



The Influence of Social Media Usage and Political Trust on Young Voters Political Participation in Padang City

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DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.53697/iso.v5i1.2160>

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Received: 20-04-2025

Accepted: 20-05-2025

Published: 21-06-2025



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Abstract: The advancement of information technology and evolving political dynamics have significantly changed how young people engage in politics. This study focuses on investigating the influence of social media usage and political trust on the political involvement of Generation Z and Millennials in the 2024 election in Padang City. The research, utilizing a quantitative associative method with multiple linear regression analysis, involved 100 respondents aged 17 to 42, selected through proportional stratified random sampling. The results revealed a notable simultaneous influence of social media usage and political trust on political participation, accounting for 31.6%. Individually, social media usage had a substantial influence of 29.5%, while political trust had an 8.6% impact on political participation. Based on these findings, recommended that the government and relevant institutions enhance digital and political literacy among young people and foster political trust through transparency and accountability. This research emphasizes the significance of effective political communication strategies on social media to boost the political engagement of young individuals in future elections.

Keywords: Social Media, Political Trust, Political Participation

Introduction

Political participation is a crucial democratic system aspect, particularly during general elections (Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). In this digital age, the dynamics of political engagement have significantly evolved, particularly among the younger generation (Postill, 2020). This trend is increasingly important as young voters will play a decisive role in the 2024 Indonesian Election.

Social media has become the primary platform for young people to access political information and participate in public discussions. According to Omotayo and Folorunso (2020), social media usage has a positive correlation with the level of political participation, especially in the form of online activism. However, Certoma (2022) warn that the influence of social media on political participation is complex and can vary depending on the local socio-political context.

On the other hand, political trust remains a crucial factor in encouraging political participation. A longitudinal study conducted by (Quaranta et al. 2022) in various European countries shows that low levels of political trust tend to decrease conventional

political participation but may increase non-conventional participation such as protests and online petitions.

Although there has been extensive research examining the relationship between social media, political trust, and political participation, there are still gaps in our understanding of how these factors interact in the Indonesian context, especially among the younger generation. Sumerta et al. (2024) studied young voters' political participation in Jakarta, revealing unique patterns in the political behavior of Generation Z and Millennials, but did not deeply explore the role of social media and political trust.

The unique aspect of this research is its attempt to combine the analysis of social media usage and political trust within the distinctive socio-cultural context of Padang City. A well-known city for its matrilineal system, among other characteristics. By centering on the 2024 Election, the research aims to offer a more profound theoretical comprehension and practical insights for stakeholders to boost the political involvement of young people.

Furthermore, this research will also contribute to the current academic debate on '*slacktivism*' put forward by Djumadin (2021), by examining whether political engagement through social media truly translates into real participation in elections. Thus, the expected research to provide a new perspective in understanding the political participation dynamics in the digital era, especially in the Indonesian context.

Vaccari and Valeriani (2021) highlight how individuals, especially the younger generation, increasingly rely on their personal networks on social media to form political opinions and make electoral decisions. This adds complexity to understanding contemporary political behavior.

Another aspect investigated in this study is the presence of 'echo chambers' and 'filter bubbles' on social media (Ross Arguedas et al., 2022). They found that social media algorithms tend to reinforce users' confirmation bias, which can affect political perceptions and levels of trust in political institutions.

Cheng et al. (2024) study on the role of social media influencers in shaping young voters' political opinions shows a significant shift in sources considered credible by Generation Z and Millennials. This finding opens new questions about how political trust is formed in the digital era. Furthermore, this research will also touch on the issue of increasing political polarization on social media, as revealed in a comparative study by Sinpeng (2020) in several Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia. They found that polarization on social media has different impacts on offline political participation, depending on the cultural context and political system of each country.

Our research aims to make empirical contributions regarding the relationship between social media usage, political trust, and political participation in Padang City. Additionally, we hope to enrich the theoretical discussion on the transformation of political participation in the digital era. The results of this research provide a foundation for developing effective strategies to increase meaningful political participation among the younger generation and maintain the integrity of the democratic process amidst increasingly complex information flows.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study applies a quantitative associative method with a survey research design. According Leavy, (2022), associative quantitative research explores the relationship between two or more variables. In this case, research concentrates on the relationship between social media usage, political trust, and political participation of young people. For further clarification, please refer to the conceptual framework in Figure 1.

