

# THE COMMUNICATION STYLE OF 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN INDONESIA: INFLUENCING GENERATION Z VOTERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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## Abstract

Understanding communication style is very important, especially in the presidential election campaign. It is important in the campaign process where it used to influence people's interest in voting. Generation Z is the largest voters in the presidential election 2024 so understanding generation Z communication style is one of strategy to attract their interest in voting president. One of Gen Z communication style is they use social media in daily life. Furthermore, social media is considered an effective means of political communication. So, using gen Z communication style on social media is good strategy in attracting the interest of gen Z voters. In this research, researcher wanted to analyze how the Gen Z communication style that used the presidential candidates to influence the Gen Z voters' interest on social media Instagram and TikTok. Researchers used a descriptive qualitative method and collected the data using observation. Researched analyzed the data used Mile and Huberman technique. From the analyze of observation data, the researcher concluded that all presidential candidates used gen Z communication style in their campaign on social media. They used social media platform Instagram and TikTok; making posts on social media; having distinctive terms in online communication; being relaxed, open minded, friendly, not patronizing; and using short video or live streaming to communicate and share experiences.

**Keywords:** *Communication Style; Generation Z; Presidential Election.*

## INTRODUCTION

Communication style is a distinctive characteristic possessed by everyone, where everyone has different traits in terms of communication methods, models, ways of expressing, and in providing responses during communication. Panisora stated that communication style as a set of characteristics of a persons' speech in the act of communication. Style means a specific way of receiving messages, interpreting them, expressing responses, and providing feedback (Ilham, 2020). Understanding of communication styles and role of communication is a crucial for improving human

relationships, allowing personal conflicts to be avoided and resolved. Additionally, understanding of communication style is also important for activities that rely on communication skills such as product promotion, information delivery by customer service to client, and even the presentation of a presidential candidates' vision and mission in elections.

In the presidential candidate selection, communication style is essential in the campaign process because it is used to attract voters. A presidential candidate must be able to communicate engagingly and possess credibility in public, both verbally and non-verbally, such as through appearance, gestures, or body language. The communication style used during the campaign plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing the behavior of the public as voters. Communication style has an important role in promoting president candidates. Communicative actions and language used can play an important role in supporting or undermining participatory strategies used in campaign processes of presidential candidates (Kortekaas & Zorn, 2022). The presidential election is of interest and always Indonesian people waited it. Elections are one of the Indonesian people's efforts to elect the best leaders as well as the embodiment of a democratic country (Sutopo et al., 2024). Society has become an important focus for presidential candidates to influence their preferences in voting. Based on the candidate list from General Election Commission or Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU) about the presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the 2024 election, there are three pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates: Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD, and Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka (Muliawati, 2023).

The number of voters for the 2024 elections, based on data from the General Election Commission or Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU), showed that the majority of voters are from the Millennial Generation and Generation Z with 66,822,389 or 33.60% from the Millennial Generation and 46,800,161 or 22.85% from Generation Z (Muhamad, 2023). The presidential election in 2024 is the first election participated for Generation Z. Gen Z is people that was born between 1997 and 2012. This generation is considered first-time voters, estimated to number 47.5 million, as data from the Indonesian population projection for 2015-2045 indicates that in 2024, the population aged 17 and above will reach 205.3 million, of which 23.1 percent are Gen Z (Harmadi, 2022). The preferences of Gen Z will certainly influence the results of the 2024 presidential elections, making it very important to understand their aspirations and preferences to achieve success in the 2024 presidential elections.

Understanding the communication style of generation Z is one of the campaign strategies that can be used to attract the interest of Gen Z voters. Communication style is an important factor that differentiates each presidential candidate. Presidential candidates must be able to understand the communication style of Gen Z, which is seen as having a free and flexible character and being bold in expressing opinions.

