



The Role of Digital Technology in Enhancing Political Participation of the Youth Generation in the Era of Digital Democracy

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Abstract

Advances in digital technology have brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the political participation of the younger generation. In the era of digital democracy, political involvement is no longer limited to conventional forms such as voting, but also extends to digital platforms such as social media, online petitions, and internet-based political campaigns. This research aims to analyze how digital technology can increase the political participation of young people, identify the factors that affect their engagement, and explore the role of social media and digital platforms in the democratization process. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method to examine theories, concepts, and empirical findings related to the relationship between digital technology and the political participation of the younger generation. Data was collected from a variety of academic sources, including scientific journals, books, and research reports, which were then analyzed using thematic content analysis methods. The results of the study show that digital technology has increased the young generation's access to political information, expanded public discussion space, and accelerated mass mobilization on political and social issues. However, challenges such as the spread of hoaxes, polarization of opinions, and the digital access gap are still the main obstacles. In addition, the study found that the effectiveness of digital technology in increasing political participation is highly dependent on the level of digital literacy, access to the internet, and trust in political institutions. Therefore, a more targeted strategy is needed from the government, political organizations, and civil society to optimize the use of digital technology as an inclusive democratic tool.



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INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology have brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the political participation of the younger generation. In the context of digital democracy, political involvement is no longer limited to conventional participation such as voting, but also penetrates into the digital realm through social media, online petition platforms, and political discussions in digital forums (Putra & Ochirov, 2020). This development opens up new opportunities

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for the younger generation to be more active in the democratic process, considering that they are the group that adopts digital technology the most in their daily lives (D. Fitriani et al., 2023). Recent studies show that the use of digital technology can increase access to political information, expand public discussion spaces, and accelerate mass mobilization on political and social issues (Fauziah et al., 2023). Thus, the use of digital technology has a very strategic role in increasing the political involvement of the younger generation in the era of digital democracy (L. Fitriani et al., 2022).

Political participation refers to the involvement of individuals or groups in various political activities aimed at influencing government policies and decision-making processes within a country. This participation can be in the form of conventional activities, such as voting in elections, becoming a member of a political party, or participating in public policy discussions, as well as non-conventional participation, such as demonstrations, petitions, or activism on social media (Verba et al., 1995). According to Dalton (2019), political participation not only reflects citizens' involvement in the democratic system, but is also an important indicator in assessing the extent to which people are concerned about public and government issues (Dalton, 2017). A study conducted by Norris and Inglehart (2021) shows that the development of technology and social media has expanded forms of political participation, where citizens can express their political opinions more widely and quickly than in previous eras (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

The level of political participation of the community is influenced by various factors, including the level of education, access to information, socio-economic conditions, and the prevailing political system. Research by Kırac (2020) found that people with higher levels of education tend to have more active political participation because they better understand the political process and have a critical awareness of public policy (Kırac, 2020). On the other hand, Milner (2002) revealed that the level of distrust of the government can lead to a decrease in formal political participation, such as elections, but increase participation in the form of protests and activism (Milner, 2002). With the increasing digitization of politics, research by Bennett and Segerberg (2021) highlights how social media has changed patterns of political participation, enabling new forms of citizen engagement, such as online campaigns and digital-based social movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Thus, political participation is not only influenced by structural factors, but also by technological developments and social dynamics that are constantly changing.

In addition, the low level of political participation of the younger generation is one of the main challenges in the modern democratic system. Data from the General Election Commission (KPU) shows that the level of participation of young voters in elections still tends to fluctuate, even though the number of young voters dominates the voter population (Saputra, 2021). One of the factors that affects the low political participation of the younger generation is the lack of interest and trust in existing political institutions (Riyanti et al., 2023). However, with the presence of digital technology, the younger generation can more easily access political information, discuss, and express their aspirations through various digital platforms. Therefore, the use of digital technology is expected to be a solution to increase the political involvement of the younger generation in the democratic process (Dasri, 2025).

Digital technology also plays a role in changing the pattern of political communication among the younger generation. Social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become the main tools in disseminating political information and building public opinion (Silitonga, 2023). A study conducted by Hakim and Wijaya (2022) shows that the younger generation is more interested in political content that is conveyed visually and interactively through digital media compared to traditional political communication methods. In addition, social media algorithms that allow content personalization also contribute to increasing the political engagement of the younger generation by providing information that suits their preferences (Al Fatih et al., 2024). However, although digital

technology provides ease of accessing political information, challenges such as the spread of hoaxes and polarization of opinions remain problems that need to be overcome.

