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Social Media and its Impact on the Political Participation of Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the impact of social media on the political participation of Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur. A descriptive correlational research design was used to examine the link between social media usage and political engagement. Data were gathered from 111 Gen Z respondents across various barangays through Google Forms and face-to-face surveys. Simple random sampling ensured equal chances of participation per barangay. An adopted questionnaire was used, and the data were analyzed using the median as the statistical tool. Findings showed that Generation Z in Tagudin "rarely" or "sometimes" used social media and participated in politics only "sometimes." A significant link was found between the most used platform and offline political participation, but no strong connection existed between online engagement and social media usage, frequency, or time spent. The following conclusions were drawn: Facebook was the most commonly used platform, with users spending 1–6 hours daily online. The study recommends that Generation Z should explore other platforms, follow verified sources to avoid misinformation and join offline activities such as forums and campaigns. A balance between online and offline participation can help strengthen their political awareness and involvement.

Keywords: *Social Media, Generation Z, Political Participation.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's generation, social media has become a powerful tool for political participation. Observing the rapid change of the world, social media has impacted people in many ways. It now turned as the source of information through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter. On the other hand, political

candidates nowadays add social media campaigns as one of their political campaign strategies. Today people live on social media, for it has been the hottest promotion tool during elections by the political parties to influence, connect and express their vision and to gain majority from the voters. As the general election for 2025 is approaching and this will be the time to choose leaders who will lead us within the next few years. As a Filipino citizen, one must exercise their right of suffrage and be mindful in their political views. In this modern times, Generation Z are the most active in the social media, they have greater access to information and the ability to promoting their platforms and it is where they express their political beliefs. Social Media may also change the way in which political groups and politicians conduct election campaigns, keep in touch with constituents, and forge alliances with other groups or individuals. It also enables small groups with limited resources to participate in the political process. Nowadays, the internet is playing a significant role in providing pieces of information through the public on political events, engaging its users and encouraging them to get involve in offline political activities. To start with, a tool for political parties to notify the public as a one way communication through the websites is internet. However, new media and technology have changed communication patterns into way communication (Emruli & Baca 2011). Furthermore, this study faces a significant research gap due to the lack of interest in political participation, whether social media engagement translates into meaningful political participation, and if the higher social media results in more political involvement or just passive engagement. This will help the researchers in determining the relationship between social media and Political Participation of Generation Z.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive correlational research design to determine the link between social media usage along with political participation, and see how social media impacts political participation by Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur. Descriptive research design is a powerful tool used by scientists and researchers to gather information about a particular group or phenomenon. Descriptive research helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of a specific issue and provides valuable insights that can inform future studies (Shrutika Sirisilla, 2023). Correlational [research design](#) investigates relationships between [variables](#) without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them (Pritha Bhandari, 2021). This study employs simple random sampling as its sampling technique. This method is appropriate for populations that are highly homogeneous, ensuring that each member has an equal chance of being selected for participation (Bhardwaj, 2019). Simple random sampling is defined as the simplest and most common method of selecting a sample, in which the sample is selected unit by unit, with equal probability of selection for each unit at each draw (Singh, 2003). Similarly, Acharya (2013) states that “in this method, every individual has an equal chance of being selected in the sample from the population.” According to Thomas (2020), simple random sampling guarantees that every individual in the population has an equal probability of being chosen, reducing bias and increasing the reliability of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Social Media Usage of Generation Z

Table 1. Presents the level of social media usage of Generation Z in terms of:

Most Social Media Used

INDICATORS	MEDIAN	DER
1. Facebook	5.00	Always
2. TikTok	4.00	Often
3. YouTube	4.00	Never
4. Instagram	3.00	Sometimes
5. Telegram	2.00	Often
6. Twitter	1.50	Rarely
7. Discord	1.00	Never
8. Snapchat	1.00	Never
OVERALL	2.50	Rarely

Most of the Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur, Facebook is their most social media used and has the highest rating with a 5.00 median value and described as “always”. Among various social media platforms, Facebook has emerged as the most widely used globally. According to recent statistics, Facebook boasts over 2.8 billion monthly active users, making it a dominant force in the social media landscape (Statista, 2023). While Discord and Snapchat got 1.00 as the least median value described as “never”. Discord and Snapchat are popular with certain groups but haven't reached the same broad audience as some other platforms. A study by Kaye et al. (2020), Discord started as a gaming-focused app but has not grown into a versatile space for communities and conversations. While Snapchat, according to research by Smith (2021), its growth has slowed as people prefer platforms with more features. The findings implies that Generation Z always used Facebook as their most used social media platform. Generation Z uses this platform not just

for fun but also to connect with others and express themselves. In contrast, Snapchat and Discord have the least median value. These are described as never used, reflecting that Generation Z is lack of familiarity with this platform.

