

TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY: A STUDY ON GENERATION Z IN AUSTRALIA INDONESIA YOUTH ASSOCIATION (AIYA) YOGYAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

Murals are often a medium for conveying people's aspirations. However, most people think that murals are just graffiti on the wall with no meaning. In this case, mural artists play a role in voicing aspirations, criticism, ideas and things that are bothering society. Because murals do not only focus on the beauty of the mural artwork, but also have meaning and messages. Masjo, as a mural artist, sees phenomena around him that he uses as topics for murals. As happened some time ago, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a real impact on society. Masjo sees this phenomenon as sad. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, using iconography and iconology semiotics to obtain markers of meaning contained in mural images. So that this research can explain or describe Masjo's mural work in detail. The results of this research are the meaning of artistic expression and messages of social criticism in Masjo's mural entitled 'Just stay at home'. The meaning of artistic expression in mural works tells how to survive in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. The social criticism in the mural discusses the role of the government which only advises people to stay at home, while the government does not provide guarantees for people's lives.

KEYWORDS

TikTok Social Media; Generation Z; Political Awareness; Religious Tolerance



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the countries that practices a democratic system in the administration of power based on the will of the people (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). This is as written in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 1 paragraph 2 which states that "State sovereignty is in the hands of the people and is carried out in accordance with the constitution." General elections or

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elections are one of the democratic systems that practice a form of political decision-making sourced from the will of the people. Elections are a means of people's sovereignty to elect members of the House of Representatives, members of the House of Representatives, the President and Vice President, and to elect members of the House of Representatives, which are carried out directly, publicly, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

Entering 2024, the democratic process will be held to elect the President and Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2024-2029 period. Facing this political situation, political parties carry their best candidates and determine unique and diverse campaign strategies. Referring to Election Law number 7 of 2017 which states that political parties or coalitions of political parties can register prospective candidate pairs, namely having fulfilled the provisions of 20% of seats in the House of Representatives or 25% of valid votes nationally (Umum, 2023). Reporting from the General Election Commission (KPU) website, the KPU has determined three pairs of presidential and vice presidential candidates in the 2024 election, namely Anies Rasyid Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD.

One of the categories of voter groups that is very interesting to study is young voters, namely Generation Z or Gen Z (El Qudsi & Syamtar, 2020). Generation Z is a term for the generation born in the range of 2000 to 2012, or the age of 12 to 24 years (Mahardhika et al., 2021). Based on the results of the DPT recapitulation, the voter group from Generation Z is 46,800,161 voters or as much as 22.85% of the total voters in the 2024 election. However, based on a CSIS survey, it is known that the interest of youth or Gen Z to participate in politics is very low. The complex nature of politics makes the younger generation, especially Generation Z, not interested in the world of politics, government actions and behaviors that are considered non-transparent make the level of trust of the younger generation in politics decrease (Nastiti, 2023).

The election process is inseparable from the campaign practices carried out by each candidate pair. According to McGregor (2020), the campaign encourages public reflection back to itself and provides information for communication and strategic decisions of the campaign. In Indonesia, a political campaign means a strategy that is commonly used by political parties or election participants to be able to promote messages, visions and missions, and convey policy directions (Amrurobbi, 2021).

According to Brändle (2022), the implementation of campaigns by becoming digital activists is the result of one of the efforts of existing political and social movements to use social media sites that have the goal of progressive, racist, or anti-systemic protests. Social media can be an effective medium in increasing the knowledge, understanding, and even trust of Generation Z in fostering political awareness and their participation in current political issues (Pratama et al., 2024).

The presence of social media, which has been firmly attached to modern society today, serves as a platform for mobilizing political awareness, debates, and political advertisements, so that it can help the public in fostering political awareness and making the right choice between candidates and candidates (Ekoh

& Elizabeth, 2021). According to Gentina in the book *The New Generation Z in Asia: Dynamics, Differences, Digitalisation* mentions that some of the distinctive characteristics of Generation Z who are digital *natives*, meaning that the generation of original digital products has the ability in the field of technology and does not need to adapt to learn every existing technological development, including the absorption of political content through social media.

