

## Emotions as A Driving Factor of Political Conformity Among Generation Z in Regional Elections

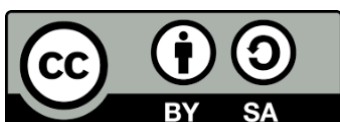
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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of conformity on the emotional aspects of Generation Z in determining political choices in local elections. The research involved 40 respondents who are online game players in Gowa Regency, consisting of both male and female participants. The research instrument used questionnaires containing 32 items for the conformity variable and 32 items for the emotional variable. The descriptive analysis showed that the respondents' conformity level was in the moderate category with a mean score of 37 (SD = 4.03), while their emotional level was also in the moderate category with a mean score of 37.01 (SD = 5.6). Normality and linearity tests confirmed that the data were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ) and revealed a significant linear relationship between the two variables ( $p = 0.02$ ). Simple regression analysis indicated that conformity influenced the emotional aspects of Generation Z by 12.6%, with a regression coefficient of 0.415, suggesting a positive relationship. These findings highlight that the higher the tendency of Generation Z to conform to their group, the stronger the emotional influence in their political decision-making. The results are consistent with social psychology and emotional intelligence theories, which emphasize that social pressure can reinforce individuals' emotional responses. Therefore, conformity plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of Generation Z's emotional involvement, particularly in the context of political behavior in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Emotion, Conformity, Generation Z



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**INTRODUCTION**

The democratic festivity in Indonesia has always been a significant moment awaited by all segments of society, both the older and younger generations. Each individual holds political preferences regarding candidates deemed most eligible to be elected as regional leaders. In the decision-making process, the public assesses candidates based on various aspects, ranging from personality, vision and mission, to family and educational background. Such considerations are inseparable from the image projected by the candidates. Differences in political choices are natural, as they are influenced by individual character, emotions, and socio-cultural values inherent in each person.

Within this context, first-time voters, particularly Generation Z, emerge as a group of interest. Following the 2024 Presidential and Legislative Elections, the political orientation of Generation Z has gained serious attention from political parties, legislative candidates, as well as presidential and vice-presidential nominees. Various stakeholders seek to utilize social media as a campaign platform by presenting political gimmicks tailored to the characteristics and interests of this generation. The political preferences of Gen Z not only shape campaign strategies but also influence the nomination of regional leaders by political parties. Moreover, the aspirations of this young demographic have become a reference point in political surveys to map potential public support. This indicates that Generation Z holds a strategic position in the landscape of contemporary political power.

Generation Z demonstrates a tendency toward conformity, which is closely related to their characteristics as a digital generation. Their lives are strongly embedded in information technology, making the adoption of digital norms a part of their daily practices, including in political decision-making. Social media algorithms tend to present content aligned with users' interests and preferences, which results in users being exposed primarily to information consistent with their existing views. Consequently, opportunities to encounter differing perspectives are limited, thereby reinforcing pre-existing beliefs and encouraging conformity within groups holding similar views.

Conformity in this context can be explained through two aspects: *normative influence*—the tendency to follow a group in order to be accepted, appreciated, or not rejected—and *informational influence*—the tendency to follow a group because of the belief that the group possesses more accurate knowledge or information. These two aspects ultimately shape the emotional bonds that drive political conformity among Generation Z.

Emotions play a significant role in shaping Generation Z's decisions, where their actions are often driven by sentiments and personal values rather than purely rational considerations. This is evident in their responses to global issues such as climate change and social justice. Therefore, the ability to manage emotional awareness becomes a crucial aspect for Generation Z to make decisions that are more objective and balanced. Emotional factors also influence their political attitudes, as emotions are closely related to feelings, thoughts, biological states, and behavioral tendencies. Well-managed emotions can foster motivation and political participation, yet when left uncontrolled, they may lead to negative attitudes such as apathy or even rejection of the democratic process.

According to Daniel Goleman, emotions are linked to feelings, thoughts, biological conditions, and tendencies to act. Emotions can serve as a motivational driver when properly managed, but they may also have adverse effects if left uncontrolled. Commonly experienced emotions include fear, anger, happiness, joy, hatred, jealousy, and sadness (Goleman, 2024). As an essential part of psychological aspects, emotions are strongly attached to almost every human behavior. James emphasized that one important factor in emotion is the feedback arising from physiological changes in the body as a response to fear- or confusion-inducing situations. Typically, individuals are aware of emotions they experience, such as anger, joy, or fear, yet they may not always be conscious of internal changes such as blood pressure or organ activity.

Studies have shown that today's adolescents tend to be more comfortable interacting through social media rather than engaging in face-to-face communication within the family (Rakhmaniar, 2024; Novilia et al., 2019). Furthermore, there is a perceptual gap regarding emotional support: about 27.5% of adolescents feel they always receive parental support, while 76.9% of parents believe they have consistently provided it (CDC, as reported by Parents.com, 2024). Social media interactions may also substitute for direct contact with peers and negatively impact adolescents' communication skills and self-confidence (Child Mind Institute, 2025).

