

## Generation Z's Political Participation in the Gorontalo Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections

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### Article Info

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**Abstract** : This study addresses the phenomenon of declining voter turnout amid an increasing final voter list (DPT), which underscores a gap between the rising number of registered young voters and their actual engagement in local democracy. The study aims to analyze the forms and influencing factors of Generation Z's political participation in the 2024 Gorontalo Mayoral Election. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach in Gorontalo City, data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, with informants selected via purposive sampling. The findings indicate that Generation Z's political participation includes involvement in campaigns, political discussions, and voting; however, their engagement remains fluctuating and heavily reliant on social and environmental conditions. Key factors driving this participation include social media usage as a political information source, identification with parties or candidates, and the influence of family and social circles. In conclusion, Generation Z's political participation possesses distinct characteristics shaped by digital media, suggesting that adaptive political education and socialization strategies are highly required to enhance the quality of youth engagement in future local governance.

**Keywords** : Political Participation; Generation Z; Mayoral Election; 2024 Simultaneous Election.

## INTRODUCTION

Each generation reflects its era. The human generation thrives in a vortex of social, political, economic, and technological change, like interconnected pages of history. Over the past hundred years, the world has witnessed the emergence of several major generations that have shaped the modern civilization of the Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials (Gen Y), Generation Z, and now Generation Alpha.

Each group has its own unique characteristics, which shape the ever-changing social dynamics.

The Baby Boomers, made up of individuals born between 1946 and 1964, grew up in a post-war era full of optimism. They are known as a generation of hardworking people who see success through assertiveness, loyalty, and hard work. According to them, the world can be changed through real efforts and long-term commitments. Changes began to be felt when the Generation X era (1965–1980) began.

They witnessed the transition from traditional to contemporary lifestyles. This generation grew up to be independent, skeptical, and tend to appreciate work-life balance because it grew up in the midst of political and economic instability and the beginning of the digital revolution.

Then came the Millennial Generation, also known as Gen Y (1981–1996), which was born at the same time as the rapid advancement of information technology. They thrived with the internet, mobile phones, and social media changing the way people connected with each other. Due to the fast-paced and competitive demands of the times, this generation is often portrayed as ambitious and flexible, but also full of pressure. Generation Z (1997–2012), the true digital generation, now controls the world. Gen Z grew up as a critical, open, and highly sensitive generation to global issues such as the environment, equality, and mental health. They have never lived without the internet, and they use smartphones to access the world. They live in an age of information abundance, but they also face problems such as identity crises and excessive digital stimulants. In addition, the millennial generation, Generation Alpha, was born in 2013. They grow up in a fully connected world, where digital devices, online learning, and artificial intelligence are part of life from an early age. Although their future is unknown, it is clear that they will be the most educated and connected generation in human history.

Each generation reflects its times, shaped by unique social, political, economic,

and technological conditions. This diversity of characters between generations is also reflected in the dynamics of elections. Elections as a pillar of democracy are not only the process of choosing leaders, but also an arena where the values, aspirations, and expectations of different generations meet. General elections are an instrument of a democracy itself, one of the fundamental forms of democracy is the existence of general elections or (elections). General Election (Election) In accordance with the provisions of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections Article Paragraph 1 states that elections are a means of people's sovereignty to elect members of the House of Representatives, Members of the Regional Representative Council, President and Vice President, and to elect members of the Regional House of Representatives, which are carried out directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the State Constitution Republic of Indonesia in 1945 (Law. No.7 of 2017) (Sholahuddin et al., 2019).

This law certainly aims to answer the political dynamics related to election organizers and participants, the election system, election management, and law enforcement in one law, namely the Law on General Elections (J et al., 2025). General elections and regional head elections are integral to democracy itself. Local government is the implementation of government affairs by local governments and the House of Representatives (DPR) based on the principle of autonomy and assistance duties,

along with the principle of autonomy as widely as possible in the system and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, as stated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

In the 2018 Gorontalo Mayor Election, the number of Permanent Voter Lists (DPT) was recorded as 127,280 voters. Of this total, as many as 102,711 voters were recorded to exercise their voting rights by casting their votes at Polling Stations (TPS). The details of the votes for each candidate are as follows: candidate number one received 37,032 votes, candidate number two received 42,398 votes, and candidate number three received 23,281 votes. If totaled, the total valid votes obtained by the three candidates reached 102,711 votes, according to the number of voters who attended and cast their votes.