Gen Z is considered to lack a specific communication style and tends to avoid dominant and rule-bound communication approaches. Generation Z prefers a communication style that is casual, friendly, and open (Alyustin, 2022). Generation Z does not like communication styles that involve reprimands or advice that come off as condescending. They prefer feedback or advice that is delivered through dialogue or discussion. Generation Z like to use digital communication via social media or other chatting platforms over face-to-face interactions (Zis et al., 2021). Gen Z uses short videos, stories, and live streaming as their primary means of communication and sharing experiences authentically and transparently (Muttaqin, 2024). According to Ikhsan (2023), the communication style of Gen Z has certain characteristics, they prefer to use social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok; they have their own language that they use in communication, such as the use of emojis, abbreviations, and specific terms like "LOL" (Laugh Out Loud) or "FYI" (For Your Information) for brief communication. Therefore, to influence the choices of voters in the elections, especially Gen Z, it is necessary to have expertise in a more engaging communication style that aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z. This includes using social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, preferring to communicate through chat rather than voice calls, having their own language that includes emojis, abbreviations, and specific terms in online communication, a relaxed, open, and friendly communication style, a dislike for a lecturing tone, and utilizing short videos, stories, and live streaming to communicate and share experiences. Muttaqin (2024) described that generation Z prefer to communicate through social media or chat platform than communicate directly. Generation Z also like use short videos, stories, and live streaming as the communication way and sharing experiences So, it can be concluded that the communication style of generation Z are they enjoy using social media to communication; they prefer to communicate through chat than directly; they have own language like emoji, abbreviation, and specific term; they like relaxed, open, and friendly communication style; they dislike for a lecturing tone; they like use short videos, stories, and live streaming as the communication way and sharing experiences.

In this digital era, particularly in the context of political campaigns, social media has role as a communication tool that can connect political actors with their constituents, facilitating communication between the communicator and the communicant over long distances and on a massive scale. Social media is not only used for personal communication purposes but is also utilized to build closer connections (Rapp et al., 2013), but also strengthen the evaluation (Naylor et al., 2012), and increasing accessibility with the audience (Gao et al., 2018). Based on Dosenko\* et al., (2019) research, it was found that media coverage can be a tool for shaping the image of presidential candidates, where the formation of the president's image can be seen from their appearance, communication style, public speaking style, behavior, and

the characteristics displayed in the media. The level of trust people has in the president also directly depends on what is presented in the media, the features provided by certain channels, and which characteristics are given more attention in a particular media outlet. Ilham (2020) also found that communication style of presidential candidates in responding of issues in presidential election 2019 in mainstream media, social media, or online media have had an extraordinary influence on the candidates' electability and image. Thus, social media is considered an effective means of political communication in the presidential candidates' campaign process.

Research institute We Are Social & Meltwater in 2023 found that social media has become an important medium for politicians to master, considering that 107 million or 52% of voters in Indonesia are young people who have a habit of accessing social media (Adnan & Mona, 2024). Furthermore, presidential candidates followed the communication style of Gen Z through social media content posts has become one of the steps taken by presidential candidates to attract the interest of young voters especially gen Z. From the observations of several communication methods used by presidential candidates during the 2024 presidential campaign, the researchers are interested to analyze how the communication styles of Generation Z that used by presidential candidates in influencing Generation Z voters on social media. Researchers limited the social media platform only Instagram and TikTok because, based on a survey conducted by the digital marketing agency Invinyx and the survey institution Jakpat, a recent report was released on "*Pemetaan Strategi Influencer di Media Sosial*" found that the Instagram platform is the most popular social media among Gen Z in 2023. Besides that overall, there are two of the most popular social media platforms frequently accessed by respondents, namely Instagram 94% and TikTok 81% (Liputan6.com, 2024).