Contemporary studies on the role of social media on political awareness and political participation, mostly focus on social media as a preference for information sources and can influence voter participation in Indonesia. For example, political research of the younger generation through social media instruments that turns out to be able to stimulate youth to enter the world of politics (Alamri et al., 2023). The research found that social media can meet the cognitive, personal, integrative, affective, and even tension release motives that millennials have when looking for political information (Audina & Wahyutama, 2023). Some argue that TikTok's social media has changed the way the younger generation accesses and disseminates political information by being more likely to rely on social media fully than conventional media (Albarzand et al., 2024).

This reflects a significant lack of attention to the important role of social media, especially TikTok, which is closely related to the daily life of Generation Z as young voters in elections which also have a great influence on democracy in Indonesia. In addition, the effectiveness of using social media as a political campaign medium from various perspectives such as the demographics of the target audience, prospective young voters in the future, as well as the views of people who are not voters in Indonesia are important to know. This research seeks to overcome this void by presenting findings on the role of TikTok social media as a political campaign medium in building and even increasing Gen Z political awareness, Gen Z's perception of Australian citizenship towards the political campaign system in Indonesia, and issues related to religious tolerance which are important elements in increasing political awareness.

As part of and representative of Generation Z, AIYA (Australia-Indonesia Youth Association) Yogyakarta chapter is the subject of this research based on its role as a strategic forum for young people, especially Generation Z. AIYA is a *non-governmental* organization that aims to connect Indonesian and Australian youth in accommodating various initiatives to deepen understanding of bilateral relations, build relationships, cross-cultural engagement, as well as creating a space for discussion on relevant current issues (AIYA, 2024). AIYA also has characteristics that are familiar with digital technology and social media, as a source of information and a medium of self-expression.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a type of qualitative research with an in-depth interview data collection method to explore the role of TikTok social media in shaping the political awareness of Generation Z, especially among members of the Australia Indonesia Youth Association (AIYA) Yogyakarta. Qualitative research is research that produces data in the form of written or oral words that reflect the opinions and

behaviors of the observed people (Moleong, 2017). Meanwhile, an *in-depth interview* is an interview process that is conducted directly face-to-face between the interviewer and the respondent to dig up or reveal more in-depth and personal data (Poerwandari & Berliana, 2022).

This method was chosen to explore a deep understanding of the political experiences, views, and perceptions of AIYA Yogyakarta members. In addition, this approach is also to examine specific phenomena in a broader socio-cultural context, especially regarding how social media mediates the cross-cultural political views of AIYA Yogyakarta members who include Indonesians and Australians. Critical and political theories of media economy can analyze and reveal how exploitation, domination, commodification, and ideology interact with social communication media (Fuchs, 2021).

Interviews are held With ask several questions to respondents in a span of 30 to 45 minutes face-to-face or online with *Google Meet*.

Table 1. Research respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Man	1	16.5
Woman	5	83.5
Total	6	100
Age		
20	2	33.5
21	2	33.5
22	1	16.5
24	1	16.5
Total	6	100
Citizenship		
Indonesia	3	50
Australia	3	50
Total	6	100
Program Studi		
Hukum/Law	1	16.666
International Relations	1	16.666
Law and International Relation (Double Degree)	1	16.666
Environmental Science	1	16.666
Indonesian Studies and Politics and International Relation (Double Degree)	1	16.666
Psychology	1	16.666
Total	6	100
Positions at AIYA		
President 2024	1	16.666
President 2023	1	16.666
Event Officer	1	16.666
Education Officer	1	16.666
Socio-Cultural Event Officer	1	16.666

Graphic Designer	1	16.666
Total	6	100
University Origin		
Gadjah Mada University	1	16.666
Veteran National Development University of Yogyakarta	1	16.666
Islamic University of Indonesia	1	16.666
Wollongong University	1	16.666
Deakin University	1	16.666
Melbourne University	1	16.666
Total	6	100

Based on the data that has been collected in Table 1. It can be seen that the resource persons in this study on average have educational backgrounds relevant to political studies, international relations, and socio-cultural studies. This shows a strong relationship between the academic expertise of the interviewees and the focus of this research, which is centered on the political consciousness of Generation Z. Various study programs, such as psychology and environmental science, also provide a cross-disciplinary perspective that can help understand how TikTok social media can be used to shape political awareness and build cross-cultural narratives especially in Generation Z.

