



The Impact of Generative AI On Political Participation and Information Vulnerability of Generation Z: A Literature Review

M. Yazid Khofi^{1*}

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received November 29, 2025

Revised December 19, 2025

Accepted December 20, 2025

Available online December 20, 2025

Keywords:

Generative AI; Digital Politics; Generation Z

ABSTRACT

This study comprehensively analyzes the impact of generative AI on the political participation and information vulnerability of Generation Z, employing library research and literature review approaches. Data were collected from books and scientific articles sourced from Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, and Scispace, with publications spanning the years 2018–2025. The selection process was conducted in stages, involving the screening of titles, abstracts, and full texts based on inclusion criteria that emphasized the relevance of topics related to generative AI, digital politics, and Generation Z. Thematic analysis was employed to synthesize the findings across studies. The results of the study indicate that generative AI is no longer simply a communication tool, but rather a strategic actor shaping the production and distribution of political information through algorithmic personalization, accelerated narrative circulation, and amplified emotional communication. Its impact is ambivalent; AI can increase political participation, but also trigger misinformation, manipulation, and erosion of public trust. Gen Z's information vulnerability is understood as the result of the interaction between platform design, algorithms, and the information ecosystem, not simply an individual limitation. This study recommends strengthening AI literacy, transparent regulation, and political data governance to maintain the quality of digital democracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a powerful technological tool with a broad impact on various aspects of human life, including entertainment, economics, education, and politics. The development of artificial intelligence is no longer limited to computational functions alone. However, it has transformed into systems capable of automatically producing text, images, sound, and video through a technology known as generative AI (GenAI). In the political context, AI has begun to be utilized as a campaign aid, for public opinion analysis, and even for the creation of personalized digital political content. AI has also become involved in the decision-making processes of political parties through the use of big data and predictive modeling to inform political communication strategies (Arifin, 2025).

Meanwhile, the generation most impacted by the expansion of digital technology in politics is Generation Z, a group born and raised in a highly connected technological environment. However, digital literacy among this generation is often limited to the technical aspects of using devices and applications. It does not yet fully encompass the critical skills necessary for evaluating the political information they consume. A lack of understanding of source credibility, algorithmic bias, and the political-economic motives behind information production makes Generation Z a relatively vulnerable group to digital manipulation (Salma, 2019). This situation highlights the importance of scientific studies on the interaction between GenAI and digital literacy in shaping Generation Z's patterns of political participation.

The emergence of generative AI has reshaped the political information ecosystem by fundamentally changing the production, distribution, and consumption of political content. On the one hand, GenAI facilitates the democratization of information production by enabling more individuals and groups to participate in digital political discourse, thereby increasing the potential for inclusivity (Summerfield et al., 2024). However, on the other hand, this same technology also poses significant challenges to information

*Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: yazidkhofi@gmail.com

quality due to AI's ability to create false narratives, manipulate visuals, and simulate reality, further complicating the political communication landscape (Carvalho et al., 2025). At the distribution level, engagement-oriented digital platform algorithms prioritize emotional and controversial content, potentially reinforcing the polarization of public opinion (Aoki, 2024). This rapid development has also created outdated legal texts, prompting the need for new regulations to safeguard information integrity and public trust (Noroozian et al., 2025).

Amid these structural changes, Generation Z faces significant vulnerabilities in a digital space rife with disinformation and political polarization. The high reliance on social media as a primary source of information makes this generation vulnerable to rapidly spreading, manipulative narratives (Pérez-Escoda & Rubio-Romero, 2021). Studies show that younger generations tend to be more skeptical of traditional media and use social media as both a primary source of news and a source of disinformation (Pérez et al., 2022). A lack of basic news literacy skills exacerbates this situation, creating a space for the growth of conspiracy theories and political extremism, particularly on visual platforms like YouTube and Facebook (Korber et al., 2023). At the same time, the phenomenon of hate speech demonstrates how disinformation is strategically produced for political gain and poses a serious threat to democracy, particularly in developing countries (Salma, 2019).

Social media has become an essential component of modern political campaigns due to its ability to reach voters widely and quickly. Digital platforms enable two-way communication between political actors and the public, while also serving as an arena for political image building. However, this dynamic also presents challenges in the form of the spread of hoaxes, digital propaganda, and the strengthening of echo chambers that narrow public discourse (Sinamo et al., 2025). Research in Indonesia suggests that AI is being utilized not only as a tool for content production but also as a strategic approach to political communication, designed to shape voter perceptions and enhance public engagement. Image generator technology proved effective in creating an emotional appeal in the Prabowo-Gibran and Andra-Dimyati campaigns, confirming that AI plays a significant role in transforming modern political communication and shaping public opinion (Arifin, 2025).