From explanation above, researchers interested to focus in communication style of Generation Z that used by presidential candidates in presidential campaign 2024 in influencing generation Z voters in media social. This topic is new because the 2024 presidential election is the first participation of generation Z in election. Besides that, this research can help complement the topics about communication style, Gen Z, and social media that have become trending topics in several recent studies. Thus, the purpose of this study is to analyze the generation Z communication style that used by presidential candidates in the 2024 presidential election campaign in influencing the interest of Generation Z voters on social media channels. From this research, researchers hoped that readers, especially those from generations above Gen Z, such as millennials to baby boomers, can understand and comprehend the communication style strategies directed at Gen Z. By studying these strategies, older generations can foster closeness and attract the interest of Gen Z through communication, engaging them in institutions, companies, politics, and enhancing the creative sector that can contribute to the progress of the nation

## METHOD

This research is descriptive qualitative research where researchers used observation and documentation to collect the data about generation Z communication style that was used by president candidates in presidential campaign period from media social. Based on PKPU No 15 Year 2025 that the presidential campaign period was held for three months from November 28, 2023 until February 10, 2024 (Wibawana, 2023) so researchers collected the data based on data that was found in that period. To determine the communication style that was used by presidential candidates, researchers used indicators the characteristic of gen Z communication style like using social media, tend to avoid dominant and rule-filled communication style, prefer a relaxed, friendly, and open-minded style, using emoji. This data was analyzed to identify the communication styles of Generation Z used by presidential candidates in the 2024 presidential election campaign on social media. Researcher focused only Instagram and TikTok because both social media are social media that are often used by Generation Z.

Researchers used observation and documentation to collect the data where the observation was carried out by observing the Generation Z communication style that was used by presidential candidates, Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo in the content on their social media Instagram and TikTok. Researchers used documentation to collect data about the campaign activities carried out by the three presidential candidates on social media. Literature study by examining several articles related to the communication style carried out by the three presidential candidates during the 2024 election campaign. The data analysis process is carried out by selecting the content of text or speech of presidential candidates who use Generation Z's communication style on social media Instagram and TikTok. In analyzing texts or speech through the media by paying attention to the context, actions, history, power and ideology of the texts and speeches that are studied in accordance with the characteristics and communication styles of Generation Z.

This research began with the collection of observational data, documentation, and literature study to address the problem formulation. The observation was conducted by analyzing the communication styles of Generation Z used by the presidential candidates Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo, as reflected in their content on social media platforms, specifically Instagram and TikTok. Subsequently, documentation was carried out regarding the campaign activities of the three presidential candidates on social media, namely TikTok and Instagram. Following that, a literature review was conducted by analyzing several articles related to the communication styles employed by the three presidential candidates during the 2024 election campaign.



After collecting the data, researchers did interpret data, which is to give meaning to the results of field note related to the results of the analysis of the content of presidential candidates' posts on social media Instagram and TikTok. Then conducting documentation used screenshot Instagram and TikTok posts of presidential candidates who use the communication style of generation Z. Researchers used Miles and Huberman technique analyzing of the data where researchers analyzed data through data reduction, presenting data, and make conclusion or verification. In presenting the data, the researchers described the findings with text that is narrative/words and easy to understand. Researchers described the communication style of Generation Z used by presidential candidates during the 2024 presidential election campaign on the social media channels Instagram and TikTok. Furthermore, the researchers made conclusions based on the data that has been processed through data reduction and data exposure. Where from the reduction of data, data presentation, and the results of the analysis of the gen Z communication style of presidential candidates in the 2024 presidential election campaign in influencing the interest of generation Z voters. The researchers used triangulation method to produce data validity where the triangulation method is a method that functions to check the validity of data with different data collection techniques, namely observation, documentation, and literature study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations, documentation, and literature review conducted during the research, the researcher found that the presidential candidates in the 2024 presidential election are using Generation Z communication styles to influence the interests of Generation Z voters on social media. The researcher discovered that on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo are employing Generation Z communication styles during their campaigns for the 2024 presidential election. The Generation Z communication styles used by the presidential candidates to influence the interests of Generation Z voters on social media in the 2024 presidential election include utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok; preferring to communicate through chat rather than voice calls; having their own language that includes emojis, abbreviations, and specific terms in online communication; maintaining a casual, open, and friendly communication style; disliking a lecturing communication style; and using short videos, stories, and live streaming to communicate and share experiences.