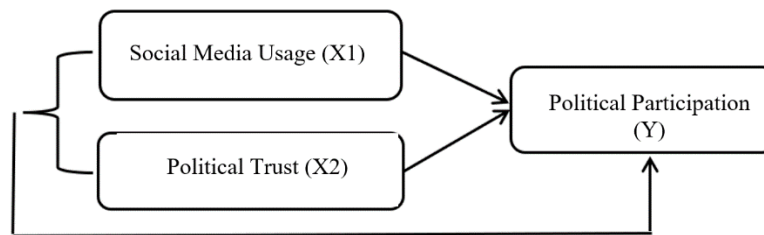


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Framework

2. Research Sample

The research sample comprises 100 respondents using a proportional stratified random sampling technique. The inclusion criteria specify that the respondents must be residents of Padang City aged between 17 and 42 years, belonging to the Generation Z and Millennial categories. To ensure sufficient representation from different people. The participants were stratified based on age groups and administrative areas.

3. Data Collection and Procedures

The data collection involved distributing structured questionnaires. The research instrument utilized a 5-point Likert scale (Kusmaryono et al., 2022), where respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements. The answer choices ranged from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5). This questionnaire comprised three main parts, measuring social media usage, political trust, and political participation.

The adapted questionnaire of social media used the Integration Scale (SMUIS) developed by Elhami Athar and Azamian Jazi (2022). This scale consists of 10 items measuring the intensity and involvement of individuals in social media use. For political trust, from the Political Trust Scale developed by Mangion and Frendo (2022) and Hoe et al. (2021). This questionnaire consists of 8 items measuring the level of trust in various political institutions. Lastly, political participation was adopted from the Political Participation Inventory questionnaire developed by Rudnev (2021) and Johann et al. (2020), which consists of 12 items measuring various forms of political participation, both conventional and non-conventional.

The instrument underwent validity and reliability testing in a preliminary study with 30 respondents before being used in the main study. The validity and reliability test results ranged from 0.512 to 0.784 (r table = 0.361) with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.876 for social media. Political trust showed the r count values for all items ranged from 0.486 to 0.752 (r table = 0.361) with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.842. Lastly, for political participation,

the r count values for all items ranged from 0.523 to 0.798 ($r_{table} = 0.361$) with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.891.

The questionnaire items all showed r count values greater than the r table, which indicates that all items are valid. Cronbach's Alpha values for the three variables were also above 0.7, indicating good reliability levels (Schrepp, 2020). The questionnaire adaptation involved translating the items into Indonesian and making contextual adjustments to ensure relevance to the socio-political conditions in Padang City. This process included expert validation from two political science experts and one language expert to ensure conceptual and linguistic equivalence.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis consisted of two main stages. First, descriptive statistical analysis to provide an overview of sample characteristics and response distribution. Second, inferential analysis employed multiple linear regression to test research hypotheses regarding the impact of social media usage and political trust on political participation. Statistical calculations used SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) software. Additionally, Mardiatmoko (2024) performed the classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity, to ensure the validity of the regression model.

Result and Discussion

Results

Before testing the research hypotheses, we conducted classical assumption tests as prerequisites. After that, simple and multiple linear regression tests were to answer the research hypotheses, the results of the classical assumption tests in this study.:

a. Normality Test

After analyzing the data, the results of the normality test are:

Table 1. Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test					
		Social Media Usage	Political Trust	Politic Participation	Unstandardized Residual
N		100	100	100	100
Normal Parameters ^a	Mean	26.7900	28.1000	31.1300	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.60631	4.38892	5.90951	4.83743830
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.122	.133	.129	.072
	Positive	.003	.133	.129	.072
	Negative	-.122	-.121	-.072	-.055
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.219	1.325	1.288	.717
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.102	.060	.073	.682

Based on the results of the normality test in Table 1. showed that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) values for the social media usage variable, political trust, political participation, and unstandardized residual are 0.102, 0.060, 0.073, and 0.682, respectively. These values are greater than 0.05. Therefore, we can conclude that the regression model meets the normality assumption.

