

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: Instagram *Rembuk Pemuda* and Voter Participation Issues among Gen Z

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of *Rembuk Pemuda* on Instagram as a virtual public sphere that addresses the persistent issue of low voter participation among Generation Z in Denpasar. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through digital observations, document analysis, and in-depth interviews (WWC) with community leaders, content creators, and Gen Z followers across Denpasar Barat, Denpasar Timur, Denpasar Utara, and Denpasar Selatan. The findings reveal that *Rembuk Pemuda* effectively utilizes visual storytelling, interactive content, and data-driven messages to enhance political literacy and civic engagement among youth. Informants emphasized that the platform's neutral stance, relatable tone, and credible information foster trust and encourage reflective discussion. Through infographics, short videos, and participatory comment spaces, *Rembuk Pemuda* transforms abstract political issues into accessible, culturally resonant narratives. Analysis using Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action shows that the platform fulfills the principles of clarity, truth, sincerity, and appropriateness, enabling rational-critical dialogue within digital environments. However, challenges such as algorithmic bias, gender dynamics, and awareness fatigue persist. Despite these constraints, the study demonstrates that youth-led civic communities like *Rembuk Pemuda* can reshape digital communication into participatory and inclusive spaces that promote democratic awareness. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how communicative action and digital rhetoric operate in Indonesia's emerging digital democracy.

Keywords: political communication; digital public sphere; Gen Z; *Rembuk Pemuda*.

Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has brought profound changes to political communication patterns worldwide. Social media platforms have emerged as dominant spaces for disseminating political information, engaging in public debate, and mobilizing civic participation. Among these platforms, Instagram has become particularly influential for Gen Z, who were born between

1997 and 2012, and are considered “digital natives” due to their strong attachment to online platforms (Hutabarat et al., 2023:316). For Gen Z, Instagram is not merely a source of entertainment but also a space for accessing political knowledge, expressing opinions, and participating in democratic discourse.

The tendency of low voter participation among Generation Z is not only related to the number of voters but also concerns political literacy and a sense of representation, as Gen Z often perceives politics as a struggle for power that prioritizes personal interests over public ones (Zahira et al., 2025, p. 233). Despite this shift, challenges persist in fostering meaningful political engagement among young voters. Studies highlight that low levels of political literacy and the high circulation of inaccurate information may distort Gen Z’s understanding of politics and reduce their participation in political processes (Ramadhana & Mutiah, 2024:174). Moreover, Instagram’s algorithm-driven content recommendations often create echo chambers that reinforce pre-existing views rather than broadening perspectives. Consequently, Gen Z may be less exposed to diverse political discourses, limiting their ability to critically evaluate competing viewpoints and diminishing their participation in rational discussions (Judijanto et al., 2024:26).

In Indonesia, particularly in Denpasar, low voter turnout among Gen Z has raised concerns about the vitality of democratic participation. Data from the General Election Commission (KPU) revealed that voter participation among youth in Denpasar was below the national average in recent elections. For instance, in the 2018 local election, voter turnout reached only 63% compared to the national average of 73.2%. Similarly, during the 2019 general election, participation in Bali stood at 81%, while Denpasar only achieved 70% (Widiantari & Putra, 2025). More recent data indicate that in the 2024 local election, youth participation reached only 59%, still significantly lower than the national target of 77.5% (Hupmas KPU-DPS, 2020). These figures underscore an urgent need to strengthen political literacy and civic responsibility among Gen Z voters.

The perception of politics among young people further complicates the issue. Many Gen Z voters regard politics as a distant and abstract activity, often associated with dishonesty and corruption, and disconnected from their everyday lives (Judijanto et al., 2024:26). This apathy contributes to declining voter participation and weakens democratic legitimacy. Nevertheless, scholars argue that Gen Z holds significant potential to act as agents of change in Indonesia’s democratic development. As Hutajulu et al. (2024:244) note, while youth participation has declined, their digital fluency and openness to new forms of engagement present opportunities for revitalizing democratic participation through innovative communication strategies.

