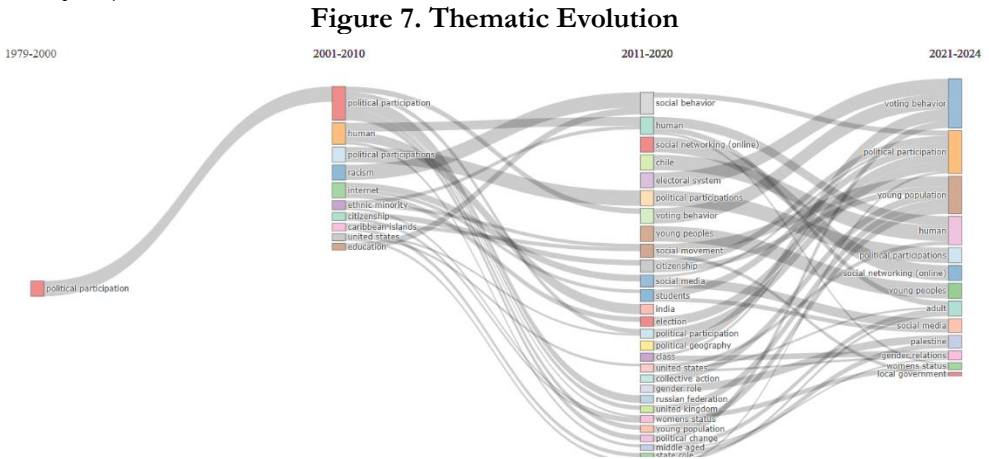
Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

The three-field plot in figure 6 provides a comprehensive view of the relationships between three key dimensions of academic research: author countries (AU_CO), sources (SO), and keywords or topics (ID). The flow between the fields demonstrates how research output from specific countries contributes to particular journals or sources, which in turn focus on specific topics or themes. On the left side, various countries are represented, with Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom being notable contributors. The United States also features prominently, reflecting its significant role in global research output. The middle section lists the journals or publication sources, such as PLoS ONE, Journal of Youth Studies, and Journal of Adolescence. These sources serve as hubs, aggregating research from diverse countries and focusing on a range of interdisciplinary topics. The right side represents research themes such as "political participation," "social media," "adolescent," and "young adult." The

size and intensity of connections highlight the popularity or dominance of these themes within the sources and their country-level origins.

Portugal shows strong connections with journals like Journal of Youth Studies and PLoS ONE, indicating a focused contribution to youth-related and interdisciplinary research. Similarly, the United States has diverse connections across journals, highlighting its role in shaping multiple thematic areas, including political and social issues. Journals like PLoS ONE display a broad thematic range, while others such as Journal of Youth Studies and Journal of Adolescence are more specialised, focusing on terms like "adolescent," "young adult," and "youth participation." Topics such as "political participation" and "social media" show wide-ranging relevance, with contributions from multiple countries and publications. This suggests that these themes are central to contemporary research agendas, likely driven by global sociopolitical changes and technological advancements.

Research Relevance and Development Degree (Four Quadrant Thematic Analysis)



Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

Figure 7 depicts the thematic evolution of research topics across four time periods: 1979–2000, 2001–2010, 2011–2020, and 2021–2024. The visualisation highlights how research on "political participation" has evolved over decades, branching out and intersecting with new and emerging topics. In the earliest period (1979–2000), "political participation" stands as the central and sole thematic focus, reflecting its foundational role in the academic discourse of the time. This focus broadens significantly during 2001–2010, where it branches into various subthemes such as "racism," "ethnic minority," "internet," "education," and geographic-specific topics like "United States" and "Caribbean Islands." These developments suggest a growing interest in exploring political

participation in diverse social, technological, and cultural contexts, particularly in understanding its interaction with marginalised groups and the digital age.

In the 2011–2020 period, the scope of research further diversifies, incorporating topics such as "social behaviour," "social networking (online)," "voting behaviour," "social movements," and "electoral systems." The inclusion of terms like "students," "citizenship," and "political geography" reflects an interdisciplinary approach, integrating political science, sociology, and technology studies. This period also sees a geographical expansion, with countries like Chile, India, and Russia entering the thematic discourse. These developments align with the global rise of digital activism, social media's influence on political behaviour, and a growing focus on youth and education.

