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Political Trust and Generation Z Political Participation in Palangka Raya's 2024 Mayoral Election

Khoirudin¹, Marvy Ferdian Agusta Sahay², Fitriana Selvia³, Imanuel Jaya⁴, Adithiya Wiradinatha Saputra⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z's political participation is a key aspect of democracy, particularly in local elections. This study aims to examine the influence of political trust on Generation Z's political participation in the 2024 Palangka Raya Mayoral Election. The study employed a quantitative approach using simple linear regression analysis. A total of 116 respondents classified as Generation Z in Palangka Raya City were selected as the study sample. Data were collected through a questionnaire using a Likert scale and subsequently analyzed via simple linear regression. The results of the analysis show that political trust has a positive and significant influence on Generation Z's political participation. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.181 indicates that political trust explains 18.1% of the variation in political participation, while the remaining 81.9% is influenced by other factors not analyzed in this study. These findings confirm that political trust is one of the determinants that contribute to driving Generation Z's political participation in the 2024 Palangka Raya Mayoral Election.

Keyword:

Political Trust, Political Participation, Generation Z, Local Elections, Simple Linear Regression.

INTRODUCTION

Political participation is widely recognized as a fundamental indicator of democratic quality, as it reflects citizens' involvement in public decision-making processes, particularly through elections. High levels of political participation demonstrate the effective functioning of democratic institutions, whereas low participation may indicate declining public engagement with political processes and government institutions (Surbakti, 2007). Consequently, increasing voter participation has become a major concern in Indonesia's

¹khoirudin.khoirrr@mhs.fisip.upr.ac.id

democratic development, particularly in regional head elections (Pemilihan Kepala Daerah or Pilkada), which are conducted based on the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair elections.

Despite these democratic principles, voter participation in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election remained relatively low. According to the General Election Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum [KPU]), voter turnout reached only 60.73% of the 217,584 registered voters listed in the Permanent Voter List (Daftar Pemilih Tetap [DPT]). This figure was the lowest among all regencies and municipalities in Central Kalimantan and fell considerably short of the national voter turnout target of 82% established by the KPU. These findings suggest that a large registered electorate does not necessarily translate into high electoral participation.

The issue becomes increasingly relevant in light of Indonesia's ongoing demographic bonus, characterized by a growing proportion of the productive-age population. Generation Z, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, cited in Evita, 2023; BPS, 2020), represents one of the country's largest demographic groups. In Palangka Raya, Generation Z accounted for 49,311 registered voters, representing 23.32% of the total DPT in the 2024 election. Given its substantial electoral share, this generation is expected to play a pivotal role in shaping local democratic processes and future political development (Ramadhan, 2025).

Previous studies have predominantly examined Generation Z's political participation from the perspective of digital engagement, social media use, and their characteristics as digital natives. Comparatively less attention has been given to political trust as a determinant of electoral participation, particularly within the context of local elections in Palangka Raya. Political trust is considered an important factor influencing citizens' willingness to engage in democratic processes because it reflects confidence in political institutions, public officials, and the broader political system.

Against this background, this study investigates the influence of political trust on the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on youth political behavior while providing empirical evidence that may assist policymakers and election management bodies in designing strategies to strengthen political participation among young voters.

Political Trust

Political trust refers to citizens' confidence that governments and political institutions will exercise their authority responsibly and formulate policies that serve the public interest (Adinugroho, 2021). It reflects the extent to which individuals perceive political institutions as capable, accountable, and committed to addressing societal needs. A higher level of political trust strengthens the legitimacy of democratic institutions and encourages citizens to engage more actively in political processes.

Drawing upon the framework proposed by Dalton and Syed (as cited in Pasadak, 2021), political trust consists of five interrelated dimensions: competence, benevolence, integrity, reliability, and fairness. Competence refers to the government's ability to perform its responsibilities effectively, while benevolence reflects the government's concern for citizens' interests and welfare. Integrity represents honesty, transparency, and ethical consistency in political leadership. Reliability describes the government's consistency in fulfilling its commitments and policy promises, whereas fairness emphasizes the equal and impartial implementation of laws and public policies. Together, these dimensions shape citizens' evaluations of governmental performance and institutional credibility.