Against this backdrop, Instagram-based initiatives such as *Rembuk Pemuda* have emerged as promising approaches to address these challenges. *Rembuk*

Pemuda is a youth-led community that actively utilizes Instagram to raise political awareness and encourage voter participation among young Indonesians. Through infographics, short videos, testimonials, and interactive discussions, the platform transforms complex political issues into accessible, visually appealing content. By framing political participation as relevant and approachable, *Rembuk Pemuda* seeks to counter apathy and foster critical political engagement among Gen Z (Maulana et al., 2023:48).

The activities of *Rembuk Pemuda* also resonate with Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action, which emphasizes the role of rational dialogue in creating a democratic public sphere. According to Habermas, effective communication must meet four validity claims: clarity, truth, sincerity, and appropriateness (Syauqy & Anugrah, 2024:30). By promoting open discussions and fact-based content, *Rembuk Pemuda* attempts to establish Instagram as a "virtual public sphere" where young citizens can deliberate on political issues in a rational and inclusive manner.

The urgency of this research lies in addressing the declining participation of Gen Z voters in Denpasar's elections, a trend that, if unaddressed, may undermine democratic consolidation at the local level. Examining how *Rembuk Pemuda* functions as a platform for political communication offers valuable insights into the ways digital communities can enhance political literacy, combat disinformation, and increase voter turnout. The findings are not only relevant for communication studies but also hold practical implications for policymakers, civil society, and youth organizations seeking to strengthen democratic engagement in the digital era.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer two central research questions: (1) how does *Rembuk Pemuda* function as a virtual public sphere in Instagram-based political communication concerning low voter participation among Gen Z? (2) How do its communication activities shape Gen Z's political awareness and voting behavior in Denpasar? Addressing these questions will contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between digital media, political communication, and youth participation in contemporary Indonesian democracy.

Literature Review

Political communication has undergone a profound transformation due to the rapid expansion of digital technologies and social media platforms. Traditional political communication, which relied heavily on mass media such as television, newspapers, and radio, has increasingly shifted toward interactive digital environments where political actors and citizens communicate directly. Social media has altered not only the channels through which political

information is disseminated but also the ways in which citizens participate in democratic processes.

According to McNair (2018), political communication encompasses all forms of communication undertaken by political actors, media organizations, and citizens regarding political matters. In the digital age, communication is no longer unidirectional. Citizens actively produce, share, comment on, and reinterpret political messages, creating a participatory communication environment. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X (formerly twitter) have become influential spaces where political identities, public opinion, and civic engagement are continuously negotiated.

The emergence of digital political communication has expanded opportunities for political education while simultaneously introducing new challenges such as misinformation, algorithmic filtering, political polarization, and performative participation. Consequently, scholars increasingly argue that the effectiveness of political communication should not only be measured by information dissemination but also by its ability to foster meaningful civic participation.

Research indicates that Instagram is particularly attractive to younger generations because it combines entertainment, visual aesthetics, and social interaction. Political messages presented through infographics, short videos, memes, and interactive discussions tend to receive greater engagement than conventional political campaigns. Consequently, Instagram has become an important medium for political education and voter mobilization among young citizens. Recent Indonesian studies demonstrate that institutional political communication on Instagram increasingly employs educational, collaborative, and participatory content to encourage youth engagement. Nevertheless, researchers also note that online engagement often remains symbolic and expressive rather than translating directly into electoral participation.

Generation Z, generally defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, represents the first generation to grow up entirely within digital environments. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z obtains political information primarily through social media rather than traditional news outlets. Digital nativity shapes the political characteristics of Generation Z in several ways. First, they consume information rapidly through short-form visual content. Second, they value authenticity, transparency, and interaction over hierarchical communication. Third, they are more likely to engage in issue-based activism rather than long-term political party affiliation.

These characteristics create both opportunities and challenges for democratic participation. On one hand, social media increases political awareness by making information more accessible. On the other hand, the abundance of fragmented information may encourage superficial political

engagement characterized by likes, shares, and comments without deeper civic involvement. Studies in Indonesia consistently show that Instagram plays an important role in increasing political awareness among young voters by providing accessible political information and encouraging discussion. However, digital engagement alone does not automatically translate into voting behavior or sustained democratic participation.