b. *Heteroscedasticity Test.*

The heteroscedasticity test obtained from the results of the data in this research are:

Table 2. Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.529	2.391			.640	.524
Media Social Usage	.040	.070	.060		.571	.569
Political Trust	.040	.073	.058		.554	.581

a. Dependent Variable: RES 1

Table 2. shows that the significance value for the social media usage variable is 0.569. more than 0.05. Therefore, the heteroscedasticity does not occur. Similarly, the significance value of political trust is 0.581, also more than 0.05, indicating that heteroscedasticity does not occur.

c. *Autocorrelation Test*

Table 3. Autocorrelation Test

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.574 ^a	.330	.316	4.88705	1.702

Table 3. shows the Durbin Watson (D-W) value is 2, which is less than 1.702 but greater than -2. Therefore, the data used does not exhibit autocorrelation.

d. *Research Hypothesis Testing*

To analyze the research hypotheses, we performed a multiple linear regression. You can refer to the table below for the results:

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression

Model	Coefficients ^a				t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	7.311	3.803			1.923	.057
Social Media Usage	.645	.111	.503		5.825	.000
Political Trust	.232	.116	.173		1.999	.048

a. Dependent Variable: Political Participation

Table 5. showed the multiple linear regression equation as follows: $Y = 7.311 + 0.645 X_1 + 0.232 X_2$

The constant value in the multiple regression equation indicates that when the other independent variables are zero, the political participation variable will increase by 7.311 units.

e. *T-Test (Partial t-test)*

Table 5. Partial t-Test

No	Variable	T _{count}	T _{table}	Sig.	R ²	Impact
1	Media Social Usage	6.516	1,984	0,000	0,295	Significant
2	Political Trust	3.218		0,002	0,086	Significant

In Table 5. showed the T-test results for each variable are: 1) For the social media usage variable (X1), the T-count value is 6.516, which exceeds the T-table value of 1.984, and the significance value is 0.000, indicating a significant influence of social media usage on political participation (Ha₁ accepted, H0₁ rejected). The R² value of 0.295 shows that the effect of social media usage on political participation is 29.5%. 2) For the political trust variable (X2), the T-count value is 3.218, higher than the T-table value of 1.984, and the significance value is 0.002, demonstrating a significant influence of political trust on political participation (Ha₂ accepted, H0₂ rejected). The R² value of 0.086 reveals that the impact of political trust on political participation is 8.6%.

f. *F-Test (Simultaneous)*

Table 6. Simultaneous t-Test

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1140.630	2	570.315	23.879	.000
	Residual	2316.680	97	23.883		
	Total	3457.310	99			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Usage, Political Trust
 b. Dependent Variable: Political Participation

Table 6, showed the F-count value of 23.879 exceeds the F-table value of 3.08, and the Sig. is 0.000, is less than 0.05. As a result, we can conclude that both social media usage and political trust have a significant simultaneous influence on political participation.

g. *Coefficient of Determination Test (R²)*

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	
1	.574 ^a	.330	.316	4.88705	1.702	

Table 7 above shows the adjusted R square (R²) value is 0.361, indicating that social media usage and political trust collectively influence political participation by 31.6%.

Discussion

Based on the research results and analysis above, we can present several explanations:

1. *The Influence of Social Media Usage on Political Participation*

The research indicates that social media significantly influences the political participation of young people in Padang City, with a contribution of 29.5%. This finding

supports Alodat et al. (2023) study, which highlights the crucial role of social media in mobilizing the political participation of young voters.

Social media has become the main source of political information for young people. According to Ali et al. (2020), social media platforms enable rapid and widespread dissemination of political information, increasing young voters' political awareness. Their study in Australia shows that 78% of young voters rely on social media for political information.

Social media platforms provide a space for political discussion. This aligns with the concept of 'networked individualism' (Hampton & Wenhong, 2021), where individuals form political opinions through interactions in online social networks. Wang and Tsai (2023) found that political discussions on social media increase offline participation by 23% among young voters in Taiwan.