Table 2. Presents the level of social media usage of Generation Z in terms of:

Frequency of Social Media Usage

INDICATORS	MEDIAN	DER
1. Several times a day	4.00	Often
2. Every hour of the day	4.00	Often
3. About once a day	3.00	Sometimes
4. A few times a week	2.00	Rarely
5. A few times a month	2.00	Rarely
OVERALL	3.00	Sometimes

It is seen in Table 2, the indicators "several times a day" and "Every hour a day" got the highest rating of 4.00 median value and described as often. The frequency of social media used among Generation Z highlights their integration of digital communication into daily life, shaping their social interactions, identity formation, and engagement with broader societal issues. A study conducted by Twenge et al. (2019) indicates that social media usage within Generation Z is highly prevalent and is a significant part of their everyday routines. The indicators "a few times a week" and "a few times a month" got the least median rating of 2.00 and were described as rarely. According to recent studies, indicators such as "a few times a week" and "a few times a month" have been identified as having the least frequency of social media usage, suggesting that these frequencies may not significantly contribute to the perceived benefits or drawbacks of social media engagement (Smith, 2022). The findings implies that Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur uses social media several times a day or every hour, which is described as often. Generation Z, might want to stay updated, connect with friends, or be entertained. In contrast, other Generation Z individuals in the area use social media only a few times a week or a few times a month, which is described as rarely, maybe because they are busy, have other interests, or don't feel the need to be online all the time. This shows that not all Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur have the same habits or reasons for using social media.

Table 3. Presents the level of social media usage of Generation Z in terms of:

Amount of Time Spent on Social Media

INDICATORS	MEDIAN	DER
1.1-2 hours	3.00	Sometimes
2.3-4 hours	3.00	Sometimes
3.5-6 hours	3.00	Sometimes
4.7-10 hours	2.00	Rarely
5.11 hours or more	2.00	Rarely
OVERALL	3.00	Sometimes

It is seen in Table 3, the indicators "1-2 hours", "3-4 hours", and "5-6 hours" got the highest rating of 3.00 median value and described as sometimes. Studies show how much time people spend on these platforms and their effects. Studies show that spending 1-2 hours on social media provides a balanced experience, allowing users to engage without major negative impacts on mental health (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). Research indicates that Generation Z spends an average of 3 to 4 hours per day on social media (Pew Research Center, 2019). This extensive use is attributed to the accessibility of smartphones and the desire for social interaction and validation. According to reports, Generation Z members use these apps for five to six hours every day on average (Twenge et al., 2018). The indicators "7-10 hours" and "11 hours or more" had the least median value of 2.00, which is described as rarely. A study by Junco (2012) revealed that excessive social media use negatively affects Generation Z, as time spent online browsing social media. The findings implies that Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur some Generation Z members spent 1-2, 3-4, or 5-6 hours on social media, because they might be using it for fun, chatting with friends, or watching videos. While others rarely spent 7-11 hours or more on social media. Maybe because they have other things to do, like school, work, or hobbies. This shows that how much time Gen Z spends on social media depends on their lifestyle, interests, and how important social media is to them.

Level of Political Participation of Generation Z

Table 4 presents the level of political participation of Generation Z in terms of:

Online Political Engagement

INDICATORS		DER
1. I share political news and information on social media.	3.00	Sometimes
2. I often read political content on social media.	3.00	Sometimes
3. I used social media to access political news articles.	3.00	Sometimes
4. I often watch political news on social media.	3.00	Sometimes
5. I follow politicians or political pages.	3.00	Sometimes
6. I utilized social media for campaign awareness and responsible voting.	3.00	Rarely
6. I used social media to attend political meetings.	2.00	Rarely
7. I comment on political news or information on social media.	2.00	Sometimes
8. I joined groups on social media for more information about politics.	2.00	Rarely
9. I regularly post on social media about politics.	2.00	Rarely
OVERALL	3.00	Sometimes

It is seen in Table 4, the indicators “I share political news and information on social media”, “I often read political contents on social media”, “I used social media to access political news articles”, “I often watch political news on social media”, “I follow politicians or political pages”, and “I utilized social media for campaign awareness and responsible voting” got the highest rating of 3.00 median value and described as sometimes. This aligns with the findings of Pew Research Center (2020), which reported that a significant portion of Generation Z actively engages with political content online, often sharing news articles and updates related to political events. Followed by the indicators, “I used social media to attend political meeting”, “I comment on political news or information on social media”, “I joined groups on social media for more information about politics”, and “I regularly post on social media about politics”, got the least median value of 2.00 and described as rarely. This finding implies that the Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur only sometimes interacts with political content on social media. This could mean they are interested in politics but not all the time. Maybe they only pay attention when something important happens or when it affects them directly. It shows that while they are aware of political issues, they don’t always make it a big part of their social media use.