Political participation refers to citizens' voluntary activities aimed at influencing political decision-making, public policy, or electoral outcomes. Verba et al. (1995) distinguish between conventional participation—such as voting and campaign involvement—and unconventional participation, including demonstrations, petitions, and digital activism. The rise of social media has expanded political participation into online environments. Scholars describe this phenomenon as digital participation, where citizens engage in political discussions, create political content, share information, or mobilize collective action through digital platforms. For Generation Z, political participation increasingly occurs in hybrid forms that combine online and offline engagement. Young citizens frequently encounter political content through Instagram before participating in community discussions, volunteering, or voting. Nevertheless, scholars caution that online participation should not automatically be interpreted as substantive democratic engagement because many online activities involve symbolic expression rather than direct political action.

Research on Indonesia's 2024 election highlights that digital political communication effectively increased the visibility of political issues among Generation Z, but its influence on actual voter turnout depended on political trust, digital literacy, and institutional credibility rather than exposure alone. Although Generation Z constitutes one of Indonesia's largest electoral groups, scholars continue to debate the quality of their political participation. Several recurring issues emerge within the literature.

First, political apathy remains a concern among segments of young voters who perceive politics as distant, corrupt, or ineffective. Second, misinformation and disinformation circulate rapidly through social media ecosystems, making political literacy increasingly important. Third, algorithm-driven content may create echo chambers that reinforce existing beliefs while limiting exposure to diverse perspectives. Another issue involves performative participation, where visible online activities—such as liking political posts, reposting campaign content, or using political hashtags—may create an illusion of civic engagement without corresponding offline participation.

During Indonesia's 2024 election, political campaigns extensively targeted Gen Z through Instagram, memes, entertainment content, gaming communities, and popular culture to attract first-time voters. While these strategies increased political visibility, scholars argue that long-term democratic participation

requires deeper political education beyond viral content. Consequently, political communication initiatives such as Instagram *Rembuk Pemuda* become particularly relevant because they attempt to bridge entertainment-oriented communication with substantive democratic discussion.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the role of *Rembuk Pemuda* on Instagram as a virtual public sphere for addressing the issue of low voter participation among Gen Z in Denpasar. The qualitative method was selected because it allows researchers to explore social phenomena in natural contexts and to capture participants' perspectives in depth (Sugiyono, 2023:9). The study focused on describing and interpreting communication processes and practices that encourage political awareness and participation among young voters. A descriptive qualitative design was applied, as this method enables the researcher to present a detailed narrative of communication practices observed in the digital environment. The descriptive approach also supports an exploration of how messages are produced, distributed, and interpreted in the context of political communication on Instagram.

The research was conducted primarily on the Instagram account *Rembuk Pemuda* (@rembukpemuda), which serves as the main virtual space for political communication among Indonesian youth. Although the study focused on digital interactions, fieldwork was supported by direct communication with informants located in Denpasar (West, East, North, and South districts) and Jakarta. These locations were chosen to represent both the local political context of Bali and the broader organizational activities of *Rembuk Pemuda* at the national level.

The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained from observations of Instagram posts, captions, videos, and interactions on the *Rembuk Pemuda* account, as well as from semi-structured interviews (WWC) with eight key informants:

1. Organizational representatives: I Gusti Agung Ayu Bintang Maharani Putri (Head of *Rembuk Pemuda Bali*) and the Head of *Rembuk Pemuda Indonesia*.
2. Content creators and members: I Komang Doni Kurniawan (content creator), I Made Dwipa Anggara Putra (student and follower).
3. Gen Z followers: Ni Putu Tarisa Ayumi Satya Paramita, Ni Kadek Cintya Laksmi Devi, Cokorda Istri Dewi Ica Shashi Anindita, Desak Yurika Damayanti, and Pande Made Janardana Satyatma.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure their relevance to the research focus, particularly their engagement with *Rembuk Pemuda* and their experience as Gen Z users in Denpasar. Their insights covered perspectives on political awareness, reasons behind voter apathy, the role of

social media, and the effectiveness of *Rembuk Pemuda's* Instagram strategies in fostering participation. Secondary data included scholarly literature on digital political communication, youth participation, and media studies, as well as reports from the General Election Commission (KPU) and analytical data related to voter turnout in Bali.