In addition, the position of resource persons at AIYA Yogyakarta shows that they are actively involved in organizational activities. Those who hold positions such as *President*, *Event Officer*, and *Education Officer* show that they are the main drivers in this organization. Coming from leading universities in Indonesia and Australia, these speakers are able to bring different insights based on the academic and social experiences of each individual. The opportunity to compare views between Indonesia and Australia, especially related to the response to political content spread on TikTok, is presented with various points of view. So this emphasizes the relevance of resource persons in analyzing cross-cultural and digital interactions to form political awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of TikTok in the Formation of Political Awareness of Generation Z

TikTok is becoming one of the most popular social media platforms today because it offers different types of content to share, including creativity, video challenges, *lipsync*, songs, dancing, singing, education, and promotion (Dewa & Safitri, 2021). In Indonesia, the majority of TikTok users are generations Y and Z, of which Gen Z is between 12 and 24 years old (Mahardhika et al., 2021).

Based on data released in October 2023 by the We Are Social site – Hootsuite – an online media content management service site that connects with various social networking sites in the United States –, there are 106.52 million active users of social media, especially TikTok. This number makes Indonesia the country with the 2nd most TikTok users in the world. Social media users in Indonesia have an average duration of 3 hours and 17 minutes every day. The development of

technology, especially through social media such as TikTok, reflects that technology can affect the change of self-attitude of its own users and others (Villanueva et al., 2017). This is the basis for the importance of the role of social media, especially TikTok, in forming political awareness of Generation Z as *digital natives*.

TikTok's social media presents content in the form of short videos and *photo slides* with various topics and in accordance with current issues and references from the account owner. This is supported by TikTok's social media which has *an FYP (For You Page) feature*, which is a collection of TikTok short videos that appear on the homepage or *TikTok timeline* (TikTok, 2024). *TikTok Indonesia Newsroom* also explained that a content can *be fyp* by using *hashtags* for certain issues, *relatable content*, and the more people who like and comment on the content, the more viral or widespread the video will be. Therefore, political issues have become a trending topic on TikTok since 2023 but are still under TikTok's supervision with the classification of Government, Politician, and Political Party Accounts (GPPPA) to set aside dangerous misinformation and TikTok also ensures that their platform continues to provide positive and open information (Vijay & Gekker, 2021).

As a popular platform preferred by Gen Z to find entertainment, references, and sources of information, it is not uncommon for TikTok to also be one of the platforms for the campaign process of several political parties and even the 2024 presidential candidate pair (Alam, 2021). Although the initial focus of the TikTok company was not to develop this application as a medium of political communication and other types of campaigns related to politics, TikTok has successfully played a role in politics in almost all countries in the world, especially in the field of ideology development, political activism, and *internet trolls* (Pahira et al., 2021).

Based on data found in a study conducted on Generation Z who are members of the Australia-Indonesia Youth Association (AIYA) Yogyakarta, researchers found that the role of TikTok has a significant impact in influencing the political awareness of Generation Z. Researchers also see that Generation Z intensely access TikTok social media every day, there are even some Gen Z who access TikTok for more than 4 hours per day. Gen Z revealed that there are political issues that they often find on their *fyp page*, including the issue of the 2024 election, the facts of each pair of 2024 presidential candidates, criminal cases, and social issues.

Political content that we can find through TikTok social media, including content from the accounts of Indonesian presidential and vice presidential candidates as well as from related political parties, for example @aniesbaswedan, @amuhaiminiskandar, @gibran_rakabuming, @ganjar_pranowo, @mohmahfudmdofficial, @partaigerindra, and @dpppdiperjuangan. The content of these accounts discusses and responds to various political, governmental, social, criminal cases, and current issues that are happening. Therefore, social media, especially TikTok, has an important value as a means to provide knowledge and build individual and group awareness of political values, and can increase the participation of the younger generation, especially Generation Z, in political aspects in Indonesia (Cedrún & Civilá, 2024).