The most recent period, 2021–2024, shows a continuation and refinement of earlier themes alongside new areas of focus. Topics like "voting behaviour," "social media," and "social networking (online)" remain prominent, underscoring their persistent relevance in contemporary studies. However, new topics such as "young population," "Palestine," "gender relations," "women's status," and "local government" emerge, suggesting an increased emphasis on inclusivity, regional politics, and grassroots governance. This indicates a shift toward understanding political participation not just as a broad phenomenon but also through localised and gendered lenses.

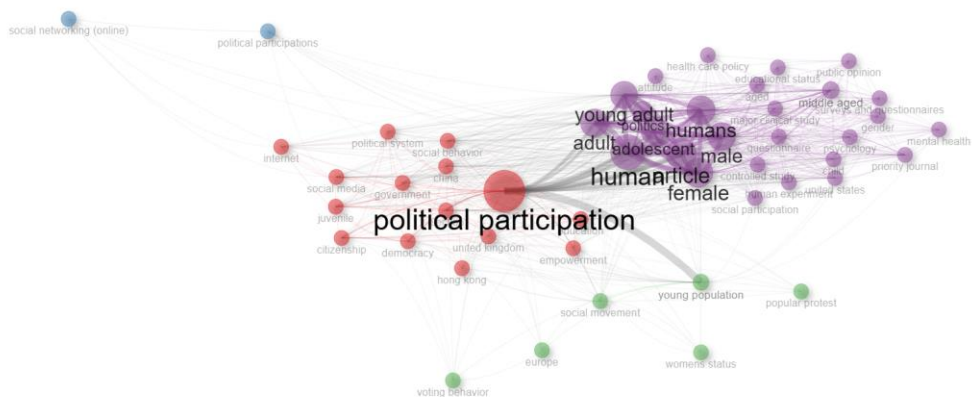
Overall, this thematic evolution reflects the dynamic nature of political participation research, adapting to societal changes, technological advancements, and emerging global issues. It illustrates the expansion from a singular focus on political participation to a multidisciplinary and multifaceted exploration of its intersections with other social and political dynamics. The thematic evolution depicted in Figure 7 aligns closely with the research topics of Gen Z political engagement, particularly in the context of digital democracy. Gen-Z, as a digitally native generation, represents a demographic deeply influenced by social media, online networking, and emerging technology trends prominently highlighted in the thematic shifts from 2011 onward.

The 2011–2020 themes, such as "social networking (online)" and "social media," reflect the transformative impact of digital platforms on political participation. For Gen Z, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter are not only spaces for social interaction but also for civic engagement, activism, and political mobilisation. Digital democracy thrives on these platforms, where participation is amplified through viral campaigns, decentralised discussions, and innovative advocacy strategies. The term "young population" emerging in the 2021–2024 period emphasises the growing attention on youth, including Gen Z, as pivotal actors in shaping political landscapes. This generation's engagement with political issues often revolves around digital tools, which facilitate their involvement in debates on climate change, gender equality, and social justice. The

prominence of "voting behaviour" and "political change" in recent years ties directly to studies on Gen Z's electoral participation. Digital democracy tools, such as online voter registration and virtual debates, are increasingly targeted at this demographic, reflecting their preference for accessible, technology-driven solutions.

Themes like "gender relations," "women's status," and "social movements" highlight how digital platforms empower marginalised groups, including Gen Z activists, to advocate for intersectional issues. Digital democracy enables these groups to challenge traditional hierarchies, promoting participatory governance through inclusive digital spaces. The intersection of terms like "local government" and "global social movements" resonates with Gen-Z's dual engagement with hyper-local and global issues. Digital democracy provides the tools for Gen Z to simultaneously participate in local political decisions and connect with global campaigns, exemplifying the generation's adaptability and global mindset. The integration of digital democracy into studies of Gen Z political engagement underscores the generation's unique role in shaping modern political systems. Future research should delve into how digital tools are transforming the traditional mechanisms of democracy, particularly in fostering youth-led political movements. Additionally, examining the challenges of misinformation, digital surveillance, and algorithmic biases within the context of Gen Z's political participation will provide a comprehensive understanding of digital democracy's potential and pitfalls.