Data collected by observation, interview, and document analysis technique. The researcher conducted participant observation by monitoring the *Rembuk Pemuda* Instagram account over a specified period. This included analyzing visual content, captions, hashtags, and user engagement through likes, comments, and shares. The observation provided insights into the communication strategies used by *Rembuk Pemuda* and how these strategies were received by Gen Z audiences.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the eight informants listed above. The results revealed that Gen Z audiences tend to perceive politics as distant or overly complex, yet they respond positively to visual and relatable content. For instance, Cintya (Denpasar Barat) and Tarisa (Denpasar Barat) emphasized that creative visuals and simple language made political topics easier to digest. Doni (Denpasar Utara) and Dwipa (Denpasar Selatan) highlighted the importance of media credibility and educational framing, while Shashi (Denpasar Timur) and Desak (Denpasar Utara) viewed Instagram as a bridge connecting youth to political discourse. Janar (Denpasar Timur) noted that *Rembuk Pemuda's* community-based approach helped make political discussion more approachable. The Head of *Rembuk Pemuda Bali* confirmed that their social media strategy focuses on accuracy, inclusivity, and avoiding political affiliation ensuring trust among young followers.

Relevant documents such as Instagram analytics, election participation data, organizational reports, and scholarly publications were examined. These materials were used to support and verify the data obtained from observations and interviews.

The collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) model, which consists of three main stages, namely (1) data reduction: raw data from interviews, observations, and documents were summarized, categorized, and filtered to identify the most relevant information related to the research focus; (2) data display: organized data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives, thematic charts, and figures to illustrate the communication patterns observed in *Rembuk Pemuda's* Instagram activities; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification: patterns, themes, and relationships between communication strategies and voter participation were identified. Preliminary conclusions were verified through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings.

To enhance the credibility of the research, triangulation of sources, techniques, and time was applied. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing data from leaders, designers, and followers of *Rembuk Pemuda*. Technique triangulation involved combining interviews, observations, and document analysis. Time triangulation ensured that data were collected at different moments during the research period, reducing the risk of bias.

The researcher ensured informed consent by explaining the purpose of the study to all participants before conducting interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms for informants where necessary. The study also adhered to ethical guidelines in handling digital data, ensuring that observations of Instagram content were conducted responsibly and without infringing on users' privacy.

This study focused only on one digital community (*Rembuk Pemuda*) and one platform (Instagram). Therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other youth organizations or social media platforms. Additionally, the study relied on qualitative data, which are interpretive in nature and may be influenced by the researcher's perspective. Despite these limitations, the research provides valuable insights into the dynamics of political communication and youth participation in the digital era.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that *Rembuk Pemuda* has successfully established itself as a dynamic platform for political communication and civic education among Generation Z in Denpasar. Through qualitative data obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study found that the organization effectively transforms Instagram into an interactive space for dialogue and critical reflection. Followers perceive the platform not only as a source of information but also as a community that validates their perspectives and voices. These findings reflect the role of *Rembuk Pemuda* as both a content producer and a facilitator of participatory discourse that embodies Habermas's idea of the public sphere.

Interviews with several informants revealed that the appeal of *Rembuk Pemuda* lies in its ability to communicate complex political issues in visually engaging and culturally relatable ways. Content such as infographics, interactive stories, and short videos allows young people to learn about political participation in formats aligned with their communication habits. Many respondents emphasized that the account's neutrality and use of credible sources distinguish it from partisan campaigns. The findings suggest that digital political communication, when rooted in authenticity and inclusivity, can effectively nurture civic consciousness among youth.



Figure 1. Content on Political Participation Issues in Instagram @rembukpemuda
(Source: Instagram @rembukpemuda, 2025)

Instagram as a Space for Civic Inspiration and Learning

The use of Instagram by *Rembuk Pemuda* has evolved far beyond its initial role as a social media platform for information dissemination. For many young people in Bali, it represents an interactive civic learning environment, a digital sphere where political education, cultural identity, and collective reflection intersect. Informants repeatedly emphasized that Instagram allows them not only to consume political content but to contribute, interpret, and share it within their social circles.

This participatory spirit was clearly articulated by I Gusti Agung Ayu Bintang Maharani Putri, Chairperson of *Rembuk Pemuda* Bali, who explained that Instagram has become a visual archive of their learning journey and community evolution.

