The Effect of Tiktok Use on Political Literacy and Political Participation of Student State High School Mumbulsari in the 2024 Regional Head Elections 2024

Damar Asmorojati[1], Mukhamad Murdiono[1], A. Rizal[2]

[1]Faculty of Social Sciences, Law, and Political Science, Yogyakarta State University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[2]Faculty of Education and Literature, Bosowa University, Makassar, Indonesia
Corresponding author email: damarasmorojati.2023@student.uny.ac.id*

Article Info

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the utilisation of the social media platform TikTok in enhancing political literacy among students at SMA Negeri Mumbulsari. The research questions focus on how the use of TikTok influences students' political understanding and to what extent their political participation changes after accessing political content on the platform. The method employed is quantitative with an ex post facto approach, involving a sample of 109 Year 12 students. The theoretical framework underpinning this research comprises theories of political literacy and political participation within the context of social media. The findings indicate that TikTok plays a significant role in enhancing students' political awareness, as demonstrated by the notable increase in their interaction and participation in political discussions. In conclusion, TikTok can serve as an effective political education tool for the younger generation if utilised appropriately.

INTRODUCTION

Social media does not merely function as a tool for communication, but is also frequently used as a medium for conveying political messages (Daşlı, 2019). According to Rosadi, Darmawan, and Anggraeni (2020), social media can be utilised as an instrument for delivering political messages to the public. Through easy access to information and the presentation of engaging and creative content, political messages can be communicated effectively via social media (Kulachai et al., 2024). This is evident in the widespread political campaigns conducted on social media in the lead-up to general elections, as well as the circulation of criticisms regarding government policies and the dissemination of politically related issues (Tapsell, 2021). The delivery of political messages through social media serves as a means of political education for the public, aimed at enhancing their political literacy (Kahne et al., 2012) (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).

This also has an impact on public political participation. In this digital era, education largely utilises digital media, thus political education needs to develop learning models that are both effective and efficient (Ramdhani & Novian, 2020). This is further supported by Greenhow

(2019), who states that social media provides new opportunities both inside and outside the classroom by advancing professional development, education, and scholarly communication. Political figures and parties have also created TikTok accounts as a means of political communication with the public. Several regional leaders are actively using social media, such as the former Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil, whose TikTok account @ridwankamil.official has 2.5 million followers. In addition, Ganjar Pranowo, former Governor of Central Java, is also active on social media through his Instagram account @ganjarpranowo, which has 7.5 million followers, and the former Governor of East Java, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, who manages the account @Khofifah.official with 95.8 thousand followers. By engaging in effective political communication in the virtual public sphere, political figures can shape their public image among society.

An individual's political knowledge can be measured through various aspects. Jack Dennis (Budianto, 2017) defines political knowledge in three dimensions: knowledge about government, knowledge of political rules and procedures, and understanding of the environment and society. According to Budiman & Riyanto (2013), the factors influencing political knowledge include education, information/media, social and cultural aspects, economy, environment, experience, and age. Social media has become a new medium in political communication (Utami & Nasiwan, 2023). Political education aims to achieve a higher level of political participation and increased awareness of roles and involvement in influencing public policy-making. The integration of these three aspects, according to Crick (2004), is referred to as political literacy, whereby young people use their knowledge to engage in politics responsibly and participate actively. This view aligns with Brownhill (1984), who stated that the goal of political education is to foster professional interest and guide individuals towards their political responsibilities, while also providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil these responsibilities.

Political literacy is an increasingly important concept within the context of civic education in the 21st century. With the emergence of new challenges in democracy and public participation, a deep understanding of political processes, rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as the ability to analyse political information, has become crucial. Political literacy is not only related to factual knowledge, but also encompasses the ability to think critically and actively engage in political processes. Political literacy plays a vital role in democratic processes. According to Putri (2015), political literacy is defined as the implementation of a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding politics, starting from small matters such as political issues and influencing oneself and others in decision-making. Through political literacy, first-time voters can receive political education that enables them to participate in political activities related to various aspects, such as the concept of the state, power, decision-making, and public policy.

Political literacy and social media are both essential and necessary. The key to increasing national productivity and reducing poverty and social inequality lies in the success of addressing literacy issues. Therefore, literacy is heavily emphasised for both the current and future generations. In addition, students are also expected to stay informed about current issues in order to monitor the development of their political understanding and awareness.

Novian (2021) identified that although social media plays a significant role in disseminating political information and enhancing students' political literacy, previous studies have tended to overlook how specific platforms, such as Instagram, influence students' political knowledge and participation in a detailed manner.

Furthermore, Athahirah (2022) identified the importance of first-time voters in improving their political literacy by using social media wisely and building social networks that contribute positively to the enhancement of manifest political participation.