Political trust is also influenced by citizens' perceptions of government performance. Rudolph (as cited in Pasadak, 2021) argues that economic conditions, policy responsiveness, procedural fairness, and the competence of public officials are among the primary determinants of political trust. Positive evaluations of these aspects are more likely to strengthen public confidence in political institutions.

Political Participation

Political participation refers to citizens' voluntary involvement in political activities aimed at influencing governmental decisions and public policies (Surbakti, 2007). Similarly, McClosky (as cited in Budiardjo, 2008) defines political participation as voluntary actions undertaken by citizens to select political leaders and influence policy outcomes. As a fundamental element of democracy, political participation reflects the extent to which citizens contribute to political decision-making processes.

According to Erawan (2016), political participation can be expressed through several forms, including voting, campaign activities, communal engagement, contacting public officials regarding public concerns, and protest or other non-conventional political actions. The level of political participation is shaped by various factors, such as political awareness, political trust, socioeconomic status, parental political affiliation, and organizational experience (Surbakti, 2007). Among these determinants, political trust has received considerable scholarly attention because citizens who trust political institutions are generally more willing to participate in democratic activities.

The Relationship between Political Trust and Political Participation

Political trust has been widely acknowledged as an important predictor of political participation. Citizens who perceive political institutions as competent, trustworthy, and responsive are more likely to participate in elections and other forms of democratic engagement because they believe that their involvement can contribute to meaningful political outcomes. Conversely, declining political trust may discourage citizens from participating by reducing confidence in the effectiveness and legitimacy of political institutions.

Although previous studies have extensively examined Generation Z's political participation, many have focused on digital political engagement, social media use, or online activism. Comparatively fewer studies have investigated political trust as a determinant of electoral participation among young voters, particularly within the context of local elections. This study addresses this gap by examining the influence of political trust on Generation Z's political participation in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. Based on the theoretical perspectives and previous empirical findings, it is hypothesized that political trust has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's political participation.

Political participation refers to citizens' voluntary involvement in political activities intended to influence governmental decisions and public policies (Surbakti, 2007). Similarly, McClosky (as cited in Budiardjo, 2008) defines political participation as voluntary actions undertaken by citizens to select political leaders and affect policy outcomes. These perspectives emphasize that political participation constitutes an essential component of democratic governance by enabling citizens to express their political preferences and contribute to decision-making processes.

According to Erawan (2016), political participation encompasses five principal forms: voting, campaign activities, communal activities, contacting public officials regarding personal or community concerns, and protest or other forms of non-conventional

participation. Furthermore, Surbakti (2007) identifies several factors that influence political participation, including political awareness, political trust, socioeconomic status, parental political affiliation, and organizational experience. Among these determinants, political trust is considered particularly important because citizens who perceive political institutions as trustworthy are generally more willing to participate in electoral and other democratic activities.

Previous Studies

Previous research has consistently demonstrated that political trust is closely associated with political participation. Pasadak (2021), for example, reported a positive and significant relationship between political trust and university students' political participation ($r = 0.597$), suggesting that greater trust in political institutions encourages higher levels of political engagement.

Research on Generation Z has also identified various determinants of political participation. Ardiansyah et al. (2024) and Kholilah Yahya et al. (2024) found that rational considerations, sociological factors, psychosocial characteristics, and social media exposure significantly influence the voting behavior of young voters. Similarly, Sitanggang et al. (2024) reported that candidates' political image, particularly perceptions of integrity and benevolence, positively affects first-time voters' electoral behavior.