The results of the interview show that generation Z in AIYA Yogyakarta uses TikTok as one of the initial media to understand current issues, including political issues. SNH stated that Gen Z began to be interested in politics through the campaigns of presidential candidates who used TikTok with content formats relevant to Gen Z's interests were able to build high curiosity, for example the use of the concept of *TikTok live* campaigns that discussed K-Pop, *jedag-jedug* music, and even candidates who have a *second account*.

On the other hand, RCA highlighted the weakness of TikTok as a campaign medium, namely the potential for politicization of content and simplification of information at the expense of the depth of political analysis. Every social media can increase digital literacy related to knowledge, including in the field of politics, but users will always have difficulty in choosing information that is proven to be true (Pratama et al., 2024). Although RCA also acknowledged TikTok's role in raising political awareness, Gen Z must still rely on discussions and literature studies as an addition to strengthen their political understanding.

Based on the results of interviews and data found, TikTok also took a role in shaping the political awareness of Generation Z in the early stages. With the *For You Page (FYP)* feature, TikTok presents political content in an interesting way such as facts about presidential candidate pairs, 2024 election issues, and other social issues that make it an initial research material for Gen Z to deepen political understanding and awareness. AIYA Yogyakarta members not only use TikTok as a means of entertainment and information consumption, but also as a medium to identify and evaluate campaign strategies. TikTok's successful role in igniting Gen Z's political awareness must remain vigilant to avoid information manipulation that can unfairly influence political views.

Generation Z AIYA Yogyakarta's Attitude Towards Political Campaigns on TikTok

Generation Z has a special view of politics and has the political awareness to comment on something that is not in accordance with their understanding (Damsar, 2019). The existence of social media provides Gen Z with an interesting opportunity as young voters to seek information and empower themselves in their own way to actively participate in politics (Chang, 2019). In line with the findings that Gen Z has made TikTok social media the main source of information in seeking information, Gen Z has an interest in politics because its content has touched their TikTok *fyp*. Through political issues in TikTok content uploads, Gen Z has knowledge and understanding of how they should take a stance in responding to a political issue, as well as how they participate in politics.

Gen Z is able to explain the extent of their knowledge of politics, which is always synonymous with government power and policies. This is in line with political literacy which is something that is always related to power by being intended to regulate the course of the nation's life (Mahmud et al., 2019). This opinion strengthens the definition of politics from the point of view of Gen Z, which basically puts forward the definition based on the political content they often encounter through the social media TikTok.

AIYA Yogyakarta is a *non-governmental organization* that has the principle of remaining neutral in political issues, so this organization does not explicitly convey or upload political opinions. As a cross-cultural organization, AIYA focuses more on having an inclusive discussion space to understand social and political issues without taking the position of a participant. However, despite this, political awareness among AIYA Yogyakarta members, especially Generation Z in Indonesia, continues to grow.

TikTok as one of the media widely used by AIYA Yogyakarta members also contributes to shaping this political awareness, although it is more at the individual level. With this approach, AIYA Yogyakarta has succeeded in creating an environment that supports the exploration of knowledge, including politics, so that there is still organizational neutrality while encouraging members to be able to understand and discuss various issues critically, including political issues. However, critical attitudes are the main character of Generation Z in AIYA Yogyakarta even in the midst of the rise of content that is very attention-grabbing and can increase the political awareness of Gen Z. AR, for example, chooses to follow political campaign information without following the official accounts of certain candidates or political parties in order to maintain neutrality.

In contrast to RCA, which states that it is undeniable that TikTok social media can present a lot of political content with campaign goals and so on that can affect how Gen Z votes, Gen Z's willingness to vote or not, and even who Gen Z chooses in elections. RCA also explained his concerns regarding all political content spread on TikTok which can often be politicized, so that when viewed through political glasses, the content is seen in the same political context in general, so he chose to give a neutral attitude and further deepen his information and knowledge related to politics from various media, books, and discussion rooms.