“It is a way to archive our journey not only joining political issues but showing the path we’ve taken to reach this point. It can inspire others to learn, to share, and to teach from their own experiences.” (Interview, Gung Ayu, 19 October 2025)

Her reflection captures the essence of *Rembuk Pemuda’s* mission: transforming digital engagement into a living narrative of youth empowerment. The account’s posts, often documenting civic events, infographics, and volunteer activities, invite followers to see participation not as an obligation but as a process of growth and self-expression. This aligns with Habermas’s notion that communicative action enables social actors to co-construct meaning through dialogue and shared understanding.

Cintya, a follower from Denpasar Barat, echoed this sentiment when she described how *Rembuk Pemuda* made politics more approachable:

“Before, I thought politics was only for politicians or adults. But through Instagram, I realized that politics is also about our everyday decisions and how they affect our generation’s future.” (Interview, 12 October 2025)

This insight illustrates the shift from political alienation to engagement a transformation that begins with accessibility. By using a friendly tone and relatable visuals, *Rembuk Pemuda* redefines political participation as a cultural and educational practice. Doni Kurniawan from Denpasar Utara emphasized this point, explaining how the visual nature of Instagram supports understanding:

“The posts are short, colorful, and easy to understand. They make you curious about issues you didn’t care about before. It’s politics, but made simple and close to us.” (Interview, 11 October 2025)

Such reactions confirm that *Rembuk Pemuda* fulfills Habermas’s clarity principle a prerequisite for meaningful communication. By presenting messages in transparent, concise, and culturally sensitive ways, the organization lowers barriers to entry in civic discourse. What once felt like distant, abstract political talk becomes an inclusive conversation that resonates with youth identity.

Communicative Practices and Message Strategies

Observational and interview data reveal that *Rembuk Pemuda*’s communication strategy is grounded in three key elements: visual clarity, neutrality, and interactivity. The organization deliberately avoids complex language and partisanship, instead choosing to use youth-friendly formats such as short videos, carousels, and stories with polls or quizzes. This participatory approach allows followers to engage actively rather than passively.

Desak from Denpasar Utara explained that fact-checking and data verification are integral parts of the content creation process:

“Before any post goes up, they always make sure the information is correct, especially if it’s about elections or policies. That’s why people trust them. They don’t exaggerate things.” (Interview, 14 October 2025)

This commitment to accuracy aligns with Habermas’s truth validity claim, ensuring that discourse is built upon verifiable information rather than propaganda. It also builds ethos and credibility, which is essential in political communication. Meanwhile, Dwipa from Denpasar Selatan highlighted the tone of communication as another reason for the platform’s success:

“They don’t sound like activists forcing their opinions. The captions feel natural like friends talking about things that matter.” (Interview, 12 October 2025)

This relational tone demonstrates sincerity, another of Habermas’s principles. The language used by *Rembuk Pemuda* creates emotional proximity, turning political education into conversation rather than instruction. Cok Shashi from Denpasar Timur provided insight into how interactivity sustains engagement:

“Sometimes people disagree in the comments, but the moderators always keep it respectful. They remind us that it’s okay to debate as long as we listen.” (Interview, 18 October 2025)

Her statement exemplifies appropriateness, the final component of communicative action where discourse remains inclusive and socially respectful. By maintaining civil debate, *Rembuk Pemuda* demonstrates that social media can foster rational-critical dialogue instead of polarization. In addition, the organization consciously integrates emotional and cultural storytelling into its posts. Videos often feature personal stories from volunteers or youth voters, connecting civic participation with everyday life. As Janar from Denpasar Timur reflected:

“When they post about young people volunteering or joining campaigns, it makes me proud. You realize that change starts with small actions and we can all do that.” (Interview, 13 October 2025)

This emotional appeal (pathos) complements the rational content (logos), creating a holistic communication model. The combination of facts, empathy, and visual design not only informs but also motivates. The *Rembuk Pemuda* team understands that in the attention economy, persuasion depends as much on affective resonance as on logical reasoning. Furthermore, the neutrality of the platform allows it to act as a bridge between different political views. As Cintya (12 October 2025) explained, “No one feels forced to choose sides, it’s about learning, not campaigning.” Such neutrality enhances inclusivity, aligning with Habermas’s vision of the public sphere as a domain where participants meet on equal footing to exchange rational arguments.”