In the 2024 Gorontalo Mayor Regional Head Election, the number of voter participation was recorded at 80,895 people. This figure shows that even though the democratic process has run smoothly, there is still a significant gap between the number of voters present at the Polling Station (TPS) and the total Permanent Voter List (DPT) which was recorded as many as 146,070 people. Thus, there are around 65,175 voters who do not exercise their voting rights. The votes obtained in the Regional Elections showed that the number three candidate received the most votes, namely 39,696 votes, followed by the number one candidate with 27,104 votes, and the number two candidate with 14,095 votes. If

totalled, the total valid votes correspond to the participation figure, which is 80,895 votes.

The Gorontalo Mayor Election showed a fairly sharp decline in voter participation rates between 2018 and 2024. Although the number of DPTs has increased, real participation in the form of attendance at polling stations has actually decreased significantly. This can be caused by various factors, such as increasing political apathy, dissatisfaction with candidates, lack of socialization, or declining trust in local democratic processes.

This decline in voter participation becomes even more interesting to analyze when it is associated with the demographic composition of permanent voters in the 2024 election. Data on the distribution of voter age can provide an idea of which group is the most dominant in number, as well as a potential political force that determines the election results. In addition, in terms of participation, the younger generation such as millennials and generation Z, which are quite large, have an important role in determining the direction of democracy, but often show a lower level of involvement. This condition indicates the importance of more relevant and effective political approach and education strategies to reach the younger generation.

Quoted from the official account of the Gorontalo City KPU on its Instagram account, it shows data on permanent voters in the 2024 ummum election, as many as 1,182 Pre Boomer voters born less than 194, data on the Baby Boomer generation from 1945-1964 as many as

17,297 voters, generation X or called the millennial generation from 1965-1980 as many as 48,394 voters while generation Z with 1997-2012 births as many as 39,638 voters.

Based on this data, it can be seen that the majority of voters are dominated by the millennial generation (Y) with 48,394 people, followed by generation Z with 39,638 voters, and then generation X with a total of 39,568 voters. In this case, Generation Z falls into the category of novice voters. Referring to Law Number 40 of 2009 concerning Youth, youth are those between the ages of 16 and 30. With a birth span between 1997 and 2012, Generation Z clearly falls into the category of youth. Meanwhile, the Law on Elections states that voters are citizens who are 17 years old or married. Therefore, Generation Z, by definition, can be categorized as young voters because they have only entered the age of voting in this period.

One of the groups of voters who are concerned in the simultaneous general election in the 2024 mayoral and deputy mayor elections is novice voters, novice voters in general are people who are eligible to vote in the election for the first time. It is forbidden with that according to Nur Wardhani (2018) in (Ibrahim, 2022 : 576) said that novice voters in the political category are a group that has just exercised their voting rights and has different orientations and can change according to influencing factors.

Some of the research conducted by (Arumsari & Nugraheni, 2018) In his study

entitled Political Participation of Novice Voters in the Semarang Mayor Election in Semarang City, it was found that the results of the study showed that novice voters did not have maximum readiness and did not make special preparations in making choices. Their choice is influenced by various factors, such as the candidate's vision and mission, background (education and religion), social closeness to the community, previous candidate performance (especially for incumbents), track record, and personal character such as honesty, trustworthiness, closeness to the people, and freedom from legal cases.

Furthermore, the research conducted by (Tinuntung, 2014) entitled Political Participation of Novice Voters in the Election of Regents and Deputy Regents in Talaud Regency found that the results of the study showed that the form of political participation of novice voters in South Essang District included informal discussions, campaigns, and voting. Factors driving participation include political stimulators, personal and social character, political environment, and political education. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are daily busyness, a sense of inferiority, and prohibitions from family.

Meanwhile, in a study conducted by (Momor et al., 2018) found the same thing as a study conducted by tinuntung which found that in the 2018 general election for Regional Heads in East Langowan District, Minahasa Regency, the community was so enthusiastic in making the democratic party a success, including first-

time voters. Novice voters as an inseparable part of society also have an important part in the success of direct elections. The forms of political participation carried out by novice voters are no different from other community activities such as being involved in campaigns, political discussions, and voting.

Based on the studies that have been described with the same findings, it shows that the possible forms of political participation and political artification factors carried out by novice voters are likely to be the same as the studies or research that have been described, therefore in this study the researcher will look at the forms of political participation, and the factors that affect the political participation of novice voters there are the election of the mayor and deputy mayor of Gorontalo in the election simultaneously in 2024.