Table 5 presents the level of political participation of Generation Z in terms of:

Offline Political Engagement

INDICATORS		DER
1. I vote during elections.	5.00	Always
2. I attend public forums on barangay and municipal ordinances.	3.00	Sometimes
3. Sharing my views about the government to my peers and in school.	3.00	Rarely
4. Campaign actively for my chosen candidate during elections.	2.00	Sometimes
5. I perform a leadership role in an organization.	2.00	Rarely
OVERALL	3.00	Sometimes

It is seen in Table 5, the indicator “I vote during election” got the highest median value with a 5.00 and described as always. According to a study by Pew Research Center (2020), this generation is characterized by a strong sense of social responsibility and activism, which influences their voting behavior. Followed by “Campaign actively for my chosen candidate during elections” and “I perform a leadership role in an organization” got the least median value of 2.00 and described as rarely. A report by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), (2023), found that many young people believe in their political power but feel they lack the necessary support and opportunities to participate effectively. The report highlights that a significant number of youth do not feel well-informed or qualified to engage in political life, which can lead to decreased participation. Lack of interest in the subject is one factor for this low level of youth involvement in politics. This finding implies that as Generation Z continues to mature, their voting patterns and political preferences will likely shape future elections. Also, only gets involved in political activities in real life sometimes. This could mean they care about certain issues but don’t always take action. They might be busy, unsure how to get involved, or only participate when something matters to them. It shows they have some interest in politics, but it's not a regular part of their everyday lives.

Significant Relationship Between Social Media and the Political Participation of Generation Z

Table 6 presents the significant relationship between social media and the political participation of Generation Z.

Political Engagement	Social Media		
	Most Social Media Used	Frequency of Social Media Usage	Amount of Time Spent on Social Media
Online	0.166	- 0.077	0.062
Offline	0.187*	- 0.008	0.124

Legend: * $p < .05$ Significant

It is seen in Table 6, that there is a significant relationship between offline political engagement and most social media used, with p-value equal to 0.187 at .05 level of significant. This finding implies that there is a significant relationship between offline political engagement and most social media used because Generation Z, who are active in politics offline, are also active on social media. So, the more someone is involved offline, the more likely they are to use social media as a tool to support their political actions. Also, it is indicated in the table that there is no significant relationship between online political engagement and most used social media with p-value equal to 0.166, frequency of social media usage with p-value equal to -0.77, and amount of time spent on social media with p-value equal to 0.062. Furthermore, there is no significant relationship between offline political engagement and frequency of social media usage with p-value of -0.008 and amount of time spent on social media with p-value equal to 0.124. This finding implies that just because Generation Z is on social media a lot doesn't mean they care about politics or get involved in it online. Many people use social media just to watch videos, chat with friends, or scroll for fun not for political stuff. Also, the platform they use most might not be focused on politics. So, being online often doesn't always lead to online political engagement. Lastly, spending a lot of time on social media doesn't mean Generation Z is politically active in real life. Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur could be very involved in politics offline but not use social media much at all.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The following conclusions of the researcher are concluded based on the findings of the study: 1) Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur used social media very often, while some used it less frequently. The majority spend 1 to 6 hours a day on social media, but only a few go beyond that. Facebook emerged as the most used social media platform, in contrast Twitter, Snapchat and Discord are described as never used, reflecting that Generation Z is lack of familiarity in this platform. Hence, Facebook is still the most popular platform among Generation Z. 2) Generation Z in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur are sometimes engaged in offline and online political engagement. These findings suggests that while Generation Z are active in social media platforms, they are not active in political involvements. 3) The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between frequency of social media and amount time spent on social media both online and political engagement. However, there is a significant relationship in the variable most used social media in offline political engagement. This implies that the impact of social media in political participation of Generation Z is still minimum in terms of political engagement.

Based on the conclusions, the following are hereby recommended: 1) Generation Z should explore other social media platforms beyond Facebook and analyze their influence on political participation and on the social media usage, Generation Z should engage more and should reflect on how much time they spent on social media. 2) In an online political engagement, Generation Z should follow pages that is verified to ensure accurate information and avoid misinformation that could influence their political beliefs. Meanwhile in offline political engagement, Generation Z should engage more in public forums, engage themselves in campaigning and participate in leadership and experience real world political participation, also share their political views and be open because their views matter the most. 2) Generation Z should engage both in offline and online political engagement for this could help in their political views and boost their knowledge on politics.

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