Figure 8. Co-Word Networks and Cluster Analysis



Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

Figure 8 presents a co-word network and cluster analysis derived from the literature on digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics, specifically focusing on Generation Z's political engagement. This visualisation illustrates how frequently used keywords are interconnected, revealing thematic clusters that dominate the research landscape. The largest node, "political participation," serves as the central hub of the network, emphasising its pivotal

role in the field. The red cluster surrounding this term includes closely related keywords such as "citizenship," "democracy," and "empowerment," highlighting a thematic focus on the institutional and civic aspects of political engagement. This cluster indicates the significant scholarly interest in understanding the mechanisms through which individuals, particularly youth, participate in democratic processes. The purple cluster, characterised by demographic terms such as "young adult," "adolescent," "female," and "male," represents studies examining the role of age and gender in shaping political behaviour. This cluster's connection to "political participation" underscores the importance of demographic variables in analysing participation trends among Generation Z.

The green cluster is associated with broader societal factors, including "social movement," "popular protest," and "young population." This reflects the influence of collective action and societal structures in fostering political engagement, particularly within the context of youth-driven movements. Terms like "social movement" also connect this cluster to the impact of digital platforms on activism and mobilisation. Smaller blue nodes on the periphery, such as "social networking (online)," point to the role of digital tools in facilitating political discussions and participation. Their position suggests that while the digital dimension is critical, it may not be as thoroughly integrated into the broader discourse compared to other themes.

The co-word network reveals an interdisciplinary research focus that combines political science, sociology, and digital studies. For this study, the insights from the clusters validate the importance of addressing multiple dimensions of civic participation, demographic variables, and societal movements within the Indonesian context. By situating digital democracy and post-truth politics as key drivers in these clusters, this research can bridge existing gaps and contribute to understanding the nuanced dynamics of Gen Z political engagement.

Figure 9. Thematic Analysis based on Research Development Degree (Density) and Relevance Degree (Centrality)

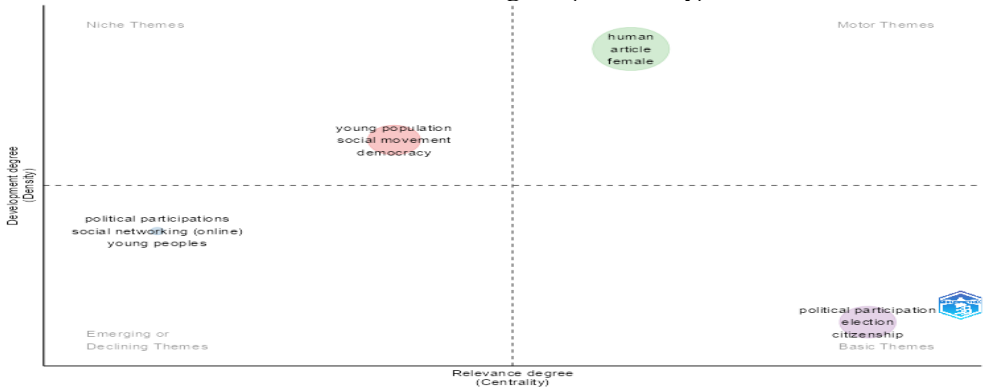


Figure 9 provides a thematic map that classifies research topics into four quadrants based on their degree of development (density) and relevance (centrality). This visualisation illustrates how key themes in the study of political participation and digital democracy intersect and evolve. The lower-right quadrant represents the Basic Themes, which are fundamental to the field due to their high centrality but lower density. Here, "political participation," "election," and "citizenship" dominate. These terms form the backbone of the discourse, signifying their foundational role in understanding political engagement, particularly among youth. Their placement suggests these themes are well-integrated but require further detailed exploration to address emerging complexities. The upper-right quadrant, which would typically house Motor Themes (both highly developed and highly relevant), contains the cluster of "human," "article," and "female." This unusual placement suggests these terms might be crucial in highly specific contexts, particularly in analysing demographic or gendered perspectives in political studies. Their high density reflects their developed state, but their placement hints at limited generalizability or application beyond specific case studies.

In the upper-left quadrant, labelled as Niche Themes, we find "young population," "social movement," and "democracy." These themes have high density but low centrality, indicating that while they are well-developed within focused studies, they are not yet central to the broader discourse. This position highlights the growing but specialised interest in youth activism and its influence on democratic processes. The lower-left quadrant, the Emerging or Declining Themes, includes "political participation," "social networking (online)," and "young people." Their low density and centrality suggest these themes are either nascent or losing prominence in the field. However, given the importance of digital tools in contemporary politics, these themes may represent an emerging frontier rather than a declining focus, particularly as digital literacy and online engagement grow.