Generation Z at AIYA Yogyakarta shows a critical and selective attitude towards political campaigns on TikTok by making this platform their initial source of relevant and interesting political information. They carefully observed the creative concept of each presidential pair's political campaign. On the other hand, they maintain neutrality while continuing to deepen their understanding of politics through various other sources of supporting information such as books and discussion rooms. TikTok is not only a campaign medium, but also a reflection space for Gen Z to assess the vision, mission, and political strategy of presidential candidates (Soyudoğan & Abdalli, 2023), but remain wary of the potential for content politicization that can influence Gen Z's political views to become biased.

Generation Z Political Awareness in AIYA Yogyakarta Through TikTok

The basic principle of political knowledge comes from the important role of social media in informing the public about the political conditions of citizens (Zempi et al., 2023). The political knowledge of Generation Z in AIYA Yogyakarta is obtained through TikTok social media and their political awareness is also influenced by interactions with digital media, especially TikTok. They not only passively receive information, but also actively seek and verify developing political issues. In addition, Gen Z's political awareness in AIYA Yogyakarta is also influenced by cross-cultural interactions between countries. The presence of

Australian members provides another perspective that also enriches political discussions between members at AIYA Yogyakarta.

The results of the interviews show that Generation Z members at AIYA Yogyakarta make TikTok not only function as a source of political information, but also as a discussion space that forms the political awareness of Generation Z. SNH and AR stated that TikTok is very provocative for Gen Z to be interested and support one candidate with content that can strengthen their reasons, deepen their knowledge and be able to decide to vote for a candidate according to the political views of each TikTok user.

However, this is contrary to RCA's opinion which states that TikTok can provide a political spark that can affect a person's political views and awareness, but not significantly. RCA said TikTok is a double-edged sword because the TikTok format is in the form of short videos whose information must be trimmed at the expense of the quality of the information conveyed, so that the political depth conveyed is often lost and used by irresponsible parties to spread fake news, inaccurate, or outdated thoughts.

Gen Z's political awareness in AIYA Yogyakarta is influenced by cross-cultural interactions between countries. The presence of Australian members provides another perspective that also enriches political discussions between members at AIYA Yogyakarta. This shows that transnational interactions can expand the spread of nationalist ideas, political discourse, and discussions related to global issues (Ernada et al., 2024).

Generation Z basically not only receives information from TikTok passively, but actively seeks and verifies developing political issues. SNH revealed, in terms of psychology, Gen Z tends to look for initial information through TikTok as the closest social media to daily life rather than looking for information in conventional media or text-based platforms. However, Gen Z still uses critical and analytical skills to assess the credibility of information sources to ensure that the information consumed is true, accurate, and relevant. This shows that in the context of political awareness, Gen Z has great potential in maintaining democratic integrity through information verification activities (Rebori, 2019).

The AR explained that TikTok's algorithm, through the *For You Page (FYP) feature, hashtags, search*, and even *political content creators* play an important role in shaping the political awareness of Generation Z. This platform facilitates self-expression and sharing political ideas through creative, interactive, and interesting content that is able to spark the curiosity of Gen Z. As a result, TikTok not only increases the political awareness of Gen Z, but also encourage political participation, such as attending debates and related discussion rooms.

The political awareness of Generation Z in AIYA Yogyakarta is greatly influenced by the use of TikTok as a source of initial information and a space for political discussion. The platform allows Gen Z to actively search, verify, and analyze evolving political issues, especially through creative and interactive campaign content. Although some members such as RCA cautioned that TikTok's format sacrificed depth of information, TikTok still encouraged Gen Z to deepen their understanding and participate in political activities. Supported by cross-

cultural interaction with Australian members, it also enriches perspectives on global and national issues.

Perceptions of Australian Members Towards the Campaign System in Indonesia

The perception of Australian members who are members of the AIYA Yogyakarta organization towards the political campaign system in Indonesia is an interesting topic to discuss, given the complex bilateral relationship between the two countries. This relationship is influenced by a long history, including Australia's support for Indonesia's independence struggle in the early republican period and various moments of tension due to political differences and foreign policies implemented by the two countries (Pangesti & Ribawati, 2024).