Within the context of Central Kalimantan, previous studies have primarily focused on electoral behavior and voter participation from different perspectives. Budi Setiyon and Hidayat Sardini (2023) examined the determinants of split-ticket voting, while Haridison et al. (2021) highlighted the contribution of political literacy and election socialization conducted by the General Election Commission (KPU) in shaping voter participation during regional elections.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into political participation, limited attention has been given to political trust as a determinant of Generation Z's political participation in local elections, particularly in the context of the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the influence of political trust on the political participation of Generation Z.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework and previous empirical findings, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Political trust has a positive and significant effect on the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a correlational research design to examine the effect of political trust on the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. A simple linear regression analysis was applied to determine the extent to which political trust predicts political participation (Sugiyono, 2023; Creswell, 2014).

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 49,311 Generation Z voters registered in the Permanent Voter List (Daftar Pemilih Tetap [DPT]) for the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral

election. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Based on the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, the minimum required sample size was 100 respondents. To improve data reliability, 116 valid responses were included in the final analysis. Eligible participants were Indonesian citizens residing in Palangka Raya, born between 1997 and 2012, and eligible to vote in the 2024 mayoral election.

Data Collection and Measurement

Primary data were collected through an online structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms between March 2 and March 16, 2026. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree/never) to 4 (strongly agree/very often), depending on the measurement indicators of each variable. Secondary data, including voter registration records and election statistics, were obtained from official publications of the General Election Commission (KPU) and Statistics Indonesia (BPS).

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

A. RESULT

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on 20 respondents with characteristics similar to those of the target population. Instrument validity was assessed using the corrected item-total correlation method, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. All questionnaire items met the validity criterion ($r > 0.444$, $p < 0.05$). The political trust scale achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.963, indicating excellent reliability, whereas the political participation scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.885, indicating good reliability. These results confirm that the research instrument was valid and reliable for data collection.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 116)

No	Characteristic	Category	n	%
1	Gender	Female	73	62,93%
		Male	43	37,07%
		TOTAL	116	100%
2	Age (Years)	18-20	35	30,17%
		21-23	41	35,34%
		24-27	40	34,48%
		TOTAL	116	100%
3	District of Residence	Jekan Raya	48	41,38%
		Bukit Batu	20	17,24%
		Sebangau	17	14,66%
		Rakumpit	16	13,79%
		Pahandut	15	12,93%
		TOTAL	116	100%
4	Educational Attainment	No Formal Education / Did Not Complete Elementary School	1	0,86%
		Junior High School	1	0,86%
		Senior High School / Vocational High School or Equivalent	67	57,76%

No	Characteristic	Category	n	%
		Diploma (D1/D2/D3)	16	13,79%
		Bachelor's Degree (S1)	28	24,14%
		Postgraduate Degree (Master's/Doctoral; S2/S3)	3	2,59%
		TOTAL	116	100%
5	Occupation	Student	60	51,72%
		Private Sector Employee	19	16,38%
		Freelance	11	9,48%
		Daily Wage Worker	9	7,76%
		Civil Servant	8	6,90%
		Homemaker	4	3,45%
		Others	3	2,59%
		Unemployed	2	1,72%
		TOTAL	116	100%

Source: Authors' compilation from primary survey data (2026).

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of the 116 Generation Z participants, 73 (62.93%) were female and 43 (37.07%) were male. The largest age group was 21–23 years (35.34%), followed by 24–27 years (34.48%) and 18–20 years (30.17%). Most respondents resided in Jekan Raya District (41.38%), had completed senior high school or vocational school (57.76%), and were students (51.72%). The distribution of respondents across gender, age, district, educational attainment, and occupation indicates that the sample represents Generation Z voters from diverse demographic backgrounds in Palangka Raya.

Classical Assumption Tests

Table 2 Summary of Classical Assumption Test Results

Assumption Test	Indicator	Result	Criterion	Conclusion
Normality	Kolmogorov–Smirnov (Asymp. Sig.)	0.163	> 0.05	Residuals are normally distributed
Linearity	Deviation from Linearity (Sig.)	0.597	> 0.05	Linear relationship
Heteroscedasticity	Glejser Test (Sig.)	0.798	> 0.05	No heteroscedasticity

Source: Authors' compilation from primary survey data (2026).