Overall, the thematic map reveals the dual focus of the field: foundational studies on "political participation" and "citizenship" and emerging, more specialised topics like the role of youth and gender in political movements. This mapping provides valuable insights for future research, particularly for integrating niche and emerging themes with foundational concepts to create a more holistic understanding of political behaviour in digital and democratic contexts. Based on figure 9, this study highlights significant novelties that contribute to the ongoing discourse in political participation and digital democracy research, as shown in Table 3 below. These themes underscore emerging opportunities and challenges in understanding how political engagement is shaped in contemporary contexts. The Niche Themes quadrant, containing "young population," "social movement," and "democracy," signifies a

specialised yet critical area of research. These themes reflect a growing focus on how younger demographics are actively reshaping democratic processes through their engagement in social movements. This niche indicates a transition from traditional participation methods (e.g., voting) toward more dynamic and unconventional forms, such as protests, grassroots campaigns, and digital activism. The thematic density suggests that this area is highly developed in specific contexts, yet its lower centrality indicates limited integration into the broader political science discourse.

Table 4. Novelty Identification based on Thematic Analysis

Themes	Novelty Identification	Explanation
Niche Themes	Youth as Catalysts for Change	This quadrant underscores the role of younger generations as key drivers of political transformation, particularly in regions undergoing democratic transitions or facing socio-political instability.
	Social Movements as Democratic Indicators	The intersection of "social movement" and "democracy" provides new insights into how collective action, often led by youth, can signal democratic vitality or dysfunction, offering a fresh lens to assess political systems.
Emerging Themes	Emergence of Online Political Spaces	The themes highlight the role of social networking platforms in providing new avenues for political discourse, activism, and mobilisation, particularly for youth who may be disenfranchised in traditional political spaces.
	Shifting Definitions of Political Participation	The evolving nature of political engagement, as seen through online activism and digital participation, challenges traditional definitions of political behaviour. This shift necessitates rethinking participation metrics to include digital interactions, petitions, and social media campaigns.
	Potential for Inclusion and Polarisation	While digital platforms democratise access to political discussions, they also pose risks of misinformation and polarisation. Understanding this duality is critical for developing more inclusive and constructive digital political ecosystems.

Source: authors' Bibliometrics Analysis

The Emerging or Declining Themes quadrant, housing "political participation," "social networking (online)," and "young people," reflects a nascent yet transformative area in political studies. These themes reveal the impact of digital platforms and online social networks on political participation, especially among younger demographics. Although their low density and centrality suggest these themes are in the early stages of academic exploration, their relevance is growing rapidly as digital tools become ubiquitous in political engagement. In conclusion, the Niche Themes and Emerging Themes quadrants present substantial novelty in the field. They highlight how youth-led movements and digital platforms are reshaping the landscape of political participation, offering fertile ground for advancing theoretical and empirical research. These insights not only enrich academic discussions but also provide practical implications for policymakers seeking to engage younger citizens and harness digital tools for democratic strengthening.

DISCUSSION

The interplay of digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics creates a complex environment for Gen Z's political engagement. While digital platforms democratise access to information and participation, the lack of political literacy and the prevalence of misinformation hinder meaningful engagement. Addressing these issues requires multi-stakeholder collaboration, including: (1) Enhancing civic education in schools; (2) Promoting digital literacy programs; and (3) Strengthening regulations against disinformation on social media platforms.

The Transformative Potential of Digital Democracy

Digital democracy facilitates new avenues for political participation through social media, e-petitions, and online forums. Indonesian Gen Z uses platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter to advocate for social issues, organise protests, and express opinions. However, the literature reveals a digital divide and disparities in access to reliable internet infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. Digital platforms have democratised access to political information and participation for Gen Z, empowering them to engage in movements such as #ReformasiDikorupsi and #TolakOmnibusLaw. These examples highlight how social media acts as a double-edged sword, both a tool for collective action and a vector for misinformation. The Indonesian context demonstrates that while digital democracy can mobilise youth and amplify their voices, its sustainability depends heavily on mitigating the risks of misinformation and manipulation.

