



JUSTICE IN THE VIEWS OF GEN Z IN SINGARAJA CITY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON GEN Z OPINION FORMATION ON JUSTICE IN SOCIETY

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi keadilan di kalangan Generasi Z (Gen Z) di Kota Singaraja dan mengeksplorasi bagaimana media sosial memengaruhi pembentukan opini mereka mengenai prinsip-prinsip keadilan dalam masyarakat. Di era digital yang ditandai dengan pesatnya perkembangan teknologi informasi, media sosial telah menjadi ruang publik digital yang krusial untuk menyebarkan informasi, membentuk pandangan, dan memengaruhi pemikiran generasi muda. Gen Z, yang tumbuh dan berkembang seiring dengan kemajuan teknologi, telah menjadikan media sosial sebagai bagian integral dari kehidupan sehari-hari mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan menggunakan teknik observasional untuk mengamati aktivitas daring Gen Z di platform seperti Instagram, TikTok, dan Twitter. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial menyediakan akses yang luas terhadap informasi dan wacana tentang keadilan, yang pada gilirannya dapat meningkatkan kesadaran sosial, empati, dan keterlibatan mereka dalam isu-isu keadilan sosial.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze perceptions of justice among Generation Z (Gen Z) in Singaraja City and explore how social media influences their opinion formation regarding the principles of justice in society. In the digital era marked by the rapid development of information technology, social media has become a crucial digital public space for disseminating information, shaping views, and influencing the thinking of the younger generation. Gen Z, growing up and developing alongside technological advancements, has made social media an integral part of their daily lives. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, using observational techniques to observe Gen Z's online activities on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. The results indicate that social media provides extensive access to information and discourse on justice, which in turn can increase their social awareness, empathy, and engagement in social justice issues.

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1. Introduction

Justice is one of the fundamental values underlying life in society, nation, and state. In theory, justice encompasses the fair distribution of rights, obligations, and resources to every individual, regardless of social, economic, or cultural background. John Rawls, in his theory of "Justice as Fairness," states that justice is a moral principle that governs the basic structure of society as a whole, with an emphasis on the importance of equal treatment and equal opportunity for all. Over time, the meaning and application of justice have evolved. Justice also experiences development in accordance with the social and cultural context faced by him. In today's digital era, social media has become a new arena for shaping public opinion. These platforms serve not only as communication and entertainment tools, but also as a primary medium for disseminating discourse, values, and ideologies, including social justice issues. In the rapid and limitless flow of information, the younger generation—especially Gen Z—is the most active and influenced group by the dynamics of digital discourse. They act not only as consumers of information but also as producers of content that can influence public opinion. With their critical, open, and technologically savvy nature, Gen Z demonstrates a strong interest in justice issues, such as gender equality, anti-racism, minority rights, and economic and environmental justice.

Singaraja City, as the center of education and culture in North Bali, is a strategic location to investigate this phenomenon. As a city populated by many students, Singaraja has a large Gen Z population that actively uses social media as a means of self-expression and advocacy. Therefore, it is important to examine how they interpret the concept of justice and to what extent social media shapes their views on viral issues, or whether it reflects a deeper critical and ethical awareness. This study aims to analyze Generation Z perceptions in Singaraja City regarding justice in a social and digital context. Furthermore, it also seeks to uncover the extent to which social media influences the formation of their opinions and values regarding justice. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to contribute to strengthening digital and social literacy among the younger generation and encouraging the emergence of a more substantial and reflective discourse on justice in a digital social

2. Methods

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3. Results and Discussion

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1.1 How Social Media Influences Generation Z's Opinion Formation on the Principle of Justice in Singaraja Society.

In the rapidly advancing digital era, social media has become a key instrument in shaping public opinion, especially among Generation Z. In Singaraja, a center of education and culture in North Bali, the influence of social media on the younger generation's views on social values, including justice, is significant. This research shows that the majority of Gen Z in Singaraja develop their understanding and views on the principle of justice not only through formal institutions such as school, family, or religious institutions, but also through the content they consume on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube. Social media provides ample opportunities for Gen Z has access to diverse perspectives on social justice issues. They act not only as passive consumers but also as producers of information through posts, comments, and participation in online discussions. This creates a phenomenon where opinions about justice are often formed through viral and emotional popular narratives, rather than from academic studies or established legal norms.