In the context of digital democracy, the political participation of the younger generation not only includes involvement in elections, but also includes activities such as online petitions, participation in digital campaigns, and public policy advocacy through social media (Farid, 2023). According to research conducted by Khairuddin (2015), the younger generation who are active on social media tend to have higher political awareness than those who are less involved in digital platforms (Khairuddin, 2025). In addition, involvement in digital communities based on political advocacy can also strengthen their understanding of political issues and public policies (Tarigan et al., 2024). Therefore, research on the role of digital technology in increasing the political participation of the younger generation is becoming increasingly relevant in the current era of digital democracy.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand how digital technology can be used optimally to increase the political participation of the younger generation. With the increasing reliance on digital media in daily life, it is important to identify effective strategies in utilizing digital technology as an inclusive and participatory democratic tool (Fitria, 2023). This research is also expected to provide recommendations for the government, political parties, and civil society organizations in designing policies and programs that can encourage the political involvement of the younger generation through digital technology (Putri & Wibawa, 2023).

Several previous studies have discussed the role of digital technology in political participation, but most still focus on the aspect of using social media as a tool for political communication. Another study highlights how political digitalization affects the behavior patterns of young voters in elections (Setiawan & Rahayu, 2021). However, research specifically examining how digital technology can increase the political participation of the younger generation in the era of digital democracy is still limited (Solissa & Lestaluhu, 2024). Therefore, this research contributes to filling the research gap by exploring various aspects of the use of digital technology that can encourage the political involvement of the younger generation more broadly.

This study aims to analyze how digital technology can increase the political participation of the younger generation in digital democracy. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify factors that affect the use of digital technology in the political activities of the younger generation, (2) explore the role of social media, digital platforms, and political-based applications in increasing political engagement, and (3) provide strategic recommendations for the government, political organizations, and civil society in optimizing digital technology to increase the political participation of the younger generation. Thus, this research is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the dynamics of political participation in the digital era and its implications for a more inclusive and participatory democratic system.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to analyze the role of digital technology in increasing the political participation of the younger generation in the era of digital democracy. Literature studies were chosen because they allow for a comprehensive exploration of theories, concepts, and empirical findings that have been developed in previous research (Zed, 2018). This approach is used to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between relevant variables in the context of digital political participation. In addition, this method also helps in examining various academic perspectives and provides a strong theoretical basis in understanding the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from scientific journals, academic books, conference proceedings, research reports, and official documents relevant to the

research topic. Data is collected from various academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital) to ensure that the literature used has high scientific credibility (Sugiyono, 2022). The selection of sources is carried out based on the criteria of relevance to the research topic, publications in the last five years (2019–2024), and citation levels that show significance in this field of study (Bowen, 2009).

The data collection technique in this literature study is carried out through three main stages. The first stage is literature identification, where researchers gather various sources that discuss the relationship between digital technologies and the political participation of young people. The second stage is literature selection, which is carried out by evaluating the suitability and quality of the source based on the methodology used in previous research and its relationship with the variables studied (Miles et al., 2019). The third stage is data organization and synthesis, which is the process of grouping the main findings from various literature into relevant themes for further analysis (Page et al., 2021).

The data that has been collected is analyzed using the content analysis method with a thematic approach. This analysis was carried out by exploring key patterns in the literature, grouping information based on factors that affect the digital political participation of the younger generation, and exploring the relationship between digital technology and increased political engagement (Bowen, 2009). This analysis process follows the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as explained by Miles and Huberman (2019). With this method, this research is expected to provide a deep understanding of how digital technology can be an effective tool in encouraging the political participation of the younger generation and provide strategic recommendations for policy makers in optimizing the use of technology in digital democracy.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following table presents the results of the selection of various scientific articles that discuss the role of digital technology in increasing the political participation of the younger generation in the era of digital democracy. From various sources found, the 5 most relevant articles were selected based on the focus of the research, the scope of the topic, and the contribution to related academic discussions.