The transformative potential of digital democracy for Generation Z's political engagement is profound, particularly in Indonesia, where this demographic is increasingly becoming a significant force in shaping political discourse and action. Digital democracy, characterised by the use of digital technologies to enhance democratic processes, provides unique opportunities for

Gen Z to engage in political activities, express their opinions, and mobilise for social change. One of the key aspects of digital democracy is its ability to facilitate access to information. Generation Z, having grown up in a digital environment, is adept at navigating online platforms to gather information about political issues, candidates, and policies. As highlighted by Natsir et al., the digital literacy of Gen Z is crucial for their engagement in political discussions, as it enables them to assess the information they encounter online critically²⁷. This digital fluency not only empowers them to participate in political conversations but also equips them with the skills necessary to discern credible information from misinformation, which is particularly important in an era marked by the prevalence of fake news and disinformation campaigns.

Moreover, the rise of social media as a primary platform for political engagement has transformed how Gen Z interacts with political content. Dewi emphasises that this generation is not only consumers of information but also active participants in political communication²⁸. Social media platforms allow Gen Z to voice their opinions, organise events, and mobilise support for causes they care about, thereby fostering a sense of community and collective action. The interactive nature of these platforms encourages dialogue and engagement, making political participation more accessible and appealing to younger voters. Transmedia storytelling also plays a significant role in shaping Gen-Z's political attitudes and behaviours. As Tazijan notes, consuming transmedia narratives allows Gen Z to engage with political content in a more immersive and relatable manner²⁹. This approach can enhance their understanding of complex political issues and inspire them to take action, as they see their values and concerns reflected in the stories they consume. By leveraging transmedia strategies, political campaigns can effectively reach and resonate with Gen-Z, further enhancing their engagement in the democratic process.

The interconnectedness of digital democracy and Gen-Z's values is evident in their commitment to social justice and sustainability. Bresler et al. argue that the values of Generation Z are shifting towards networked solidarity and social justice, which are amplified by their digital interactions³⁰. This generation is more likely to engage in activism and support movements that align with their

²⁷ Siti Zahra Mulianti Natsir et al., 'Interactive Learning Multimedia: A Shortcut for Boosting Gen-Z's Digital Literacy in Science Classroom', *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan IPA* 8, no. 5 (2022): 2168–2175.

²⁸ Dewi, Arifin, and Fuadi, 'Nurturing Political Engagement: Political Communication Strategies for Generation Z in the Lead-up to the 2024 Election in West Java'.

²⁹ Farina Tazijan et al., 'Transmedia Reading and Generation Z's Social Attitudes', *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 2023.

³⁰ Mikhail Bresler, Svetlana Galiullina, and Daria Gerasimova, 'Transformation of the Values of Generation Z-Residents of the Digital Society of Sustainable Development', *E3S Web of Conferences* 208 (2020): 9043.

values, such as climate action and social equity. The digital landscape provides them with the tools to organise, advocate, and amplify their voices on these critical issues, thereby transforming the political landscape.

However, the transformative potential of digital democracy is not without challenges. The risk of misinformation and the creation of echo chambers can hinder informed political engagement. As Mukti points out, while digital platforms can enhance awareness of social issues, they can also expose users to misleading information that may distort their perceptions and actions³¹. Therefore, fostering media literacy among Gen Z is essential to ensure that they can navigate the complexities of the digital landscape effectively. In conclusion, the transformative potential of digital democracy in enhancing Generation Z's political engagement is significant. By providing access to information, fostering interactive communication, and aligning with their values, digital platforms empower this generation to participate actively in the democratic process. However, to fully realise this potential, it is crucial to address the challenges posed by misinformation and to promote digital literacy. As Gen Z continues to shape the political landscape, their engagement will play a vital role in the evolution of democracy in Indonesia and beyond.

Critical Role of Political Literacy among Gen-Z

Political literacy encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for active participation in a democratic society. Studies highlight a concerning gap in political literacy among Indonesian youth, with many lacking the ability to evaluate political information critically. This gap is exacerbated by the inadequate integration of civic education into the Indonesian curriculum. Low political literacy emerges as a significant barrier to meaningful political engagement for Gen Z. The prevalence of misinformation in the post-truth era exacerbates this issue, distorting their understanding of democratic processes. Educational interventions, such as media literacy programs, are vital to equipping young Indonesians with critical thinking skills to navigate the digital landscape. Integrating such programs into the national curriculum could foster a generation of informed voters who can critically assess political narratives.