According to Pangesti & Ribawati (2024) from a psycho-historical perspective that shapes Australians' view of political stability, Indonesia is seen as a country with potential risks to regional security, including the East Timor conflict, Bali bomb terror, illegal drugs, telephone tapping, and border violations of Australian customs ships. In addition, psycho-cultural perceptions also play an important role in the perspective of Australians who have stereotypical views of Indonesian culture that are significantly different from the culture of most white Australians (Bhakti, 1996).

However, AIYA members who are Australian citizens who are directly involved with the Indonesian community in Yogyakarta show a more balanced and open perspective. As revealed by IL, cross-cultural interaction that occurs through discussions and collaborations between members, allows them to see Indonesia not only from the perspective of the media but also from the interaction between cultures which enriches Australian members' understanding of social, cultural, educational, and also some political knowledge even though AIYA does not move as an organization with a political focus.

Given that social media plays an important role in shaping public perception, including negative news about Indonesia often dominates media coverage in Australia, creating an unbalanced picture of political and social conditions in Indonesia (Pangesti & Ribawati, 2024).

In the context of political campaigns, AIYA members who are Australian citizens show a sense of curiosity as well as concern for political issues in Indonesia, especially those raised on social media TikTok. From the results of interviews with interviewees, it is known that campaigns on TikTok often highlight political content wrapped in entertainment elements rather than substance, such as prioritizing the candidate's personality rather than the policies or vision and mission of the presidential candidates, even though this approach is considered effective in attracting the attention of Generation Z.

The campaign approach model has been criticized, Australian members at AIYA Yogyakarta continue to acknowledge the positive potential of social media, especially TikTok, in reaching Gen Z who are difficult to reach through conventional media such as radio or newspapers. MW emphasized that

campaigning using social media by targeting a younger demographic is a smart strategy because it will get results that are in accordance with the plan. This can increase political awareness among Gen Z and help them to be more involved in the democratic process.

As for IL and LMK, both agreed that packaging political content with creativity and relevance to Gen Z's daily lives can be an effective way to become more sensitive to developing political issues and motivate Gen Z to participate in elections. On the other hand, MW noted that in Australia, this approach to social media-based campaigns has not had as much influence as in Indonesia, where campaigns are more often carried out through conventional media such as TV, newspapers, and the like.

MW and IL are in line with the perception that Indonesia has successfully campaigned through social media and made Gen Z active in the political realm, but in line with this, there are several aspects of democracy such as nepotism, information neutrality, and political integrity showing signs of decline. IL emphasized the importance of strict scrutiny of practices that can undermine democracy, while MW highlighted the need for more in-depth political education for the younger generation, the introduction of critical thinking, and a sense of neutrality. Both emphasized that although the challenges of democracy always exist, campaign innovation through TikTok shows great potential in fostering political awareness of Generation Z, as well as being an inspiration for campaign strategies for other countries to adapt similar approaches.

However, it should be noted that the practice of democracy in Indonesia and Australia shows fundamental differences in the history of development, government structure, and the level of political participation of their citizens. Reporting from the Australian Embassy in Indonesia, the campaign process in Australia takes place within the framework of a strictly regulated parliamentary democracy to ensure fairness and transparency with the supervision of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) (Roberts & Habir, 2015).

Overall, AIYA Yogyakarta members with Australian citizenship see the political campaign system in Indonesia as a reflection of unique social and cultural dynamics. Although there is criticism of sensational elements and the potential for the dissemination of inaccurate information through the most widely used social media of Gen Z, namely TikTok. They also appreciated the creativity and active involvement of the younger generation in Indonesian politics. This perspective underscores the importance of cross-cultural dialogue in strengthening a deeper understanding of democracy and political practice between countries.