Rembuk Pemuda as a Virtual Public Sphere for Generation Z

The findings demonstrate that *Rembuk Pemuda* has effectively transformed Instagram into a virtual public sphere, a digital agora where civic dialogue takes shape among youth who are otherwise detached from formal politics. This space functions as a horizontal network of communication, where authority is decentralized and participation is voluntary. Janar (13 October 2025) described it as “a digital meeting point where people from all over Bali can share thoughts about the same issues.” The platform’s design open comments, question stickers, and story replies enables ongoing dialogue between organizers and followers. These interactions exemplify Habermas’s rational-critical discourse, as participants collectively deliberate on topics such as youth participation, gender equality, and social justice.

The sense of community cultivated online is also deeply tied to Balinese cultural values. Gung Ayu (19 October 2025) emphasized that *Rembuk Pemuda*

incorporates principles of *menyama braya* (mutual solidarity) into its communication style:

“We want every follower to feel that they are part of the same effort to make our democracy healthier, together. It’s about building empathy through conversation.”

By grounding its digital discourse in local cultural ethics, *Rembuk Pemuda* manages to maintain authenticity while addressing national political themes. This fusion of cultural identity and civic education strengthens the emotional legitimacy of the movement. Moreover, the rhetorical dimensions of ethos, pathos, and logos are visible throughout the platform’s interactions. Doni Kurniawan (11 October 2025) noted that emotional stories, such as posts featuring student volunteers or youth-led initiatives, “remind us that civic action is possible even without power or money.” Meanwhile, Desak (14 October 2025) pointed out that infographics linking voter turnout with policy outcomes made “the logic of participation clearer, we finally understand why our votes matter.” These statements illustrate how *Rembuk Pemuda* blends logical and emotional persuasion to foster democratic learning.

At the same time, *Rembuk Pemuda*’s moderation of discussions ensures that disagreements remain constructive. Cok Shashi (18 October 2025) shared that “the moderators treat everyone equally. Even when people criticize, they reply politely.” This demonstrates how *Rembuk Pemuda* enacts communicative rationality, dialogue based on understanding, not dominance. Followers like Dwipa (12 October 2025) described their experience as transformative: “After following the account for months, I started talking about politics with my friends. It’s no longer taboo, it feels normal.” This normalization of civic conversation among youth signals a cultural shift from apathy to participation. The public sphere here does not exist in abstract theory but in the comment sections, story replies, and collaborative exchanges that shape civic awareness daily.

Challenges, Impact, and Theoretical Reflection

While *Rembuk Pemuda*’s success in digital civic engagement is significant, several challenges persist. One structural limitation lies in algorithmic bias. Informants acknowledged that Instagram’s visibility metrics often prioritize entertainment over educational content. As Doni (11 October 2025) explained, “Posts about voter rights don’t always get as many views as memes that’s how the platform works.” This reflects a broader paradox in digital democracy: while social media democratizes voice, it also commercializes attention, shaping what discourse becomes visible.

Gender bias remains another recurring issue. Cok Shashi (18 October 2025) and Desak (14 October 2025) both noted that women’s voices can be sidelined in online debates. “Sometimes female comments get ignored, or people say we’re

too emotional,” Desak observed. However, she also recognized that *Rembuk Pemuda*’s moderators actively counter such tendencies by reminding users to value every opinion equally. This highlights the ongoing negotiation between inclusion and existing patriarchal norms a digital reflection of offline social hierarchies.

Despite these constraints, *Rembuk Pemuda* has achieved meaningful impact. Many informants described how their engagement online inspired tangible offline actions. Dwipa (12 October 2025) mentioned organizing voter education sessions on her campus, while Cintya (12 October 2025) began sharing infographics with her friends during election periods. These micro-level actions indicate that digital discourse can trigger civic behavior change.