## **METHODS**

The method in this study uses a qualitative type of research with a descriptive approach. According to (Sugiyono, 2020) the qualitative research method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism, used to research on the condition of natural objects, (as opposed to experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument, the data collection technique is carried out in a triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Forms of Generation Z's Political Participation in the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Elections in the 2024 Simultaneous General Elections**

One of the indicators of Generation Z's political participation in mayoral elections includes political campaigns, political discussions, and voting. These three forms of political participation are the focus of this study because they represent the involvement of Generation Z in the 2024 Gorontalo Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections. The first form of political participation is political campaigns. Political campaigns are understood as political activities carried out by citizens, both individually and in groups, with the aim of influencing public opinion and the political decision-making process. This activity can be realized through providing support to certain candidate pairs, disseminating political information, and direct involvement in various campaign activities, such as distributing leaflets, installing campaign attributes, and using social media as a means of political communication.

The second form of political participation carried out by Generation Z in the Mayoral and Deputy Mayor elections is political discussions. Political discussion is understood as an activity that involves individuals in the process of conversation, exchange of opinions, and debates about political issues with other parties, both in public and private spaces. This activity reflects the level of awareness, understanding, and concern of individuals for

the political dynamics that develop in their environment.

The third form of political participation carried out by generation Z in the 2022 Gorontalo mayor and deputy mayor elections is Voting, Voting or voting is an important form of formal political participation because it reflects the active involvement of citizens in determining the direction of leadership and public policy.

Based on the three forms of political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 mayoral and deputy mayor elections, they will be described at the following points:

### **1. Political Campaigns**

In general, a campaign is a series of organized and continuous activities that aim to influence the thoughts, perceptions, and behavior of the target group over a certain period of time. According to Almond (1963), political participation is the active involvement of citizens to influence political decision-making (Almond, G. A., & Verba, 1963). Together with Sidney Verba, Almond explained that community participation has various forms, both conventional and unconventional, which in political campaigns are reflected through formal activities such as door-to-door campaigns to expressive participation such as street actions (Scott, Sidney, 1972).

Based on the results of the study, the involvement of the younger generation in political campaigns in the Gorontalo Mayor Election showed significant variations. Some of the younger generation actively participate

through activities such as street actions and door-to-door campaigns because they are considered easily accessible. However, some others choose not to get involved due to low interest in politics and limited time due to focusing on academic activities.

The results of this study are also supported by research conducted by Marsuki (2022). The study showed that political apathy among youth was influenced by low levels of political knowledge, negative images of the political world, and personal factors such as busyness. The findings are in line with the results of this study which revealed various reasons that caused some youth in Gorontalo to be less involved in political activities. In addition, the findings of this study are also strengthened by a study conducted by Satria and Rahmawati (2024), which identified that youth involvement in the "Desak Anies" campaign is more influenced by the attractiveness of entertainment elements and visual communication on social media than by a level of deep political understanding. (Marsuki et al., 2022; Satria & Rahmawati, 2024).

### **2. Political Discussion**

Gabriel Almond (1963) views political discussion as an important form of non-electoral political participation because it functions as a means of exchanging information, forming opinions, and increasing political awareness. These discussions that take place in families, communities, and friendships encourage the formation of civic culture, which is a participatory, reflective, and public-



interest-oriented political culture (Almond, G. A., & Verba, 1963).

The results of this study show that political discussions among the younger generation in the context of the Gorontalo Mayor Election take place in various social spheres, in line with Gabriel Almond's view of political discussion as one of the important elements of shaping civic culture. The discussion was carried out in a family environment in an open communication atmosphere, with discussions focusing on the choice of regional head and legislative candidates as well as an understanding of election procedures. This reflects the function of political discussion as understood by Almond, namely as a means of political education and the formation of citizen opinions.

The results of this study are also in line with the research conducted by Tamma (2021) which emphasizes that civic education in schools also shapes the political orientation of novice voters, strengthens the initial understanding of democratic mechanisms, and expands civic awareness. These findings support the results of this study which shows that the family and formal education play a role as a means of early political education. Furthermore, a study by Rubei (2022) on the role of the General Election Commission (KPU) in political socialization to novice voters in Pontianak shows that election organizing institutions have a significant influence in creating targeted and clear political communication, so as to increase the political participation of young people. Another study conducted by Tinambunan (2024) in Boyolali

also emphasized that the socialization approach through seminars and focus group discussions (Focus Group Discussions / FGD) has been proven to be able to increase the enthusiasm of young voter participation. These findings further strengthen the results of this study regarding the importance of the role of the KPU in facilitating political discussion spaces for the younger generation (Rube'i et al., 2022; Tamma, 2021; Stuart et al., 2024).