The critical role of political literacy among Generation Z (Gen-Z) is increasingly recognised as essential for fostering informed and active civic engagement. Political literacy encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for individuals to understand and participate in political processes effectively. For Gen Z, who are digital natives and have grown up in an era

³¹ Aloysius Harry Mukti, Istianingsih Sastrodiharjo, and Oda I. B. Hariyanto, 'Financial Literacy, Financial Management, Social Legitimacy and Being Fomo on Impulsive Buying: Evidence on Leisure Activity Coldplay Concert Euphoria on Indonesian Gen z Generation', *Atestasi: Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi* 7, no. 1 (2024): 639–60.

marked by rapid technological advancements and social change, political literacy is particularly vital in navigating the complexities of contemporary political landscapes. One of the primary benefits of political literacy is its ability to enhance political efficacy among young individuals. Research by Hope and Jagers indicates that political efficacy, defined as the belief in one's ability to influence political processes, is closely linked to civic engagement among youth³². When Gen Z possesses a strong sense of political efficacy, they are more likely to participate in civic activities, such as voting, advocacy, and community organising. This empowerment is crucial for fostering a generation that feels capable of effecting change in their communities and beyond.

Moreover, political literacy equips Gen Z with the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the vast amounts of information available in the digital age. In an environment rife with misinformation and biased narratives, the ability to critically evaluate sources and discern credible information is paramount. Geers et al. emphasise that media literacy education can significantly improve political knowledge and internal political efficacy among lower-educated youth, suggesting that targeted educational interventions can bridge gaps in understanding and engagement³³. By fostering media literacy, educators can help Gen Z develop the skills needed to engage thoughtfully with political content, thereby enhancing their overall political literacy.

Additionally, the intersection of political literacy and racial literacy is particularly relevant for Gen-Z, as they are often at the forefront of social justice movements. Marciano highlight the importance of supporting youths' racial literacy, which involves critical self-reflection and discussion about historical and contemporary issues³⁴. This form of literacy not only empowers young people to understand their identities and experiences in relation to broader societal structures but also encourages them to engage in activism and advocacy for racial justice. As Gen Z increasingly prioritises social equity, integrating political literacy with discussions of race and identity can enhance their engagement in civic matters.

Furthermore, the role of digital platforms in facilitating political literacy cannot be overlooked. Gen Z utilises social media as a primary means of

³² Elan C. Hope and Robert J. Jagers, 'The Role of Sociopolitical Attitudes and Civic Education in the Civic Engagement of Black Youth', *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 24, no. 3 (2014): 460–470.

³³ Sabine Geers, Mark Boukes, and Judith Moeller, 'Bridging the Gap? The Impact of a Media Literacy Educational Intervention on News Media Literacy, Political Knowledge, Political Efficacy among Lower-Educated Youth', *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 12, no. 2 (2020): 41–53.

³⁴ Joanne E. Marciano, Lauren Elizabeth Reine Johnson, and Alecia Beymer, "'Our Voice and Dreams Matter': Supporting Youths' Racial Literacy', *Journal of Literacy Research* 55, no. 2 (2023): 145–169.

communication and information dissemination. As noted by Ashley et al., media literacy education can positively correlate with political engagement, as it helps young individuals navigate the complexities of digital information³⁵. By leveraging social media for political discourse, Gen Z can amplify their voices and mobilise support for causes they care about, thereby transforming their political engagement into collective action.

However, the challenges posed by digital misinformation and the potential for echo chambers must also be addressed. Diemer and Li emphasise the importance of developing critical consciousness among marginalised youth, which can enhance their political participation³⁶. By fostering critical awareness of the socio-political context in which they operate, educators and community leaders can empower Gen Z to engage more effectively in political processes, countering the negative effects of misinformation and polarisation.

In conclusion, political literacy plays a critical role in shaping the civic engagement of Generation Z. By enhancing political efficacy, fostering critical thinking skills, and integrating discussions of identity and social justice, political literacy equips young individuals to navigate the complexities of contemporary political landscapes. As Gen Z continues to emerge as a significant force in political discourse, the importance of cultivating political literacy cannot be overstated. Educators, policymakers, and community leaders need to prioritise initiatives that promote political literacy among this generation, ensuring they are prepared to engage meaningfully in democratic processes.