The findings also reveal the presence of awareness fatigue, where users feel overwhelmed by constant civic messaging. Janar (13 October 2025) admitted that “sometimes we get tired of too many serious posts,” suggesting the need for creative balance between educational and entertaining content. *Rembuk Pemuda*’s adaptive strategy, alternating between humor, data, and storytelling mitigates this fatigue while maintaining civic focus.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study confirms that Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action remains applicable in digital environments, though it requires reinterpretation. On Instagram, clarity takes visual form through design; truth is expressed through verified data; sincerity is conveyed through authenticity and tone; and appropriateness is maintained through moderation. These principles collectively sustain a form of digital communicative rationality, where dialogue replaces hierarchy and empathy coexists with reason. As Gung Ayu (19 October 2025) summarized, “It starts from learning online but what matters is when that learning becomes real action in our community.”

Her statement encapsulates *Rembuk Pemuda*’s broader civic philosophy, that democracy is not confined to the polling booth but is practiced through daily acts of dialogue and mutual understanding. Ultimately, *Rembuk Pemuda* represents an evolving model of digital democracy in Indonesia. Its success demonstrates that political communication can be participatory, empathetic, and culturally grounded. The platform’s hybrid communication model, combining factual logic, emotional storytelling, and local values, it transforms Instagram into a living public sphere for Generation Z. The study concludes that digital civic engagement, when guided by communicative ethics, can reshape youth political culture in meaningful ways. While algorithmic and social constraints persist, *Rembuk Pemuda*’s approach shows that genuine communication, rooted in truth, sincerity, clarity, and appropriateness, can bridge the gap between online awareness and offline participation. In this sense, *Rembuk Pemuda* exemplifies Habermas’s vision of communicative action in the twenty-first century: dialogue as democracy in practice.

Conclusion

This study explored the role of *Rembuk Pemuda* on Instagram as a virtual public sphere in addressing the issue of low voter participation among Generation Z in Denpasar. The research demonstrates that digital platforms, when managed through ethical and inclusive communication practices, can effectively reshape the way young citizens perceive, discuss, and participate in politics. The case of *Rembuk Pemuda* reveals how strategic communication in social media spaces fosters both political literacy and civic engagement among youth, who often feel disconnected from formal political institutions.

The findings confirm that *Rembuk Pemuda* has successfully transformed Instagram into a participatory communication arena where young people can access simplified political information, engage in interactive discussions, and express their opinions within a respectful and egalitarian environment. Through the consistent use of infographics, short videos, visual storytelling, and interactive polls, the organization bridges the gap between abstract political issues and everyday youth realities. These strategies enhance the clarity, appeal, and accessibility of political messages, helping Gen Z audiences move from passive information consumption toward more reflective political awareness.

Furthermore, the activities of *Rembuk Pemuda* embody Habermas's four validity claims clarity, truth, sincerity, and appropriateness, within digital communication. The group's neutral stance, use of verified data, and encouragement of rational dialogue demonstrate that social media can sustain the principles of communicative action even within algorithm driven environments. The study thus contributes to the broader understanding that platforms like Instagram are not merely entertainment spaces but can evolve into contemporary forms of the public sphere that promote democratic deliberation and civic education.

While the quantitative impact on voter turnout remains modest with youth participation in Denpasar increasing from 54% in 2020 to 59% in 2024, the upward trend indicates gradual progress. More importantly, the qualitative evidence suggests that *Rembuk Pemuda* has succeeded in reshaping perceptions of politics among young voters. Many informants reported feeling more confident discussing political issues and recognizing the importance of their role as citizens. However, the challenge persists in translating awareness into sustained participation, as structural barriers such as distrust in political institutions, disinformation, and electoral fatigue continue to limit broader involvement.

The implications of this research extend beyond the case study itself. For civil society organizations, *Rembuk Pemuda* provides a replicable model of how non-partisan youth communities can use digital media to counter apathy and strengthen democratic culture. For policymakers, collaboration with such

initiatives can expand the reach of voter education programs and make them more relevant to young audiences. For educators and academic institutions, integrating digital civic literacy into curricula is essential to cultivate a generation capable of engaging critically and responsibly with online political discourse.

In essence, this study concludes that *Rembuk Pemuda* demonstrates the transformative potential of Instagram as a tool for democratic participation. Through responsible communication, creative engagement, and inclusivity, it bridges the divide between digital culture and civic responsibility. By sustaining these efforts and fostering collaboration between digital communities, government, and education sectors, Indonesia can strengthen its democratic foundations and ensure that Generation Z becomes not only an informed audience but also an active and empowered participant in the nation's democratic process.

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