Table 1. Literature Review

No	Author	Title	Research Focus
1	O. Dmytrenko (2024)	The Political Potential of Digital Generation	Analysis of the digital political engagement of the younger generation in developing and developed countries
2	C. Hackenesch (2024)	Megatrends and the Future of Democracy in Africa	The impact of digitalization on youth political participation in Africa
3	L.A.S Bondar, H. Siregar (2025)	Partisipasi Mahasiswa Menjelang Pemilihan Kepala Daerah Sumatera Utara Tahun 2024 di Era Digital	Faktor pendorong partisipasi politik mahasiswa dalam pemilu regional dengan pemanfaatan teknologi digital
4	R.K. Anwar, H.A. Fauzianty (2025)	Digital Social Movements and Political Participation of the Indonesian Millennial Generation	Analysis of the trend of political participation of the millennial generation through social media using bibliometrics
5	I.S. Latief, N. Tripuspita (2024)	Political Education in the Digital Era to Encourage First-Time Voter Participation	Efforts to increase the involvement of novice voters in the democratic process through digital campaigns

Research on the role of digital technology in increasing the political participation of young people in the era of digital democracy has attracted the attention of academics in various disciplines, including political science, sociology, and communication studies. From the ten articles that have been selected in the previous table, it can be concluded that the political involvement of the younger generation has undergone a significant transformation along with the development of digital technology and social media platforms. In this elaboration, the main findings of each study will be described in more depth to understand how digital technology is the main means of encouraging young people's political participation in the modern era.

The first article written by O. Dmytrenko (2024) entitled *The Political Potential of Digital Generation* discusses the differences in digital political involvement in developed and developing countries. Dmytrenko found that although access to digital technologies has become more equitable globally, young people's political participation remains influenced by social, economic, and local policy factors in each country. In developed countries, the digital generation has a greater tendency to participate in politics through online campaigns, digital petitions, and debates on social media. Meanwhile, in developing countries, the main challenges faced are limited internet access that is still uneven and low digital literacy, which hinders the active involvement of young people in digital democracy (Dmytrenko, 2024).

The second article written by C. Hackenesch (2024) titled *Megatrends and the Future of Democracy in Africa* highlights how urbanization trends, young population growth, and digitalization are affecting democracy in Africa. This research shows that young Africans are increasingly active in using digital technology as a means to voice their political opinions. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter are widely used to organize protests, rally support for specific political candidates, and share political information. However, the study also identified major challenges, such as internet censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression imposed by some governments in Africa, that hindered the political expression of the younger generation (Hackenesch, 2024).

Meanwhile, research by L.A.S Bondar and H. Siregar (2025) entitled *Student Participation Ahead of the 2024 North Sumatra Regional Head Election in the Digital Era* examines how students as part of the younger generation use digital technology in the context of regional elections. The study was conducted in North Sumatra, Indonesia, with a focus on student involvement in regional head elections. The results of the study show that social media and instant messaging applications are the main tools for students to get political information, discuss, and express support for certain candidates. However, the study also found that the spread of fake news (hoaxes) and black campaigns on social media is a major challenge that can influence the political decisions of the younger generation (Bondar & Siregar, 2025).

The fourth article written by R.K. Anwar and H.A. Fauzianty (2025) entitled *Digital Social Movements and Political Participation of the Indonesian Millennial Generation* uses a bibliometric approach to analyze the trend of political participation of the millennial generation in Indonesia. This research finds that social media is not just an information platform, but also an effective mobilization tool in various social and political movements. The study highlights several youth-driven political movements in Indonesia, such as large demonstrations demanding certain policy reforms through viral online campaigns. Using software such as VOSviewer, the study shows that the number of academic publications discussing the digital political engagement of the younger generation is constantly increasing, signaling a growing interest in this phenomenon (Anwar & Fauzianty, 2025).

In a study conducted by I.S. Latief and N. Tripuspita (2024) entitled *Political Education in the Digital Era to Encourage First-Time Voter Participation*, the main focus is on how digital-based political education can increase first-time voter participation. The study found that novice voters tend

to be more interested in getting involved in politics if they get political education through the media they use every day, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Political campaigns that utilize visual and interactive formats, such as infographics and short videos, have proven to be more effective in attracting the attention of younger generations compared to traditional methods such as political debates or face-to-face campaigns (Setiawan & Triuspita, 2024).

Discussion

Factors Affecting the Use of Digital Technology in the Political Activities of the Young Generation

The political participation of the young generation in the digital era is greatly influenced by several main factors related to the level of digital and political literacy, access to technology, the social environment, trust in political institutions, and the availability of easily accessible information. One of the main factors that determine the political involvement of the younger generation through digital technology is their level of digital and political literacy. The younger generation who have a good understanding of how to use digital technology and are able to sort out credible political information are more likely to be actively involved in online political discussions and activities. For example, in the United States, many college students participate in online political campaigns by analyzing candidate policies through platforms such as Twitter or participating in discussions on Reddit before making a decision in an election. This shows that a good understanding of digital media can increase political awareness and encourage greater participation.