Content that addresses issues of justice—such as social inequality, discrimination, human rights, and economic inequality—is often presented in a simple, visual, and easily digestible format. This results in a simplification of the concept of justice, which is often understood simply as "social justice" in the sense of equal distribution or equal treatment. The concept of procedural or retributive justice, which is more complex and requires an understanding of the law, is often overlooked. Furthermore, this research shows that social media algorithms also play a significant role in creating an "echo chamber" where Gen Z tends to only be exposed to content that aligns with their pre-existing views. This situation leads to opinion polarization, where the principle of justice is no longer understood as a universal value negotiable in public discussion, but rather as a group identity that must be defended. For example, in viral cases such as government action against demonstrations or agrarian conflicts, opinions are often reactive and emotional, with little room for legal or rational considerations.

On the other hand, social media also opens up significant opportunities for Gen Z to become agents of change. Many of them are actively involved in social justice campaigns, utilizing digital platforms to organize movements, spread petitions, or criticize government policies. This digital participation reflects a growing critical awareness, although it still needs to be guided by information literacy and a deeper understanding of the law. In the local context of Singaraja City, this is interesting because its people are at a crossroads between traditional Balinese values and the currents of digital modernization. Gen Z in Singaraja demonstrates a hybridization of values, where the principles of justice they adhere to are the result of negotiations between customary norms, family influences, and exposure to global digital content. Many respondents in this study admitted to experiencing confusion or value conflict when the principles of justice they embrace through social media conflict with local values or family teachings. For example, issues of gender equality or LGBTQ rights, often championed on social media, often conflict with the conservative views prevalent in their social circles.

Overall, the influence of social media on Generation Z's opinion formation regarding the principle of justice is ambivalent. On the one hand, social media can broaden horizons, open

access to various narratives about justice, and encourage social engagement. However, without adequate educational support, social media has the potential to become a source of misinformation and radicalization of opinion. Therefore, it is crucial to develop a structured digital literacy strategy, especially among school and college students, to ensure that their understanding of justice is not merely emotional and populist, but also grounded in critical analysis, legal values, and local cultural context.

1.2 The Most Relevant Social Justice Issues Among Generation Z in Singaraja.

Social justice has become an increasingly relevant topic in various societal contexts in Indonesia, and this attention has recently increased among the younger generation, particularly Gen Z. Gen Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2012, grew up in an era of rapid advances in information technology and social media. They have fast and unlimited access to global information, making them more sensitive to social justice issues than previous generations. In this context, Singaraja, the capital of Buleleng Regency in Bali, has unique social, cultural, and economic characteristics, making discussions about social justice in this region interesting to examine in more depth, especially from the perspective of the younger generation. One social justice issue that is highly relevant to Gen Z in Singaraja is unequal access to education. Education is considered a key to creating social mobility and opening up opportunities for young people to improve their lives. However, the reality on the ground shows that access to education in Singaraja, especially in rural and outlying areas, is still far from equitable.

Many schools lack learning facilities, adequate teaching staff, and technology to support digital learning. Yet, Gen Z is a generation familiar with technology and internet-based learning methods. While many students in urban areas have access to laptops, fast internet, and various online educational platforms, many students in villages around Singaraja still struggle with very limited resources and even struggle to participate in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This gap creates a strong sense of injustice among young people, and they are beginning to advocate for the importance of equitable education as a basic human right.

The second highly relevant issue for Gen Z in Singaraja is gender equality and the role of women in society. Although Bali is known for its strong traditional structures, these systems often reinforce gender stereotypes that limit women's mobility. In some traditional villages, women still face restrictions in land ownership, participation in village forums, and even strategic decision-making. Gen Z, on the other hand, grew up with global values that emphasize gender equality and human rights. They understand that women have equal rights to higher education, work in the formal sector, and hold leadership positions. The inconsistency between these modern values and patriarchal local practices often creates internal conflict and a drive for change.