### *The Presidential Candidates Used Social Media Instagram and Tiktok*

From the observation, the researcher found that the presidential candidates Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo used Instagram and TikTok as campaign media. On Instagram, it was found that Prabowo Subianto's account,

@prabowo, had the highest number of followers with 12.9 million, followed by Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan) with 7.4 million followers, and then Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjar\_pranowo) with 6.6 million followers. Among the three presidential candidates, it was evident that Prabowo Subianto had the most followers on Instagram, followed by Anies Baswedan and then Ganjar Pranowo. Meanwhile, on TikTok, it was found that Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjarpranowo) had the most followers with 7.6 million, followed by Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan) with 2.5 million followers, and Prabowo Subianto (@prabowosubianto08) with 700 thousand followers.

**Table 1.** Social Media Account Instagram and TikTok of 2024 Presidential Candidates

Presidential Candidate	Instagram (Followers)	TikTok (Followers)
Prabowo Subianto	12.9 million ( <a href="#">@prabowo</a> )	700 thousand ( <a href="#">@prabowosubianto08</a> )
Anies Baswedan	7.4 million ( <a href="#">@aniesbaswedan</a> )	2.5 million ( <a href="#">@aniesbaswedan</a> )
Ganjar Pranowo	6.6 million ( <a href="#">@ganjar_pranowo</a> )	7.6 million ( <a href="#">@ganjarpranowo</a> )

All president candidates used social media as media campaign where using social media is one of communication style of gen Z. This is in accordance with the results of a survey from digital marketing agency Invinyx and Agency Jakpat survey released the latest report on "Influencer Strategy Mapping on Social Media", where one of the findings is that the Instagram platform remains the most popular social media among Gen Z during 2023. Where, overall, there are two social media platforms that are the most popular and often accessed by respondents, namely Instagram (94 percent) and TikTok (81 percent). Zahlul Iksan also stated that Gen Z has certain characteristics, namely that they prefer to use social media platforms to communicate.

### *Presidential Candidates Like to Communicate Via Chat Rather Than Voice Calls*

The presidential candidates also prefer to make calls through chat rather than voice, where it was found that Anies Baswedan is active every day in making posts on Instagram, posting 1 to 3 times, but does not respond to comments on his posts. Prabowo Subianto is also among the presidential candidates who are less active in uploading posts on Instagram, as he has not posted anything on several occasions, such as on December 24, 2023, December 25, 2023, December 28, 2023, January 3, 2024, January 17, 2024, and January 30, 2024. Furthermore, Ganjar Pranowo is also seen on his Instagram always making at least 3 posts.

Additionally, in terms of enjoying communication through posts with a Generation Z communication style, it was found that Anies Baswedan is a presidential candidate who likes to create posts with interactive captions where he uses questions to encourage comments from his followers, uses the term "friends" to invite his

followers to engage, and addresses "Teman teman Millennial and Gen Z" to greet and communicate with Generation Z through his Instagram posts. As for the presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto, he also used social media posts as a campaign medium for the presidential election; however, the researchers did not find a communication style in his posts that aligns with Generation Z's communication style.

Ganjar Pranowo also utilizes social media posts for communication, but the researchers similarly did not find posts that employ a Generation Z communication style. In addition, based on documentation from Rangkuti (2024) stated that Anies and Ganjar are still active presidential candidates sharing posts on their Instagram feed and stories related to their campaign activities. This can be seen in their second post, which is always present every day, along with the results from their supporters from various backgrounds, including politicians, artists, and civil society, who tag their personal account names. However, on Prabowo Subianto's Instagram account, campaign activities are rarely seen shared regularly, whether in feed posts or stories. Based on the study by Selular Data Insight regarding which presidential and vice-presidential candidates are most active in responding to comments from their followers, it was found that presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo is the most active in replying to his followers' comments on social media.