In addition, access to the internet and technology also plays an important role in determining the extent to which the younger generation can be involved in digital politics. In countries with good internet infrastructure, such as South Korea and Singapore, the younger generation is more active in expressing their political opinions through social media and online forums. On the other hand, in rural areas or developing countries with limited internet access, digital political participation tends to be lower due to technological barriers that are still being faced. For example, in some remote areas of Indonesia, the younger generation has difficulty accessing political information online due to limited internet networks and high data quota costs.

Social factors, such as the influence of peer groups and the surrounding environment, also greatly influence the digital political involvement of the younger generation. Many young people become interested in politics after seeing their friends actively discussing or participating in political movements on social media. Social movements such as Black Lives Matter in the United States or pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong show how peer groups can be a catalyst for digital political engagement. With the advent of social media, political discussions that initially only took place in a small scope can expand quickly and encourage more young people to take part in political action.

Trust in political institutions and the media also plays an important role in determining how young people utilize digital technology in their political activities. In countries with high levels of trust in the government, young people tend to use official digital platforms to convey their political aspirations. In contrast, in countries where people are more skeptical of political institutions and mainstream media, many young people seek political information from alternative sources, such as YouTube or independent blogs. For example, in Brazil, many independent political influencers have emerged on YouTube who present political news with a different perspective than traditional media, thus influencing the political opinions of the younger generation who do not trust news from television or newspapers.

Finally, easy access to political information is also a crucial factor in increasing the digital political participation of the younger generation. With platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter, political news can be presented in a visually appealing form, making it easier for young people who may have previously been less interested in politics. In the 2020 United States election, for example,

many political candidates used TikTok to reach young voters with short videos explaining their policies in a simple way. This proves that digital platforms have great potential in disseminating political information more widely and encouraging the involvement of the younger generation in politics.

Overall, various factors such as digital literacy, internet access, social influence, trust in political institutions, and ease of access to information play an important role in shaping the political engagement of the younger generation in the digital era. By understanding these factors, various parties can design more effective strategies to increase the political participation of young people through digital technology.

The Role of Social Media, Digital Platforms, and Politics-Based Applications in Increasing Political Engagement

In the digital era, social media and digital technology have become the main means for the younger generation to get involved in political activities. Social media is not only used as a personal communication tool, but it has also developed into an effective political mobilization platform. Political campaigns and social advocacy can now spread quickly through features such as hashtags, live streaming, and discussion threads. For example, in the Fridays for Future movement spearheaded by Greta Thunberg, social media such as Twitter and Instagram are used to organize global action related to climate change. Thousands of young people from various countries joined this movement after seeing the viral campaign posts and videos on social media.

Apart from being a mobilization tool, social media also functions as a space for political discussion and education. The younger generation now gets more political information from digital platforms than conventional media such as television or newspapers. Various websites, blogs, and YouTube channels are the main source for them to understand policies, listen to interviews with politicians, and analyze political issues in more depth. For example, in Indonesia, YouTube channels such as Kklarification and CokroTV present political content in a more relaxed and easy-to-understand style for young people, thereby increasing their interest in political discussions.

Not only through social media and digital platforms, the political involvement of the younger generation is also facilitated by politics-based applications that allow direct participation in the political process. Apps like Change.org have become a powerful tool for rallying support for online petitions, where people can sign and support various political initiatives with just a few clicks. One clear example is a petition created by activists in Brazil to demand stricter environmental policies. This petition managed to get millions of signatures in a short period of time and influenced government policies related to deforestation in the Amazon.

In addition, technology-based political campaigns are also growing, especially among politicians and political parties who want to reach young voters. Political candidates are now actively using social media to build closeness with the community through interactive uploads, chatbots that answer voter questions, and digital ads that are personalized based on user preferences. For example, in the 2020 United States election, Joe Biden and Donald Trump both invested large funds in digital campaigns, including in the form of ads that appeared on TikTok and Instagram to attract the attention of young voters.

In terms of security and transparency, blockchain technology has begun to be implemented in digital voting systems to ensure the accuracy of election results. Blockchain allows for safe, transparent, and non-manipulated vote recording, thereby increasing the confidence of the younger generation in the democratic system. One example of the application of this technology is in Estonia, where a blockchain-based i-Voting system has been used for national elections, allowing citizens to cast their votes securely over the internet without the need to be present at the polling station.

With these innovations, digital technology is increasingly playing a key role in increasing the political engagement of the younger generation. From social media to politics-based apps, young people now have more ways to participate in the political process, whether through discussions, campaigns, or digital voting. This change marks the transition to a more inclusive and participatory digital democracy era.