Research by Hazwa (2025) indicates that the phenomenon of conformity affects Generation Z's emotional experiences by pushing them to follow social media trends in order to be accepted within social groups. The pressure to conform to norms popularized by online communities often compels them to sacrifice self-expression and personal identity. Moreover, Generation Z may also experience the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), which refers to the anxiety of being "left out" by not participating in currently popular activities. This is supported by the study of Effendi and Roem (2021), which demonstrates that social media strengthens conformity pressures through expectations shaped by online groups. Meanwhile, Nadhirah (2006) observes that young people tend to lose the ability to distinguish their own preferences and opinions due to pressures to comply with norms perceived as "correct" by their communities.

With the ease of access in the digital sphere through trends, politics has successfully penetrated and influenced public opinion among both generations through digital spaces, including politics, policymaking, and even elections. Generation Z individuals tend to follow trends and prevailing standards within social media, digital platforms, and online communities they are engaged in. A survey conducted by Litbang Kompas five days after the 2024 Legislative and Presidential Elections on February 14 revealed that 12.3 percent of Generation Z voters made their choice spontaneously at the polling booth. This percentage was the highest compared to older generations (Kompas, 21/2/2024). Their preferences were shaped by figures from their communities, admired and supported public figures, and programs considered relevant to Gen Z's needs. Regardless of elite-level dynamics, Generation Z, as the second-largest voter group in the 2024 Regional Elections, requires clarity in the candidates they will support. With greater access to information, candidates' track records and their commitment to development and democracy can be easily scrutinized—an aspect that should not be underestimated in determining regional leadership. The findings from Litbang Kompas, which positioned Generation Z as a superior voter group, are not without reason, as this generation has become the nation's successors, using social media and technology to disseminate political information and mobilize support for candidates or specific issues.

This is consistent with research conducted by Irma (2024) entitled *The Role of Generation Z in the 2024 Elections in Indonesia*, which found that Generation Z tends to pay attention to issues of environmental sustainability, gender equality, and social justice, all of which may influence political agendas and candidate preferences. Generation Z's role in the 2024 elections is also reflected in their potential to become candidates or elected officials themselves. This generation holds the potential to bring new perspectives and innovations into the political arena while representing the voice of young people in political decision-making. Thus, the role of Generation Z in the 2024 elections can serve as a key determinant of political direction and electoral outcomes. It is therefore important for political leaders and parties to consider the aspirations and needs of Generation Z in order to secure their support in future elections. Based on the discussion above and supported by previous studies, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled *Emotions as a Driving Factor of Political Conformity among Generation Z in Regional Elections*.

## METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design, which utilizes numerical data from the stages of data collection to data analysis. The analysis was conducted using SPSS to examine the extent to which emotional factors influence the political conformity of Generation Z in determining their choice of regional leaders. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 32 statement items for each variable, measured using a Likert scale with four response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items in the scale were designed in both positive (favorable) and negative (unfavorable) forms for each variable.

The sampling technique employed was saturated sampling, whereby the entire population was used as the research sample. The sample comprised five groups of online game players who regularly gather at least three times a week, consisting of both male and female participants. The research subjects were individuals aged 18–23 years who were members of particular groups or communities (Sugiyono, 2020).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study employed a questionnaire administered to 40 respondents, consisting of both male and female online game players residing in Gowa Regency. The instrument used comprised two variables: emotions, measured through 32 items, and Generation Z's conformity, also measured through 32 items. Based on the distribution of the questionnaires, data were obtained that describe the levels of conformity and emotions among the respondents. The results of the questionnaire distribution for the conformity variable are presented as follows:

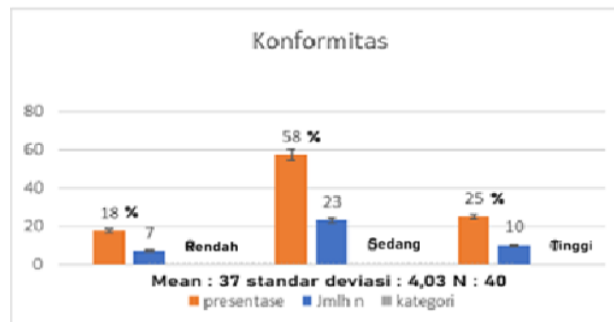


Figure 1. Konformitas

Based on the results of the conformity questionnaire distributed to 40 respondents, the mean score obtained was 37 with a standard deviation of 4.03. Descriptive analysis indicated that 7 respondents (18%) fell into the low category, 23 respondents (58%) were in the medium category, and 10 respondents (25%) were in the high category. Overall, the measurement results of the conformity scale placed the respondents in the medium category.