Analytically, these findings demonstrate that GenAI is not merely a technical tool, but a socio-political actor that shapes the reality of digital democracy. AI influences the structure of the information ecosystem, from upstream to downstream, encompassing message production, algorithmic distribution mechanisms, and increasingly visual and emotional public consumption. However, most studies tend to examine disinformation, digital literacy, and AI separately, not within a single integrative framework. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in combining three key variables: generative AI, Generation Z's information vulnerability, and political participation, into a single contextual analytical model, particularly within the digital democracy landscape.

This research aims to comprehensively analyze the impact of generative AI on the political participation and information vulnerability of Generation Z. Specifically, this research examines how AI shapes the production of political content, regulates the distribution of information through algorithms, and influences Generation Z's consumption patterns and political attitudes. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of digital political communication studies and practical contributions to the formulation of digital literacy policies and the regulation of political information technology. Therefore, this research is expected to serve as a valuable academic and policy reference in enhancing the quality of digital democracy.

2. METHOD

This research employed a library research and literature review approach. The review included books relevant to the topic, specifically "The Impact of Generative AI on Political Participation and Information Vulnerability of Generation Z." Furthermore, the study reviewed and analyzed both reputable scientific articles and articles from less reputable journals. All cited articles were sourced from Mendeley, Google Scholar, Scispace, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Scopus (Maharani & Dzikra, 2021). According to Nindy Virgiani & Nur Aeni in Khofi et al. (2025), a literature review is the process of searching for published research articles. Data were obtained from a literature review of journals and books related to "The Impact of Generative AI on Political Participation and Information Vulnerability of Generation Z."

The literature search was conducted using a combination of English and Indonesian keywords, such as "generative artificial intelligence," "political communication," "Gen Z political participation," "disinformation," "digital literacy," and "AI in political campaigns." All searches were limited to publications from 2018 to 2025 to ensure the relevance and timeliness of the study.

This will be discussed in more detail in the section titled "Related Literature" or "Literature Review." This will form the basis for formulating hypotheses and serve as a reference for comparing the results or findings found in Ali & Limakrisna's research in Maharani & Dzikra (2021).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Generative AI-Based Transformation of Political Information Production and Distribution

Generative AI has fundamentally transformed the process of producing political information through the use of Large Language Models (LLMs) and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), which are capable of automatically generating political text, visuals, and narratives. This technology enables the production of highly realistic political content, including deepfakes and manipulative messages that have the potential to undermine democratic integrity and erode public trust. However, at the same time, AI is also being used as an instrument to support information verification through automated fact-checking and disinformation pattern analysis, thereby contributing to the improvement of the political information ecosystem (Carvalho et al., 2025).

In terms of information distribution, AI technology is reshaping the way political information is circulated and prioritized through algorithmic systems designed to enhance user engagement. AI enables large-scale political discourse in the digital space, strengthening interactions between citizens and political actors, which in turn opens up opportunities for increased participation and enhanced governance efficiency. However, the expansion of AI in political communication also raises issues of legitimacy and accountability, as much of the information distribution process is opaque and potentially biased (Rymon, 2025). Overall, generative AI not only brings efficiency to political communication but also creates new tensions in digital democracy. The integration of AI into policymaking and public communication increases inclusiveness, but simultaneously raises risks related to transparency, algorithmic fairness, and public oversight of automated systems (Aoki, 2024). Furthermore, the widespread availability of AI-based content also poses epistemic challenges that threaten the credibility of mechanisms such as elections, while simultaneously reinforcing the need to develop responsible AI practices for the sustainability of the digital public sphere (Summerfield et al., 2024). In this context, the transformation of political information production and distribution based on generative AI represents a structural shift in the relationship between technology, power, and democracy.

Based on the synthesis of these research findings, it can be concluded that generative AI has driven a structural transformation in the production and distribution of political information, transforming it not merely as a communication tool but as a strategic actor in the democratic process. AI not only automates content but also reshapes information power relations by controlling distribution channels and personalizing political messages. This transformation strengthens emotion-based political communication, increases the speed of narrative circulation, and narrows the line between information and manipulation. Thus, the transformation of political information production and distribution based on generative AI is not merely a technological phenomenon, but rather an epistemological shift in modern democracy, where the validity of information is increasingly determined by algorithmic systems, rather than journalistic authority or political institutions. This situation demands AI-literate policy design, transparent regulation, and political data governance to prevent democracy from being reduced to a mere machine-controlled digital simulation.