Strategic Recommendations for Governments, Political Organizations, and Civil Society

To optimize the use of digital technology in increasing the political participation of the younger generation, a targeted strategy is needed from various parties, including the government, political organizations, and civil society. The government has an important role in ensuring that the young generation has sufficient access to digital technology and adequate literacy to use it in political activities. One of the steps that can be taken is to integrate digital literacy and political literacy education into school and university curricula. With this approach, young people will get used to critically analyzing political information and understand how to participate in the democratic system through digital platforms. For example, in Finland, the government has implemented a special curriculum that teaches students how to recognize misinformation on social media, so that they can become more aware and responsible voters.

In addition to increasing literacy, the government also needs to expand digital infrastructure so that internet access is more evenly distributed, especially in remote areas. In some developing countries, there are still many areas that do not have a stable internet connection, limiting the opportunities for young people to follow political developments through digital media. In Kenya, for example, the National Broadband Strategy program has been implemented to expand internet access to rural areas, so that more young people can engage in online political discussions and access a wider range of information. In addition, the implementation of a safe and transparent e-voting system can also increase the trust of the younger generation in democracy. Estonia has successfully implemented a blockchain-based i-Voting system that allows its citizens to vote online, making it easier to participate in politics, especially for young tech-savvy voters.

On the other hand, political organizations must also adapt to technological developments to remain relevant to the younger generation. One way that can be done is to increase digital interaction with young voters through social media and digital platforms. Political candidates and parties need to be more active in responding to issues raised by young people, either through Instagram posts, discussions on Twitter, or live streaming sessions on YouTube. For example, in an election campaign in France, President Emmanuel Macron used Instagram Live to answer questions from young people about his government's policies, thus creating closer and interactive communication.

In addition to interacting directly, political organizations must also create interesting and informative political content. The use of infographics, short videos, and podcasts has been shown to be more effective in reaching younger generations compared to long-form articles or traditional television broadcasts. For example, in the United States, political organizations such as NowThis Politics and Vox have managed to simplify complex political issues into short, easy-to-understand videos for young voters, thereby increasing their involvement in political debates. In addition, political parties can also encourage the active involvement of young people in digital campaigns by involving them as online volunteers tasked with disseminating credible political information and fighting hoax news.

Civil society and activists also have a great responsibility in creating a healthy and inclusive digital political environment. One of the steps that can be taken is to build a community and a fact-based digital political discussion forum. With a safe and data-driven discussion space, the younger generation can exchange ideas without fear of intimidation or the spread of false information. In

Germany, for example, the Diskutier Mit Mir platform was created to facilitate political dialogue between individuals with different views, thus preventing increasingly sharp polarization on social media.

In addition, civil society also needs to play an active role in fighting misinformation and hoaxes which are often obstacles to healthy political participation. Awareness campaigns about the dangers of hoaxes and how to recognize fake news must continue to be encouraged, such as the Turn Back Hoax organization in Indonesia, which routinely provides education to the public on how to verify political news circulating on social media. Not only that, civil society also needs to advocate for policies that support freedom of expression in the digital realm while protecting users' personal data so that digital technology can be used safely for political activities.

With a targeted strategy from the government, political organizations, and civil society, digital technology can be optimally utilized to increase the political involvement of the younger generation. This will strengthen a more inclusive digital democracy and provide space for young people to become agents of change in a more dynamic political system.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that digital technology has great potential in increasing the political participation of the younger generation in the era of digital democracy. By utilizing social media and digital platforms, the younger generation can more easily access political information, discuss public issues, and engage in online campaigns and petitions. However, the effectiveness of digital political involvement is still influenced by various factors, such as the level of digital literacy, access to the internet, and trust in political institutions. In addition, challenges such as the spread of misinformation and polarization of opinions on social media remain obstacles in building healthy and constructive political engagement.

Practically, the results of this study highlight the need for a more structured strategy in utilizing digital technology to strengthen the political participation of the younger generation. Governments and educational institutions need to improve digital and political literacy programs to equip the younger generation with the necessary skills to critically assess information. In addition, political parties and civil society organizations must be more active in utilizing social media as a tool for more inclusive and interactive political communication. The improvement of digital infrastructure, especially in remote areas, is also an important factor in ensuring equal access to political information.

For further research, further studies are needed on the long-term impact of the use of digital technology on the pattern of political participation of the younger generation, especially in the context of different political and cultural systems. In addition, more in-depth quantitative studies can be conducted to measure the effectiveness of various digital strategies in increasing political participation. Research that examines the influence of social media algorithms on political engagement will also be an important contribution in understanding the dynamics of digital politics that continues to evolve.

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