Many young women in Singaraja are now active in social organizations, women's communities, and digital movements advocating for improved gender policies, both at the village and district levels. Economic inequality is increasingly being felt as a source of social injustice experienced by Generation Z. Singaraja, located in North Bali, often lags behind in economic development compared to the more advanced South Bali, thanks to the support of the tourism sector. This gap impacts employment opportunities, family welfare, and access to public services. Members of Gen Z born into low-income families often have to struggle to provide for themselves, including continuing their education to a higher level or starting their own businesses. The limited employment opportunities in Singaraja for young graduates further exacerbate this situation, pushing many to migrate to Denpasar or even outside Bali in search of a better life. In this context, social justice not only means equal rights but also demands an active role for the state in distributing economic resources fairly and equitably throughout the region.

Furthermore, environmental issues are a major concern for Gen Z in Singaraja, within the context of social justice. They recognize that environmental degradation, such as river pollution, forest destruction, and coastal erosion, impacts not only the ecosystem, but also the lives of communities dependent on natural resources. For example, traditional farmers and fishermen, who make up a large part of Buleleng's population, are severely impacted by climate change and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. Gen Z understands that this injustice is not only an ecological issue, but also relates to the social and economic sustainability of the community. They are active in environmental campaigns, initiating beach clean-up movements, and opposing development that threatens the environment without considering its impact on local communities.

The issue of inclusivity towards minority groups, whether in terms of faith, sexual orientation, or disability, is also crucial. Although Balinese society is known to be quite open, social discrimination against those deemed "different" still exists. Gen Z, having grown up in a digital and inclusive environment, is highly sensitive to this issue. They encourage society to be more open and accepting of differences and demand that public policies guarantee protection for all groups without discrimination. Discussions about LGBTQ+, disability, and religious minorities are beginning to emerge in public and academic spaces in Singaraja, demonstrating that this generation no longer tolerates forms of injustice that have long been considered taboo.

Thus, Gen Z in Singaraja is faced with a variety of interconnected and complex social justice issues. They are no longer simply policy objects, but rather critical, vocal agents of change who actively participate in social processes. Through social media, communities, and grassroots movements, they continue to push for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society. The public and government need to listen to their voices, because the future of social justice in Singaraja and Indonesia as a whole will be determined by Gen Z.

1.3 Generation Z's Views on Justice in Singaraja Compared to Previous Generations.

Singaraja, the capital of Buleleng Regency in Bali, boasts a rich cultural and historical heritage, including values of social justice. Justice has always been a key issue in community life, both at the local and national levels. However, understandings of justice continue to evolve with the changing generations. Generation Z, which includes those born between 1997 and 2012, exhibits a significant shift in perspective compared to previous generations, such as Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Y or Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). A study conducted through in-depth observation of social life in Singaraja revealed that Generation Z exhibits a high sensitivity to universal issues of justice. They are more open to the concepts of gender equality, inclusivity, human rights, and environmental justice. For example, many of them actively participate in digital campaigns to champion educational equality in remote areas of North Bali, including villages around Singaraja. Generation Z doesn't rely solely on formal channels to convey their knowledge of injustice, but also utilize social media as an alternative platform to raise public awareness.

Meanwhile, Generation X tends to view justice through the lens of tradition and existing norms. Interviews with several elderly community leaders in Buleleng revealed that they view justice as harmony in social relationships and adherence to customary law (*awig-awig*). They believe that justice is achieved when one respects social hierarchy, practices customary justice, and maintains collective harmony, which is heavily influenced by the Balinese social structure, which upholds family values and the unity of traditional villages. Millennials, on the other hand, exhibit more transitional characteristics. They are beginning to recognize new ideas, such as political participation and individual rights, although the traditional values of previous generations remain influential. In Singaraja, millennials tend to be more active in community

activities based on youth organizations, but still consider the views of traditional and religious leaders.