Post-Truth Politics and Emotional Manipulation

Post-truth politics, characterised by the prioritisation of emotions and personal beliefs over facts, poses a significant challenge to political engagement. Fake news and misinformation campaigns on digital platforms have influenced Gen Z's perceptions of political candidates and issues. Despite this, Gen Z shows potential in combating misinformation through digital activism and fact-checking initiatives. The study underscores how emotional appeals in post-truth politics undermine rational discourse, further complicating Gen Z's engagement with democratic processes. The Indonesian political landscape, influenced by socio-cultural norms and traditional values, adds complexity to this challenge. Policymakers and educators must address this by promoting evidence-based discussions and encouraging platforms to adopt stricter measures against disinformation.

³⁵ Seth Ashley, Adam Maksl, and Stephanie Craft, 'News Media Literacy and Political Engagement: What's the Connection?', *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 9, no. 1 (2017): 79–98.

³⁶ Matthew A. Diemer and Cheng-Hsien Li, 'Critical Consciousness Development and Political Participation among Marginalized Youth', *Child Development* 82, no. 6 (2011): 1815–1833.

The phenomenon of post-truth politics has emerged as a significant challenge for political engagement, particularly among Generation Z (Gen-Z), who are navigating a landscape characterised by emotional manipulation and misinformation. Post-truth politics refers to a political culture where emotional appeal and personal beliefs often outweigh objective facts in shaping public opinion and political discourse. This environment poses unique challenges for Gen Z, who are not only digital natives but also increasingly active participants in political discussions and movements. One of the critical aspects of post-truth politics is the strategic use of emotional manipulation. As Lewandowsky et al. argue, misinformation is often used to divert attention from pressing political issues, shaping public perception through emotional responses rather than rational discourse³⁷. For Gen Z, who are particularly sensitive to social justice issues and emotional narratives, this manipulation can significantly influence their political engagement. The emotional resonance of political messages can lead to heightened activism, as young individuals rally around causes that evoke strong feelings, such as climate change, racial justice, and gender equality. However, this emotional engagement can also result in polarisation, as individuals may gravitate towards information that aligns with their beliefs while dismissing opposing viewpoints.

Moreover, the digital landscape exacerbates the effects of post-truth politics on Gen Z's political engagement. Social media platforms serve as both a source of information and a battleground for competing narratives. The algorithms that govern these platforms often prioritise emotionally charged content, which can amplify misinformation and create echo chambers. As Hyvönen notes, the irrelevance of factual truths in post-truth politics can lead to a form of "careless speech," where individuals engage in political discourse without a solid grounding in reality³⁸. This environment can hinder Gen-Z's ability to critically evaluate information, making them more susceptible to emotional manipulation and less likely to engage in informed political discussions.

The role of humour and satire in navigating post-truth politics is also noteworthy. McAuliffe suggests that feminist humour, for example, can provide a means of coping with the emotional toll of political crises, offering a way to sustain solidarity and agency in the face of manipulation³⁹. For Gen-Z, who often utilise memes and satirical content to express their political views, this approach

³⁷ Stephan Lewandowsky, Ullrich K. H. Ecker, and John Cook, 'Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and Coping with the "Post-Truth" Era', *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition* 6, no. 4 (2017): 353–369.

³⁸ Ari-Elmeri Hyvönen, 'Careless Speech: Conceptualizing Post-Truth Politics1', *New Perspectives* 26, no. 3 (2018): 31–55.

³⁹ Jana McAuliffe, 'How to Feminist Affect: Feminist Comedy and Post-Truth Politics', *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 49, no. 2 (2023): 230–242.

can serve as a double-edged sword. While it can foster community and engagement, it may also contribute to the trivialisation of serious political issues, further complicating their understanding of the political landscape.

In addition, the emotional manipulation inherent in post-truth politics can lead to what Demasi describes as "facts as social action," where the presentation of factual claims becomes a performative act rather than a genuine pursuit of truth⁴⁰. For Gen-Z, this shift can result in a disconnection from traditional forms of political engagement, as they may prioritise social media activism over more conventional methods such as voting or community organising. This trend raises concerns about the long-term implications for democratic participation, as emotional appeals may overshadow the need for informed decision-making.