Another distinction that can be identified in the relevant previous studies is, firstly, that the research had not yet focused specifically on social media. Therefore, the researcher suggests that future studies be developed further to examine how social media can have an impact on improving political literacy and political participation, particularly among first-time voters. Secondly, most previous research has concentrated on the influence of general social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook on political literacy, with relatively few focusing

specifically on TikTok, a platform that is increasingly popular among the younger generation due to its short-video format and unique style of conveying information.

This study presents a novel contribution by being one of the first to investigate how short-form video content on TikTok plays a role in shaping the political literacy of high school students, in contrast to other platforms that have been more extensively studied. It is distinctive in that it explores how TikTok may influence the political participation of high school students within the context of local elections (Pilkada), which differs from the more commonly studied national political context.

METHOD

This research employs a quantitative ex post facto approach. The population of the study consists of all Year 12 students at SMA Negeri Mumbulsari in the 2024/2025 academic year, with a total of 231 students. A purposive sample of 109 students was selected. The research instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire, which was tested for validity and reliability. The data analysis technique employed was multiple linear regression to examine the effect of the independent variable (TikTok usage) on the dependent variables (political literacy and political participation).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. The Influence of TikTok Usage on Political Literacy

To determine the extent of the influence of TikTok usage on students' political literacy, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, with partial testing using the t-test statistic. This test is used to identify whether the independent variable—TikTok usage—has a significant effect on the dependent variable, namely students' political literacy. The following presents the results of the t-test obtained from the SPSS 2025 output analysing the influence of TikTok usage on political literacy.

Partial Test Results (t-Test Statistic)
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10,588	1,264		8,378	,000
	TikTok Usage	1,627	,160	,701	10,178	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Political Literacy
Source: SPSS Data Testing Results, 202

Based on the results of the partial hypothesis test (t-test), the variable Utilisation of TikTok (X) shows a calculated t-value of 10.178, which is greater than the critical t-table value of 1.658 (10.178 > 1.658), with a significance value of 0.000, which is less than the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the Utilisation of TikTok (X) has a positive and significant effect on Political Literacy (Y1). In other words, the better the utilisation of TikTok, the better the level of political literacy.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, political literacy has an average score of 22.96, which falls into the "good" category. This indicates that Year 12 students at SMA Negeri Mumbulsari have utilised TikTok effectively, such as by uploading various positive activities both within and outside the school environment, which has significantly contributed to attracting prospective new students to enrol.

Political literacy through social media has become one of the main forces in enhancing political participation. This finding is further supported by Haryani et al. (2024), who state that political literacy refers to an individual's ability to understand and critically evaluate political information, as well as to participate effectively in political processes.

b.   TikTok's Influence on Political Participation

To determine the extent to which the utilisation of TikTok influences students' political literacy, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, using a partial test with the **t-statistic**. This test aims to examine whether the independent variable, namely the utilisation of TikTok, has a significant effect on the dependent variable, which is students' political literacy. The following presents the results of the **t-test** obtained from the 2025 SPSS output regarding the utilisation of TikTok and its influence on political literacy.

Partial Test Results (t-Test Statistic)
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	16,349	1,602		10,208	,000
	TikTok Usage	2,000	,203	,690	9,871	,000

a.   Dependent Variable: Political Literacy
Source: SPSS Data Testing Results, 2025

Based on the results of the partial hypothesis testing, the utilisation of TikTok (X) shows a t-calculated value of 9.871, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.658 (9.871 > 1.658), and a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the utilisation of TikTok (X) has a positive and significant effect on Political Participation (Y2). In other words, the greater the utilisation of TikTok, the higher the level of political participation. These results suggest that the use of TikTok can be one of the supporting factors in increasing political participation among students.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis, it can be concluded that the variable Political Participation has an average score of 31.56. This finding indicates that Year 12 students at SMA Negeri Mumbulsari have utilised TikTok effectively, which can help develop their speaking skills, literacy, and creativity, as well as foster collaboration with other users. This, in turn, makes a significant contribution to nurturing creativity and enhancing the multimedia skills of SMA Negeri Mumbulsari students.

The findings of this study are also supported by Nanda Friska Dewi (2024), who states that TikTok has become an important space for the younger generation to engage and participate in politics. This is because users feel that the exchange of political ideas has become more interactive, personal, and relevant to their daily lives. However, it is important to note that although TikTok has great potential to increase political participation, it must be utilised in such a way that young people are not merely consumers of information but also active political participants. The short video duration offered by TikTok prevents students from feeling bored when accessing it, making political education through TikTok a highly important and influential learning method.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis show that the utilisation of TikTok has a positive and significant influence on both political literacy and political participation among students. The better TikTok is used as a source of political information, the higher the students' level of political literacy, as reflected in their improved understanding and awareness of their rights and

responsibilities as citizens. In addition, the study also reveals that the more actively students access and engage with political content on TikTok, the higher their level of participation in political activities, whether through discussions, socialisation, or involvement in political actions within the school environment or the wider community.

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