Unlike previous generations, Generation Z in Singaraja demonstrates the courage to challenge long-standing structures deemed unfair, even when based on customary norms. For example, on issues related to land inheritance or women's rights in the restitution of customary decisions, they are more vocal in criticizing systems deemed unfair, even though they have long been accepted by society. This generation adopts a critical and argumentative approach supported by modern education and widespread access to information. Technology also plays a significant role in shaping Generation Z's views on justice. With the advent of the internet, social media, and digital literacy, they have become more aware of global justice issues such as discrimination, climate change, and economic inequality. They often compare conditions in Singaraja with those in other countries, fostering expectations for higher standards of justice. For example, the emergence of local movements opposing environmental destruction caused by hotel or mining development in Buleleng is often driven by the younger generation with a strong ecological awareness. However, this shift is not easily accepted by all groups. There is tension between Generation Z's idealism and the socio-cultural reality, which is still heavily influenced by traditional structures. Some parents and traditional leaders view Generation Z as too radical and lacking respect for local wisdom. This situation creates unique challenges for the younger generation in their advocacy for justice, as they often have to find a balance between modernity and tradition.

From a political perspective, Generation Z in Singaraja is beginning to show interest in public engagement, although not yet in a formal way, such as running for legislative office. They prefer to participate in public discussions, create educational content, and utilize community forums to voice their aspirations. They are not only fighting for justice for themselves, but also for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, religious minorities, and women. Therefore, it can be concluded that Generation Z's views on justice in Singaraja are more egalitarian, based on data and rational arguments, and balanced in prioritizing individual and collective rights. Unlike previous generations, which were more normative and bound by tradition, Generation Z adopts a progressive approach while maintaining dialogue with local values. They act as drivers of change in the discourse on justice at the local level, which is gradually triggering social transformation in Singaraja.

1.4 The Role of Gen Z Idols on Social Media in Shaping Opinions About Justice.

In this fast-paced and interconnected digital era, social media has played a key role in shaping social, political, and cultural dynamics, especially for Generation Z. This generation, born between 1997 and early 2012, grew up in a digital environment that has almost completely shaped their identities, values, and ways of understanding the world. Social media is more than just a place for entertainment or informal communication; it has become a primary arena where ideas, values, and opinions are formed, disseminated, and debated. Within this space, the idols Gen Z follows have significant influence, particularly in shaping their views on issues of justice. These idols are not always conventional celebrities such as famous actors or musicians. They also include social media influencers, young activists, content creators, and academics who are able to package complex narratives in a more understandable format. They possess significant symbolism and cultural power, as they are considered representatives of Gen Z's aspirations, emotions, and collective identity. In many cases, followers trust these figures more than formal figures such as politicians, senior academics, or religious leaders.

Social media provides a space for these figures to express their opinions, advocate for values, and shape broader narratives related to justice, whether in social, economic, legal,

environmental, or gender and racial justice. They not only express their opinions but also create a series of visual, emotional, and interactive narratives that make justice issues feel close and relevant to their followers. For example, when a figure like Greta Thunberg uploads a video criticizing world leaders who have failed to address the climate crisis, its impact is felt not only in official forums like the UN, but also sparks lengthy discussions in the comments sections of Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, followed by millions of young people from all over the world, including Indonesia. The justice narratives promoted by these figures are often conveyed through a powerful storytelling approach, involving personal stories, injustices, responses to global events, or calls to action. By combining visual aesthetics, concise data, and emotional elements, they create a new discursive space that combines activism with entertainment (entertainment-activism). At this point, opinion formation no longer occurs linearly as in the old communication model, but rather becomes circular, interactive, and involves emotions and identity affiliations.