Social media facilitates online and offline political mobilization. Choi et al. (2021) in their study in South Korea, found that social media campaigns increased young voter participation in elections by 15%. However, the influence of social media also brings challenges. The phenomena of 'echo chambers' and 'filter bubbles' (Efstratiou & De Cristofaro, 2022) were identified in respondents' social media usage patterns. This has the potential to reinforce political polarization and affect the quality of political participation. Furthermore, Waeterloos et al. (2024), in a comparative study across six European countries, found while social media increases online participation, its effect on offline participation varies and depends on local political contexts.

Interestingly, this study contrast with Tang et al. (2021) findings in China, which showed that social media usage has a negative correlation with conventional political participation among young people. They argue that government control over social media platforms may contribute to this phenomenon.

In their 2023 study, Cheng et al. emphasized the significance of "digital literacy" in influencing the connection between social media use and political involvement. Their findings revealed that young voters with proficient digital literacy skills are more inclined to assess political content on social media and are more likely to participate actively in political matters.

These findings confirm the complex connection between social media usage and political participation. While social media has a significant impact, such as local political context, digital and platform regulation must understand the dynamics of young people's political participation in the digital era.

2. *The Influence of Political Trust on Political Participation*

This research found that political trust plays a significant role in influencing political participation, although its contribution is relatively small at 8.6%. This result is noteworthy when contrasted with the findings of Joosten and Sieben (2024) and Oser et al. (2023), whose studies demonstrated a more substantial impact of political trust on political participation in European nations.

There is a positive relationship between political trust and the conventional political participation level. Folowosele (2023) findings, which analyzed data from 37 democratic countries, show that political trust consistently correlates positively with electoral participation.

Interestingly, respondents with low levels of political trust tend to be more active in non-conventional forms of participation. This phenomenon is confirmed by Stattin (2024) longitudinal study in Germany, which found that a decline in political trust over the past decade correlates with an 18% increase in online activism and street protests.

Political trust appears to be influenced by the information people receive through social media. Camroux (2023) research in Indonesia and Vietnam found that 65% of young voters base their perceptions of political institutions on social media content. Factors such as the local political culture and the history of Padang City play a role in shaping the relationship between political trust and participation. It reinforces Sang-won (2023) argument about the significance of 'social capital' in influencing political trust and participation.

However, these findings contrast with Paul and DeHart (2020) study in Singapore, which found that political trust has a greater influence (23.7%) on political participation compared to social media usage. They argue that Singapore's stable political system and high level of institutional trust may contribute to this phenomenon.

Furthermore, Roth (2024), in their comparative study across 20 advanced and developing democracies, found that the relationship between political trust and participation is curvilinear. They argue that very high or very low levels of trust can reduce political participation, while moderate levels of trust tend to encourage more active participation.

Su and Xiao (2022) contribute to this discussion by investigating the role of "*political efficacy*" as a mediating factor between political trust and participation. Their research in South Korea demonstrates that political trust enhances the sense of political efficacy, thereby leading to increased political participation.

The findings confirm the complex relationship between political trust and political participation. In Padang City, social media usage has a bigger effect than political trust, but political trust still plays a significant role in shaping political participation. These results also highlight the importance of considering contextual factors such as political systems, local culture, and media dynamics in understanding the relationship between political trust and participation in the digital era.

Conclusion

This research reveals the significant influence of social media usage (29.5%) and political trust (8.6%) on the political participation of young people in Padang City. These findings indicate an important shift in the political landscape, where social media becomes a primary catalyst for political participation while potentially causing polarization. Political trust, although its contribution is smaller, remains an important factor in encouraging citizen involvement in the democratic process.

The findings have several implications, including adapting political communication strategies, improving digital literacy, and rebuilding public trust in political institutions. To address these challenges, we recommend taking several key steps, such as developing civic education curricula that include digital literacy, strengthening social media regulations related to political content, increasing government institutions' transparency, and optimizing the use of social media by political actors to focus on informative and interactive content. Social media platforms should increase efforts to handle disinformation, while educational institutions are encouraged to integrate political education and digital literacy into their curricula.

We need further research to understand the dynamics of young people's long-term political participation. Implementing these recommendations is expected to improve the quality of political engagement, strengthen the democratization process, and build a more resilient society to face political challenges in the digital era.

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