### **3. Voting**

According to Gabriel A. Almond (1963), voting is one of the most basic forms of conventional political participation in a democratic political system. Voting is seen as a tangible manifestation of citizen involvement in the political decision-making process, where individuals have the opportunity to express their political preferences through the election of a candidate for leader or policy. Almond emphasized that this activity is not just an administrative act, but also represents active participation in determining the direction of government and public policy (Almond, G. A., & Verba, 1963).

The findings of the study show that ; The majority of the younger generation in last year's Gorontalo Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections used their voting rights as a form of participation in the democratic process. Their awareness of using their voting rights shows a basic understanding of the importance of involvement in elections as one of the manifestations of citizen responsibility. These findings indicate that the younger generation is

beginning to understand elections as a strategic means to participate in determining the direction of government policies at the local level.

The findings also show that there are a variety of factors that affect the political choices of the younger generation. Some voters show independence in making their choices based on rational judgments of competing candidates, while others still rely on family direction, especially for first-time voters. In this case, family influence serves as an initial guide for novice voters to get to know the political process, while still providing room for freedom for individuals to shape their own political preferences.

The findings of this study are certainly in line with empirical findings with several studies, one of which was conducted by Resdiana & Alfiyah (2025). In the study conducted by Resdiana and Alfiyah, it was found that generation Z tends to engage in political participation based on rational considerations. They consider that the decision to vote in local elections is no longer solely due to emotional closeness or social ties to the candidate, but rather based on personal calculations of the political benefits they may derive. In this context, Gen Z considers the candidate's vision, mission, work program, and integrity before making a choice. These findings show that the political behavior of the younger generation increasingly shows a rational, modern, and selective character in assessing political candidates (Resdiana & Alfiyah, 2025).

### **Factors that affect Generation Z's Political Participation in the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Elections in the 2024 Simultaneous General Elections**

Generation Z's political participation is an inseparable phenomenon from various factors that also affect their level of involvement in the political process, especially in the momentum of the general election. As a generation that grows and develops in the midst of information technology advances and complex social dynamics, Generation Z has different characteristics and patterns of political participation compared to previous generations. Therefore, it is important to examine in depth the factors that affect the political participation of Generation Z in the Gorontalo Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections in the 2024 Simultaneous General Elections.

Regarding these factors, this study focuses on three main indicators that are considered to have a significant influence on the political participation of Generation Z. The factors that affect political participation include: (a) social media as the main means of political information and communication, (b) identification of political parties that shape voters' political preferences and attitudes, and (c) kinship factors that play a role in influencing choices and involvement individual politics. Based on this description, it is necessary to formulate research problems related to the factors that affect the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Gorontalo Mayor and Deputy Mayor elections. In this regard, the



approach taken by the researcher to delve deeper into the facts, or that determine the political participation of generation Z is based on three things, namely social media, political party identification, kinship which will be described in the following sub-sub-points.

### **1. Social Media**

In the view of Michael Rush and Philip Althoff (1986), the media is part of the agent of political socialization that plays an important role in shaping the political orientation and behavior of individuals. Although their study at the time focused more on conventional mass media, such as newspapers, radio, and television, the concepts presented are still relevant for understanding the role of social media in the context of contemporary politics. Along with the development of information technology, social media is now an increasingly dominant means of political socialization, especially among the younger generation (Rush, Michael & Althoff, 2005).

The results of the study show that social media has a significant role in increasing Generation Z's political participation in the 2024 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections. Social media is no longer just used as a means of communication and entertainment, but has developed into the main media in the dissemination of political information that is fast, widespread, and interactive. Given that social media has become a part of Generation Z's daily routine, the platform has proven effective in building political awareness, interest, and engagement among young voters.

Information about prospective leaders, vision and mission, local issues, and candidate image strategies is easier to access through social media than conventional media.

The findings of this study are also clearly strengthened by a study conducted by Ginting & Pribadi (2025) which shows that TikTok has developed into a significant digital political space for Generation Z. Through this platform, the young generation not only plays a role as a consumer of political information, but also as an active actor who helps shape and disseminate political narratives. One of the main factors that makes TikTok effective as a medium for socialization and political participation is the existence of a personalization algorithm that is able to present content according to user preferences and behavior. This condition encourages more intensive and selective consumption of political content, thereby further strengthening the role of social media in shaping Generation Z's political participation (Ginting & Personal, 2025).