One of the main strengths of Gen Z idols on social media is the closeness they build with their audiences. This relationship is often referred to as a parasocial relationship, where followers feel a personal connection with their idols even though they have never met them in person. This connection makes their messages feel more authentic and convincing, even though they may not always be based on authority or academic capability. When they voice opinions about justice, many followers accept them without further verification, thanks to the established emotional trust. However, the relationship between idols and their followers also has potential problems that require caution. Not all idols fully understand the social and political contexts on which they comment. In some cases, opinions about justice can lead to oversimplification or even misinformation. For example, on sensitive issues like the Palestinian conflict-Issues such as Israel, gender justice, or legal justice are often presented in a black-and-white narrative, failing to engage the audience with complex perspectives. This phenomenon creates room for bias and polarization, sometimes even triggering symbolic violence, because opinions are formed without critical discussion and are based solely on the appeal of the individual expressing them.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that many Gen Z idols play a constructive role in shaping more progressive and just opinions. In Indonesia, for example, figures like Jerome Polin, Cinta Laura, Gita Savitri, and Deny Sumargo often use their platforms to voice issues such as social justice, education, mental health, and the importance of legal integrity. They present information in a style relevant to the younger generation, incorporating data, simplifying academic concepts, and creating a space for followers to discuss. This demonstrates that social media can be an egalitarian educational space when used ethically and responsibly. What is interesting about the role of idols in shaping opinions about justice among Gen Z is that this process is participatory, not top-down. Followers are not merely passive consumers, but often reproduce and adapt narratives to suit their local context, even creating new versions that are closer to their personal experiences. This reflects a participatory culture, where each individual can act as both a producer and consumer of information.

On the one hand, this phenomenon expands the democratization of information. However, on the other hand, if opinions are formed more by the personal appeal of figures than by the quality of the arguments presented, there is a risk that narratives about justice will become mere commodification. Some influencers, for example, talk about justice simply because it's trendy, rather than out of a deep ideological commitment. This makes public opinion among Gen Z vulnerable to fluctuations, sensationalism, and the influence of algorithms that prioritize viral content over substantive content. To optimize the role of social media idols as a positive force in shaping opinions about justice, systematic support in the form of good media literacy is needed. Gen Z needs to be equipped with critical thinking skills, the ability to evaluate information, and the ability to recognize bias. Likewise, idols, academics, journalists, and

activists are crucial in ensuring that the justice narratives they create have a real impact, not just go viral. In an ever-changing digital world, justice must remain a living principle and be fought for together, not just a slogan in social media posts.

4. Conclusion

This research shows that social media platforms play a key role in shaping Gen Z's views on the principle of justice in Singaraja. Gen Z not only consumes information but also actively creates and disseminates it, creating space for energetic discussion but also being susceptible to simplification of ideas and divisive views. Social media presents justice issues in a concise, visual, and emotional format, often overlooking the complexities of laws and norms prevailing in local communities. The term "echo chamber" reinforces homogenous views and reduces tolerance for divergent views, making the principle of justice feel more like a group characteristic than a universal value. However, Gen Z's participation in digital advocacy activities shows great potential for shaping a more socially aware society, although this needs to be supported by adequate digital literacy and legal understanding. Singaraja's context, which lies between traditional values and the influence of digital modernization, plays a crucial role in this dynamic. There is a complex process of value negotiation between customary norms, family teachings, and the global impact of social media. Therefore, digital literacy education integrated with local cultural values and legal understanding is crucial to fostering a more critical, balanced, and contextualized understanding of justice among Gen Z.

The phenomenon of parasocial relationships between idols and followers makes the messages conveyed seem more authentic and convincing, even though they are not always based on academic credibility. However, this also carries the risk of oversimplification, the spread of misinformation, and the polarization of public opinion. Nevertheless, many idols also contribute constructively by voicing important issues such as social justice, education, and mental health. They create participatory discussion spaces and encourage a more critical literacy culture among young people. However, without strong media literacy, Gen Z public opinion remains vulnerable to the influence of algorithms, viral trends, and the commodification of issues. Therefore, to ensure that social media becomes a positive force in shaping justice awareness among Gen Z, systematic support for critical literacy is needed, as well as an active role from all parties from digital idols, academics, journalists, and educational institutions ensuring that justice narratives remain meaningful, profound, and have a real impact.

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