Australia's Views on Religious Tolerance in the Political Context in Indonesia

Religious tolerance is one of the important indicators in assessing the quality of democracy (Rahman et al., 2024). In this context, Australia pays great attention to the issue of religious tolerance in Indonesia, considering Indonesia's position as the largest democracy in Southeast Asia with a very diverse society in religion and culture (Rasyid et al., 2020). Religious tolerance is not only about religious diversity, but also how this diversity can be managed properly through respecting Human Rights (HAM), non-violence, and fostering a nationalist sense of the state

(Kurniasih et al., 2022). This view underlines the importance of Indonesia's democratic stability by maintaining the stability of religious tolerance.

As for Australia as a country with a strong tradition of multiculturalism, the existence of a policy of multiculturalism requires the government and other institutions to encourage pluralism through public policy in a variety of ways, such as accommodating cultural or religious minority practices, allowing certain styles of dress in school settings, or providing public funding for certain racial, ethnic, and religious minorities (Wiryaningtyas, 2020).

Based on the results of interviews with AIYA Yogyakarta members who are Australian citizens, IL stated that Australians' views on Indonesia reflect expectations for religious practices and even a more inclusive democracy. By utilizing social media such as TikTok, people can be encouraged to be more open to interfaith dialogue and political views so as to support the creation of a more democratic public space considering that Indonesia has freedom of religion in accordance with the six recognized religions and provides space for adherents of certain faiths, such as groups of believers in accordance with the Administration and Population Law (Adminder) number 24 of 2013.

Freedom of religion is the inherent right of each individual to choose, practice, and change their religion or belief without any pressure or discrimination from any party (Rustam & CinthiaTarigan, 2021). Bashel & Fauzan (2024) explains that this definition is in line with the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (DUHAM) which states that freedom of religion is a fundamental right that must be safeguarded by every country that upholds human rights values. In 2023, Indonesia's democracy index will get a score of 79.51 (BPS, 2024), although this point is not ideal, there is a tendency to a positive trend regarding the implementation of human rights.

Political awareness actually includes not only an understanding of the government system, but also an appreciation for diversity and differences that are maintained (Utami et al., 2024). Political awareness among the public, especially Generation Z, is the foundation for a healthy democracy based on a deep understanding of democratic principles, including respect for human rights such as freedom of religion, opinion, and expression (Tumbol et al., 2017).

Based on an interview with LMK, TikTok as a very popular social media platform among Gen Z also plays an important role in disseminating information, not only about the presidential candidates' campaigns but also related to issues of religious tolerance, human rights, and other social issues that are easily accessible to Generation Z. While MW highlighted the big differences between Gen Z in Australia who are generally not interested in religious content, They did not grow up to be religious. However, MW also observes that Gen Z in Indonesia is still very religious and involves their religious beliefs to determine how they view and approach the world of politics.

Ultimately, religious tolerance as part of the spirit of pluralism, the peaceful existence of people with various political, religious, or ethnic identity ideas (Gorokhovskaia et al., 2023), is part of the foundation of Human Rights (HAM) which is one of the key elements in measuring the quality of a country's democracy. The growing political awareness among Generation Z through social media such as

TikTok shows great potential to strengthen democracy in Indonesia. With Australia's support and progressive views, collaboration between the two countries can create a more inclusive, adaptive and sustainable model of democracy.

CONCLUSION

Political campaigns using TikTok's social media to reach young voters are an effective strategy in igniting the political awareness of Generation Z. As for Australians' point of view, political campaigns in Indonesia through TikTok are considered an innovative approach although this strategy should be more emphasized on substance and quality verified information, rather than just entertainment or sensations that sell a candidate's personality. The political awareness that arises among Generation Z is based on a deep understanding of democratic principles, including respect for human rights such as freedom of religion, opinion, and expression. Religious tolerance is not only about religious diversity, but also how this diversity can be managed properly through respect for Human Rights (HAM), non-violence, and fostering a nationalist sense of the state. Based on the results of the observations above, it can be said that Gen Z is not as apolitical as many parties, both academics and political observers. They have a flexible perspective on politics, as long as information can be obtained from various platforms. TikTok is not the main medium to grow and increase political awareness, because Gen Z is not just a *Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)* to follow political issues that only passively receive information, but actively seek and verify political issues that develop.

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