2. Generation Z's Information Vulnerability in the Digital Disinformation Landscape

Generation Z faces heightened information vulnerability in a digital landscape dominated by algorithm-based social media platforms like TikTok. Personalized recommendation systems often create echo chambers that limit exposure to diverse perspectives, thereby reinforcing cognitive biases and increasing the risk of misinformation (Sharma et al., 2024). This situation is exacerbated by low media literacy, where most users lack the skills to evaluate the credibility of sources and distinguish between authentic and manipulative information. Furthermore, information fatigue from excessive exposure and declining trust in institutions also weakens Gen Z's critical thinking skills in navigating the increasingly complex flow of information (Saraan et al., 2025).

To address this vulnerability, various studies emphasize the importance of media literacy education-based interventions designed explicitly for Generation Z. Literacy programs focused on improving critical thinking and source evaluation skills are believed to be effective in strengthening resilience against disinformation (Komara & Widjaya, 2024). Furthermore, a collaborative approach among digital platforms, educational institutions, and civil society is considered crucial for establishing an early warning system for misleading content and fostering a culture of sustainable information literacy (Anisti et al., 2024). However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends heavily on consistent

implementation and the ability of relevant actors to respond to the ever-evolving dynamics of digital technology.

Based on the research findings, Generation Z's information vulnerability cannot be understood solely as a result of individual limitations, but rather as a complex interaction between technology design, information ecosystems, and digital social structures. Algorithms not only regulate the distribution of information but also shape how Gen Z constructs social and political realities. In this context, Generation Z's Information Vulnerability in the Digital Disinformation Landscape reflects a broader epistemic crisis, where truth competes with emotion, virality, and algorithmic interests. Therefore, mitigation efforts cannot simply focus on users; they must encompass platform design reform, technology regulation, and the reconstruction of digital education so that Generation Z becomes not only consumers of information but also reflective actors in digital democracy.

3. The Impact of Generative AI on Political Participation and the Future of Digital Democracy

Generative AI has the potential to expand political participation by facilitating more inclusive and efficient civic engagement. This technology streamlines administrative processes, such as voter registration, and opens up opportunities for faster and more accessible electronic voting systems (Novelli & Sandri, 2024). Furthermore, generative AI can support the formation of more deliberative public discourse by facilitating dialogue across social groups and presenting political information in formats that citizens more easily understand (Summerfield et al., 2024). Thus, AI serves as a new catalyst for promoting technology-based participatory democracy.

On the other hand, generative AI also poses serious challenges to democratic stability through its ability to generate manipulative content that is difficult to distinguish from reality. The case of the dissemination of fake images related to the arrest of Donald Trump illustrates how deepfakes can misrepresent public perception and potentially interfere with the electoral process (PIEDRA-ALEGRÍA, 2024). Furthermore, the rise of AI-based disinformation is accelerating social polarization and eroding public trust in democratic institutions, ultimately weakening the legitimacy of government (Formosa et al., 2025). Therefore, a robust regulatory framework is needed to ensure the transparency of AI systems and the protection of citizens' rights in the digital space.

Critically, the impact of generative AI on political participation and the future of digital democracy is ambivalent; it can function as both an instrument of political empowerment and a tool of political manipulation. AI not only expands participation but also transforms the meaning of participation itself, from engagement based on political awareness to a rapid response to algorithmic stimuli. Therefore, digital democracy in the AI era cannot be judged solely by the quantity of participation, but also by the quality of citizen deliberation, technological transparency, and critical awareness. Without strengthened governance, AI literacy, and ethical regulation, generative AI has the potential to shift democracy toward a digital simulation controlled by algorithmic logic, rather than the rational will of the public.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the synthesis of research findings, it can be concluded that generative AI has transcended its role as a technical tool in political communication and now functions as a strategic actor reshaping information power relations in digital democracy. AI not only automates the production of political content but also controls the distribution of information through algorithmic mechanisms that influence public perception, amplify emotion-based communication, and blur the lines between factual and manipulative information. This transformation demonstrates that modern democracy no longer relies solely on traditional political institutions and mainstream media but is increasingly shaped by technological systems that operate in an opaque manner.

Furthermore, this research confirms that the impact of generative AI on political participation is ambivalent. On the one hand, AI opens new spaces for broader and more efficient political engagement. However, on the other hand, it also creates risks of political manipulation and the erosion of public trust. The information vulnerability of Generation Z exacerbates this issue, as algorithms not only filter information but also shape the younger generation's construction of social and political reality. Therefore, strengthening AI literacy, adaptive technology regulation, and platform design reform are key prerequisites to ensuring that digital democracy does not evolve into a political simulation driven solely by algorithmic logic.

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