Meanwhile, presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto is the least responsive to his followers' comments. From the analysis of the data above, it can be concluded that the presidential candidates in the 2024 election are using Generation Z communication styles to influence the interests of Generation Z voters. However, Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo are considered to be the ones who do this most frequently compared to other presidential candidates Prabowo Subianto. From the analysis of the data above, it can be concluded that presidential candidates in the 2024 presidential election use the Gen Z communication style in influencing the interests of generation Z voters, only Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo are the ones who did it more often than presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto. This is in accordance with Zis, et al. that Generation Z is known to prefer to convey messages briefly and clearly so that virtual communication is preferred by Generation Z rather than communicating in person, so presidential candidates need to use posts on social media to influence the interest of Generation Z voting.

### ***Presidential Candidates Used Own Language Includes Emojis, Abbreviations, and Typical Terms in Online Communication***

The communication style of Generation Z used by presidential candidates in the 2024 election to influence the Generation Z voters where gen Z has its own language that includes emojis, abbreviations, and specific terms in online communication. The use of emojis, abbreviations, acronyms, and specific terms in online communication, as well as the use of slogans and jargon, includes creating new phrases, modifying words, or combining words in unique ways to express their feelings or reactions in



texts or online conversations. Based on observations on TikTok and Instagram, it was found that presidential candidates in the 2024 election are using specific terms or phrases commonly used by Generation Z in their Instagram posts. Anies Baswedan used the terms Wakanda and Konoha, K-Pop, and the phrase "*emang boleh?*" Prabowo Subianto also used typical Gen Z terms in his campaign process, such as the slogans "*Sorry ye*" and "*Gemoy*" in several of his social media posts. Ganjar Pranowo used the phrase "*I love you full*" and typical Generation Z pick-up lines in his post. This is in accordance with Zahlul Ikhsan's opinion that Gen Z's communication style has certain characteristics, namely they have their own language in communicating such as the use of emojis, abbreviations, and special terms to communicate.

### ***Generation Z Enjoyed a Relaxed, Open, and Friendly Communication Style***

From the observations, researchers found that presidential candidates used a casual, open, and friendly language on social media, such as using terms like "*anak muda*," "*orang muda*," and "*teman teman*" in their communications. The use of the terms "*anak muda*" or "*orang muda*" here indicated that the presidential candidates want to greet the younger generation, which can be referred to as Generation Z, using a friendly, open, and relaxed communication style. Generation Z does not like communication styles that involve direct reprimands in the form of advice that come off as condescending. When that happens, they do not react immediately but rather avoid it, seeking opinions and support from friends. Generation Z is a generation that places a greater emphasis on open communication, so they tend to prefer being involved in discussions together rather than being lectured or given input on decisions that do not include them. This non-patronizing style of communication leads to tranquillity and enjoyment, support for others, and positive feedback. Generation Z always seeks egalitarian communication and provides space for communication participants to express their ideas and opinions in a relaxed and pressure-free atmosphere. In addition, this generation is brave enough to voice their opinions that they believe to be true. In accordance with Alyustin's opinion that Generation Z tends to avoid dominant and rule-filled communication styles, they prefer a relaxed, friendly, and open communication style.