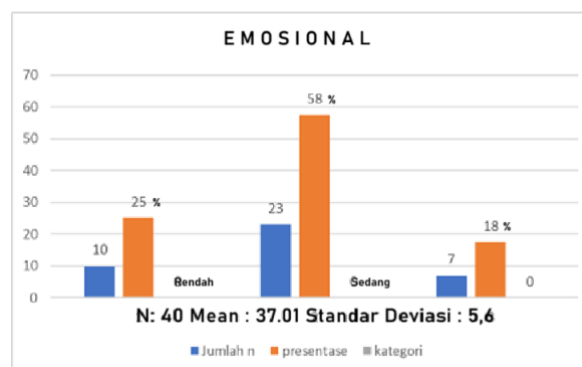


Figure 2. Emosional

Based on the results of the emotional aspect questionnaire administered to 40 respondents, the mean score obtained was 37.01 with a standard deviation of 5.6. The distribution of emotional levels among Generation Z indicated that 10 respondents (25%) were in the low category, 23 respondents (58%) were in the medium category, and 7 respondents (18%) were in the high category. Thus, it can be concluded that the overall emotional level of Generation Z falls within the medium category.

The results of the normality test showed that both the conformity variable (X) and the emotional variable (Y) were normally distributed, with criteria  $p > 0.05$ . The significance values obtained were  $Y = 0.446$  and  $X = 0.312$ , respectively. Meanwhile, the linearity test indicated a significant influence between conformity and emotions among Generation Z, with a significance value of 0.02 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1.** Normalitas

Variabel	K-SZ	Sig	Status
Emosional	0,446	P>0.05	Normal
konformitas	0,312	P>0.05	Normal

Regresion	Nilai	Sig	Status
XY	0,02	P<0.05	Linear

After conducting the normality and linearity tests, the next stage was hypothesis testing using simple regression analysis to determine whether there is an influence of Generation Z's conformity on emotions. The results of the simple regression analysis are presented in the following table.

**Tabel 2.** Hipotesis

variabel	R	Sig	Unstandarized B
Konformitas	0.126	0.02	26.774
			0.415

Based on the table above, it was found that conformity influences the emotional aspect of Generation Z in determining their choices in regional elections by 12.6%. The regression equation shows that the constant value of 26.774 indicates that when the conformity variable (X) is zero, the emotional level (Y) is at 26.774. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient of 0.415 signifies that each one-unit increase in the conformity variable will raise the emotional score by 0.415. Thus, there is a positive relationship between conformity and emotions among Generation Z.

The results of the data analysis using simple regression further indicate a positive and significant relationship between conformity and emotions, with a significance value of 0.02 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the higher the tendency of Generation Z to conform to their group, the greater the emotional influence in determining their political choices, particularly in regional elections. These findings affirm that conformity is one of the crucial factors that can strengthen the emotional involvement of Generation Z in the political process.

In line with these findings, Hazwa (2025) emphasized that the phenomenon of conformity encourages Generation Z to follow social media trends as a means of gaining acceptance within social groups. This drive influences their emotional aspects, as the desire to be recognized and accepted makes Generation Z more susceptible to collective emotions in political decision-making.

This perspective can be better understood through the concept of emotional intelligence proposed by Daniel Goleman (2015), who argued that emotions significantly affect thinking processes, decision-making, and social behavior. Goleman highlighted that individuals with low emotional control are more easily influenced by their social environment. Within the context of this study, Generation Z, whose emotions are shaped by conformity pressures, tends to make political decisions based more on emotional impulses than rational analysis.

Similarly, Baron and Byrne (2005), in their study of social psychology, explained that conformity represents an individual's response to social influences, whether explicit or implicit, from the group. They stressed that social pressure can lead to significant changes in attitudes and behaviors, particularly when individuals seek acceptance from their environment. This is evident among Generation Z, where emotional involvement in politics is reinforced by conformity to majority opinions circulating on social media and online communities.

From an empirical standpoint, political survey results on Generation Z in Indonesia also support these findings. The Indonesian Political Indicator Survey (2023) reported that more than 55% of young voters, particularly Generation Z, admitted that their political decisions were influenced by social media trends and peer opinions. This data is consistent with the results of the simple regression analysis in this study, which showed that 12.6% of the variation in Generation Z's emotional state can be explained by conformity, while the remaining variance is influenced by other factors such as media information, family political identity, and personal experiences.

Thus, it can be interpreted that conformity is not merely a social factor but also shapes the emotional dynamics of Generation Z. This influence is evident in their political behavior, where the desire for group acceptance, limited political experience, and high emotional engagement with social media trends often result in political preferences that are more emotional than rational.

## CONCLUSION

This finding reinforces the notion that the stronger Generation Z's tendency to conform to their social groups, the greater their emotional involvement in the political decision-making process. These results are consistent with theories of social psychology and emotional intelligence, which explain that social pressure can shape individuals' emotional responses, and are further supported by empirical data demonstrating the dominant influence of social media and peer opinions on Generation Z's political decisions. Thus, conformity can be understood not only as a social factor but also as a critical variable that amplifies Generation Z's emotional engagement in politics. This dynamic indicates that the political preferences of Generation Z are more likely to be driven by emotional impulses rather than rational analysis.

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