Despite these challenges, Gen-Z's engagement with post-truth politics also presents opportunities for transformative change. As they become more aware of the tactics used in emotional manipulation, there is potential for them to develop resilience and critical thinking skills. Educational initiatives that focus on media literacy and critical analysis can empower Gen Z to navigate the complexities of the digital landscape more effectively. By fostering a culture of inquiry and scepticism, young individuals can become more adept at recognising and countering emotional manipulation, ultimately enhancing their political engagement⁴¹. In conclusion, post-truth politics and emotional manipulation play a critical role in shaping Gen Z's political engagement. While these dynamics present significant challenges, they also offer opportunities for growth and resilience. By fostering political literacy and critical thinking skills, educators and community leaders can equip Gen Z to navigate the complexities of the post-truth era, ensuring that their engagement is informed, meaningful, and impactful.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics form an interconnected framework that significantly shapes the political engagement of Indonesia's Generation Z. The systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis demonstrate that the rapid expansion of digital platforms has created unprecedented opportunities for political participation while simultaneously increasing young citizens' exposure to misinformation, emotional polarisation, and declining information credibility. Within this context, political literacy emerges as the central enabling factor that equips Generation Z

⁴⁰ Mirko A. Demasi, 'Facts as Social Action in Political Debates about the European Union', *Political Psychology* 40, no. 1 (2019): 3–20.

⁴¹ Kunkunrat Kunkunrat, Ade Priangani, and Willya Achmad, 'The Relationship between Islamic Boarding Schools and Islamic Politics: Democratic Literacy Education for First-Time Voters in West Java', *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2026): 461–79.

with the capacity to critically evaluate digital information, distinguish factual content from manipulation, and participate in democratic processes in a more informed and responsible manner. Conversely, the proliferation of post-truth narratives undermines evidence-based political reasoning by encouraging emotional and identity-driven decision-making. By integrating the previously fragmented domains of digital democracy, political literacy, and post-truth politics, this study offers a more holistic conceptual framework and enriches the scholarly understanding of youth political participation in the digital era, particularly within emerging democratic contexts such as Indonesia.

These findings further highlight the importance of strengthening political and digital literacy through collaborative efforts involving governments, educational institutions, civil society organisations, and digital platform providers to foster critical thinking, fact-checking competencies, and ethical digital citizenship. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its reliance on published literature and bibliometric evidence, which reflects scholarly developments rather than directly measuring the political behaviour of Generation Z. The exclusion of non-indexed publications and local sources may also have restricted the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Therefore, future research should move beyond literature synthesis by undertaking empirical investigations using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches to examine the causal relationships among digital democracy, political literacy, post-truth politics, and youth political engagement. Longitudinal and comparative studies across regions and Southeast Asian countries are also recommended to capture contextual variations, while future research should incorporate emerging issues such as digital inequality, algorithmic governance, artificial intelligence, and socio-economic disparities to develop more robust theoretical models and evidence-based strategies for strengthening democratic resilience among younger generations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia, for its institutional support and the academic environment that facilitated the completion of this research. The authors also appreciate the valuable insights and constructive feedback provided by colleagues and reviewers, which significantly contributed to improving the quality of this manuscript.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Agust Jovan Latuconsina conceived the study, designed the research framework, conducted the systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis, interpreted the findings, and drafted the manuscript. Fendy Suhariadi contributed to the research

methodology, validated the analytical process, supervised the study, and critically reviewed and revised the manuscript for important intellectual content. Suparto Wijoyo contributed to the conceptual development of the study, provided substantive legal and policy perspectives, supervised the overall research process, and served as the corresponding author. All authors reviewed, approved the final version of the manuscript, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

AI USAGE STATEMENT

The authors used artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted tools exclusively to enhance the linguistic quality of the manuscript through language editing, grammar correction, and stylistic refinement. AI was not involved in the conception or design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of the findings, or the development of the conclusions. All ideas, analyses, arguments, and scholarly judgments presented in this article are entirely the authors' own. The authors carefully reviewed and verified all AI-assisted outputs and accept full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the final manuscript, ensuring its compliance with established standards of research ethics and academic publishing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests or conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article. No financial, professional, institutional, or personal relationships influenced the design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of this research. All authors have reviewed and approved the final manuscript and affirm that the study was conducted with integrity, transparency, and in full accordance with the ethical principles of scholarly research and publication.

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