### ***Generation Z Does Not Like Communication Styles That Involve Direct Reprimands in The Form of Advice That Come Off As Condescending***

Generation Z does not like communication styles that involve direct reprimands in the form of advice that come off as condescending. When that happens, they do not react immediately but rather avoid it, seeking opinions and support from friends. Generation Z is a generation that places a greater emphasis on open communication, so they tend to prefer being involved in discussions together rather than being lectured or given input on decisions that do not include them. This non-patronizing style of communication leads to tranquillity and enjoyment, support for others, and

positive feedback. Generation Z always seeks egalitarian communication and provides space for communication participants to express their ideas and opinions in a relaxed and pressure-free atmosphere. In addition, this generation is brave enough to voice their opinions that they believe to be true. Based on the observations and documentation, it was found that Anies Baswedan employs a non-patronizing communication style during his presidential campaign. It can be seen from several of his captions that ask for the opinions of Generation Z, as well as his program like "*Desak Anies*," where Anies Baswedan invites young people to engage in dialogue. The use of the phrase "*Kebebasan untuk berpendapat*" reflects the fact that freedom of speech aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z. As for Prabowo Subianto and Ganjar Pranowo, the researcher did not find a communication style that was not patronizing according to the communication style of generation Z because in some of his posts he used more formal language. As for presidential candidates using language that is not patronizing or formal according to the communication style of Generation Z in their social media posts, this is in accordance with Alyustin's opinion that Generation Z does not like the style of communication in the form of reprimands or advice that is patronizing, they prefer communication or expressing opinions through dialogue or discussion.

### ***Generation Z Using Short Videos, Stories, and Live Streaming To Communicate and Share Experiences***

Based on observations, it was found that presidential candidate Anies Baswedan used live streaming to communicate with Generation Z. Since the start of the 2024 presidential campaign, Anies Baswedan has been conducting live broadcasts on the TikTok app and has gone viral on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, as well as trending hashtags on X. Additionally, the use of trending short videos and music as campaign media has also been implemented. Prabowo Subianto did not go live on his TikTok account for his presidential campaign but instead made a short video with his cat and danced to "*Oke Gas*" to connect with Generation Z. Ganjar Pranowo, on the other hand, held a TikTok live session with content that was quite engaging and relevant to the needs of Gen Z, focusing on mental health. Next, about the three-finger salute from the Hunger Games movie. In addition, in one of his TikTok videos, Ganjar admitted to being an Army, or a fan of the South Korean group BTS, before his face was edited to resemble Jungkook from BTS, accompanied by photos of other members along with the song "*Standing Next to You*" by Jungkook. It is known that Generation Z enjoys K-Pop, so this can be utilized as a medium for campaigning. This is relate to Muttaqin's opinion that Gen Z prefers visual and interactive content such as the use of short videos, stories, and live streaming as their main way of communicating and sharing experiences.

## CONCLUSION

From the data analysis, the researchers found that presidential candidates used generation Z communication styles in the 2024 presidential election to influence the interest of Generation Z voters, particularly in the language used on social media Instagram and TikTok. The candidates employed generation Z language in their campaigns, including using social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, preferring to communicate through chat rather than voice calls, especially by making posts on social media, and having their own language that includes emojis, abbreviations, and specific terms in online communication, which they incorporate into their campaigns. The presidential candidate also applied a relaxed, open, and friendly communication style, disliking a lecturing approach, and used short videos, stories, and live streaming to communicate and share experiences. Based on the researcher's observations, the presidential candidate who most applied Generation Z communication styles on social media is Anies Baswedan. Then, Prabowo Subianto is the presidential candidate who least frequently used Generation Z communication styles on his social media. He used a more assertive and formal language.

Researchers hope that this research can be used as a reference for readers, especially generation millennial and baby boomers to understand how to communicate with generation Z. In addition, the results of this research can be used as reference for researchers in develop communication science especially about communication style. For further research, this research can be improved by developing from the research instrument, for example by conducting interviews with generation Z regarding the preferred communication style of presidential candidates so the research data obtained can be more complete so it can support research results that are easy for readers to understand. In addition, other researchers can conduct the research related to the communication styles of other candidate leaders related to generation Z.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

The author is a lecturer in Islamic Broadcasting and Communication IAIN Ponorogo. The author compiled, designed, analyzed, and proposed the research by herself. Author developed research instruments and data collection, work on management references, data contributions or analysis tools on the final manuscript by herself.

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