Before conducting the regression analysis, the classical assumptions were examined to ensure the appropriateness of the regression model. As shown in Table 2, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test yielded an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.163, indicating that the residuals were normally distributed. The linearity test produced a Deviation from Linearity significance value of 0.597, confirming a linear relationship between political trust and political participation. Furthermore, the Glejser test resulted in a significance value of 0.798, indicating the absence of heteroscedasticity. These findings demonstrate that the data satisfy the assumptions required for simple linear regression analysis.

Table 3 Simple Linear Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	0.735	3.899	–	0.189	0.851
Political Trust	0.428	0.085	0.426	5.022	<0.001

Source: Authors' compilation from primary survey data (2026).

Dependent Variable: Political Participation

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of political trust on the political participation of Generation Z. As presented in Table 3, political trust had a positive and statistically significant effect on political participation ($B = 0.428$, $\beta = 0.426$, $t = 5.022$, $p < 0.001$). The regression equation can be expressed as follows:

Political Participation = 0.735 + 0.428(Political Trust)

The positive regression coefficient indicates that higher levels of political trust are associated with higher levels of political participation among Generation Z. Therefore, the proposed research hypothesis is supported.

Table 4 Coefficient of Determination

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.426	0.181	0.174	4.693

Source: Authors' compilation from primary survey data (2026).

As presented in Table 4, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.181, indicating that political trust explained 18.1% of the variance in the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. The remaining 81.9% of the variance was attributable to other factors not included in the present model. These findings suggest that although political trust is a significant predictor of political participation, additional variables should be considered to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Generation Z's political engagement.

B. Discussions

The findings demonstrate that political trust has a positive and statistically significant effect on the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. This result supports the theoretical perspective proposed by Surbakti (2007), which suggests that citizens' trust in political institutions and government actors plays an important role in encouraging political engagement. When individuals perceive political institutions as competent, fair, and trustworthy, they are more likely to participate in political activities, particularly elections.

The findings are also consistent with previous studies. Pasadak (2021) reported that political trust was positively associated with political participation among university students, while Sitanggang et al. (2024) found that perceptions of candidates' integrity and benevolence significantly influenced the voting behavior of first-time voters. These studies reinforce the argument that trust serves as an important psychological factor in motivating political participation among young citizens.

Despite the significant relationship identified in this study, an interesting discrepancy remains. Although Generation Z respondents reported relatively high levels of political trust, voter turnout in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election remained the lowest in Central Kalimantan, with a participation rate of only 60.73%. This finding suggests that political trust alone is insufficient to fully explain political participation. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.181$) indicates that political trust explained only 18.1% of the variation in political participation, while the remaining 81.9% may be attributable to other factors that were not examined in the present study.

These findings imply that improving political trust should be accompanied by broader efforts to strengthen youth political engagement. Future studies should therefore consider additional variables, such as political efficacy, political knowledge, political literacy, exposure

to political information, socioeconomic characteristics, and social influences, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping Generation Z's political participation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that political trust has a positive and statistically significant effect on the political participation of Generation Z in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election. The regression analysis demonstrated that political trust significantly predicted political participation, supporting the proposed research hypothesis. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.181$) indicates that political trust explained 18.1% of the variance in political participation, while the remaining 81.9% may be explained by other variables beyond the scope of this study.

Although respondents generally reported relatively high levels of political trust, the overall voter turnout in the 2024 Palangka Raya mayoral election remained relatively low. This finding suggests that political trust alone is not sufficient to encourage active political participation among Generation Z. Accordingly, efforts to increase youth political participation should not only focus on strengthening public trust in political institutions but also consider other factors influencing political engagement. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional explanatory variables to provide a broader understanding of political participation among young voters.

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