### **2. Political Party Identification**

The political preferences of the younger generation in the Gorontalo Mayor Election are influenced by various factors, especially the proximity to political parties and the assessment of the vision, mission, and promises conveyed by the candidate pair. A number of respondents showed interest in certain political parties, such as the NasDem Party, which then influenced their decisions in making political choices. This partiality towards political parties reflects the political identification that is

beginning to develop among young voters, although the level and intensity are still diverse.

However, not all young generations have a closeness to certain political parties. Some respondents took a neutral position and did not show strong partisan affiliations. For this group, the determination of political choices is more based on the evaluation of the vision, mission, and work programs offered by the candidate pair. This pattern shows the tendency of rational voters to place the integrity, commitment, and leadership capacity of the candidate as the main considerations in determining political preferences.

The phenomenon of differences in orientation can be explained through the concept of political identification. According to Rush and Althoff (1986), political identification is an individual's psychological and emotional attachment to a certain political party or political group that has a profound effect on political views, orientations, and behavior in the long run. Political identification is not formed instantly, but rather through a complex process of political socialization, involving the role of the family as the main agent of socialization, interaction with the social environment such as peers and communities, and the individual's direct experience in following political dynamics (Rush, Michael & Althoff, 2005).

This finding is in line with Haryanto's (2016) research which shows that political identification or party identification is a dominant factor in voting behavior in local politics in Indonesia. Voters who have an

emotional connection to a political party tend to maintain their political preferences based on that proximity, even when faced with a variety of alternative candidates. On the other hand, the younger generation who do not have a close relationship with a certain political party tends to show a different pattern of voting behavior, namely prioritizing a rational assessment of the vision, mission, and work program of the candidate pair. This is strengthened by research by Faisal, (2024) who found that generation Z tends to make political choices based on a rational evaluation of the credibility, clarity of the program, and integrity of the candidate concerned (Faisal et al., 2024; Haryanto, 2016).

### **3. Kinship**

According to Rush and Althoff (1986), kinship in the political context is a form of social attachment that is rooted in emotional relationships, values, and loyalty built in the family environment or group of relatives. This attachment plays an important role in shaping an individual's orientation, perspective, and political behavior. Kinship functions as one of the main channels of political socialization that instills values, identities, and political preferences from an early age. Nevertheless, Rush and Althoff also assert that overly strong kinship ties have the potential to limit an individual's political independence, as one tends to follow the political preferences of the family without conducting a critical evaluation of the various alternative options available (Rush, Michael & Althoff, 2005).

The findings of the study show that the political participation of the younger generation in the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections of Gorontalo is influenced by various social factors, especially the role of family and peer groups. The results of the study revealed that peer groups have a significant influence on the political participation of the younger generation, especially through discussions, daily interactions, and opinion formation in the campus environment. This condition shows that peer groups function as an effective social space in increasing political awareness while influencing the preferences of young voters. In addition, the family also plays a central role in shaping the political choices of the younger generation, especially for novice voters who still need direction and guidance from their parents in understanding political dynamics.

These findings are strengthened by various empirical studies that affirm the importance of the role of families and peer groups in shaping the political participation of the younger generation. Research by Yunus, (2022) shows that parental involvement through political discussions and the cultivation of political values in the family have a significant influence on political ethics and preferences of novice voters. On the other hand, the influence of peer groups has also proven to be strong, as shown by Zainurin (2024) who found that interaction with peers, especially through informal discussions and exchange of views, is able to strengthen political identity and increase the political awareness of the younger generation.

Furthermore, Wicaksono, (2015) revealed that the combination of the influence of family, peers, and the media simultaneously shapes student voting behavior, even though the family remains the most dominant agent of political socialization (Wicaksono et al., 2015; Yunus et al., 2020; Zainurin et al., 2024).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that Generation Z's political participation in the Gorontalo Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elections in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections is realized through involvement in political campaigns, political discussions, and voting. The three forms of participation show that Generation Z has a diverse level of involvement and is still influenced by social conditions and the surrounding environment. Generation Z's political participation is influenced by the role of social media as the main source of political information, identification of political parties or candidates, and the influence of family and social environment as agents of political socialization. These findings confirm that Generation Z's political participation has distinctive characteristics influenced by the development of digital media, so adaptive and sustainable political education and socialization strategies are needed to improve the quality of the young generation's political participation in local democracy.

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