

Public Opinion Formation in the Digital Age : A Review of Literature

Diah Fatma Sjoraida^{1*}, Bucky Wibawa Karya Guna², Aat Ruchiat Nugraha³, Daniel Pasaribu⁴, Novianty Djafri⁵

^{1,3}Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

² Sekolah Tinggi Musik Bandung, Indonesia

⁴Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

⁵Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia

*Corresponding email:diah.fatma@unpad.ac.id

Abstract

The digital age has brought significant changes in the way people access and process information. Social media and other online platforms have become a major source of information and public opinion. This study aims to review the literature on public opinion formation in the digital age. This study uses the literature review method to analyze literature relevant to the research topic. A literature review shows that the digital age has had a significant impact on the formation of public opinion. Social media and other online platforms have become the primary means for individuals to access information, share ideas, and exchange opinions. This has led to changes in the way public opinion is formed and disseminated. The formation of public opinion in the digital age is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Social media and other online platforms have an important role to play in shaping public opinion. A better understanding of the process of forming public opinion in the digital age is needed to develop effective communication strategies and build a more democratic society.

Keywords: Public opinion formation, digital age, social media, online platform

Introduction

Public opinion has an important role in society because it can influence the decisions and actions of individuals and institutions (Garritzmann et al., 2023). By having accurate and relevant information, public opinion can help people make wiser and rational decisions, as well as influence policies and decisions taken by governments and other organizations. In addition, public opinion can also influence the culture and values of society, as well as strengthen or influence social and political changes that occur (Jardine et al., 2024; Rhee et al., 2024). In modern society, public opinion also has an important role in influencing business and financial decisions. Companies that pay attention to public opinion can improve their reputation and increase customer trust, while those that do not pay attention to public opinion can suffer heavy losses (Bayes et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important for individuals and organizations to pay attention to public opinion and influence that opinion in an ethical and transparent way. Thus, public opinion can be an effective tool in influencing better decisions and actions in society (Wlezien, 2019).

The changing media landscape in the digital age has had a significant impact on the way we access, consume and share information. Technologies such as the internet, social media, and mobile devices have changed the way people access real-time breaking news,

participate in content creation, respond through comments, and quickly share information with others (Garritzmann et al., 2023a). Thus, traditional mass media such as television, newspapers, and radio have experienced a decline in advertising revenue, forcing them to look for new ways to generate revenue (Bremer & Bürgisser, 2023).

Changes in media consumer behavior have also become a significant phenomenon in the digital age. Consumers can easily access the latest news in real-time, participate in content creation, provide responses through comments, and quickly share information with others. This has created major challenges for the mass media, threatening existing business models and forcing the media industry to adapt quickly (Sutrisno, 2023). In recent decades, rapid technological change has changed the way people access, consume, and share information, making traditional mass media have had to adapt quickly to stay relevant.

Furthermore, digital media exerting influence on the formation of public opinion has become very significant in today's digital era. Digital media such as social media, news websites, and blogs have become the main source of information for people, giving them wider and faster access to share information and participate in discussions (Polizzi, 2023). Thus, digital media has great power in influencing public opinion and views, especially through repeated and continuous reporting, as well as through the presentation of certain points of view in their reporting (Khrais & Gabbori, 2023a). The use of digital media in political campaigns has also increased its influence in shaping public opinion. Political candidates use social media platforms to disseminate campaign messages, interact with voters, and build their support base (Tkáčová et al., 2023). Thus, digital media allows candidates to be more effective in reaching a wider audience and influencing public opinion. In addition, the technology of processing data and targetting advertisements is also used more sophisticatedly in targeting potential voters, expanding reach, and increasing campaign effectiveness (Garritzmann et al., 2023b).

However, the influence of digital media can also have a negative impact if it is not used in an ethical and transparent way. The spread of inaccurate information or hoaxes through digital media can influence unwise decision making and increase communication gaps in society (Alenezi, 2023). Therefore, it is important for digital media to maintain the quality of the information presented and to ensure that the information disseminated is accurate and balanced. Thus, digital media can continue to play an important role in shaping public opinion effectively and ethically (Bearman et al., 2023; Turyadi et al., 2023).

In the digital era, how is the process of forming public opinion influenced by the use of digital technology and social media? Does the use of digital technology and social media affect how people obtain, evaluate, and use information, and how they evaluate the credibility of information sources? In this context, this problem can be discussed through literature analysis related to digital literacy, literacy skills, and the influence of digital media on the process of forming public opinions. Therefore, this study aims to review the literature on public opinion formation in the digital age.

Research Methods

This research uses a literature review approach to collect and evaluate various literature sources related to social transformation in the digital era. We select relevant and

up-to-date sources, including journal articles, books, research reports, and other sources of information that contain information related to social transformation in the digital age. We also use qualitative analysis to identify and analyze themes and concepts related to social transformation in the digital age, as well as to understand how the use of digital technologies affects the process of public opinion formation. In this stage, researchers also conduct systematic literature reviews to identify the latest trends, important findings, and the latest developments in virtual sociology studies. We compare and integrate findings from multiple sources to produce a comprehensive picture of the topic of social transformation in the digital age. By doing so, we can offer deeper insights into how digital technologies influence people's opinion-forming processes and how society obtains, evaluates, and uses information in the digital age.

Result and Discussion

Factors Influencing The Formation of Public Opinion in The Digital Age

Social media has become a very popular platform for sharing information and ideas. This factor influences how people obtain, evaluate, and use information, as well as how they evaluate the credibility of information sources. Social media also affects the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics (Zhang & Chen, 2023). In this context, studies have shown that social media has a significant impact on the formation of public opinion, including in terms of its influence on political and cultural opinions. Digital technology has influenced the way society obtains, evaluates, and uses information. This factor influences the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that digital technology has a significant impact on the formation of public opinion, including in terms of its influence on political and cultural opinions (Hoang Anh Tuan et al., n.d.)

The sources of information used in the formation of public opinion influence the way society obtains, evaluates, and uses information. This factor influences the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that credible and reliable sources of information influence the way people form opinions, while non-credible sources of information can influence the way people form inaccurate opinions (Helbing et al., 2023). In addition, political participation affects the way people form opinions on various topics, including political opinions. This factor influences the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that political participation influences the way people form opinions, including in terms of their influence on political and cultural opinions (Timotheou et al., 2023).

Digital literacy skills influence the way people form opinions on a variety of topics, including political opinions. This factor influences the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that digital literacy skills influence the way people form opinions, including in terms of their influence on political and cultural opinions (Apeti, 2022).

The Formation of Public Opinion In The Digital Age Towards Civil Society

In the digital age, the formation of public opinion undergoes significant changes. The presence of the internet and social media has changed the way people get information and

voice their opinions. In the context of civil society, these changes have far-reaching and profound impacts. Digital technologies allow information to spread quickly and create new forums for public discussion and debate, which in turn influences the formation of public opinion as a whole. One important aspect of public opinion formation in the digital age is wider access to information. The Internet allows people to access various sources of news and information from all over the world quickly and easily. This provides an opportunity for people to compare different perspectives before forming opinions. However, on the other hand, abundant information can also be confusing and cause confusion if not verified properly.

The formation of public opinion in the digital age has become a very relevant topic in the context of social and cultural transformation. In the digital age, digital technologies have influenced the way people obtain, evaluate, and use information, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. Digital literacy skills influence the way people form opinions, including in terms of their influence on political and cultural opinions. The use of digital technology has influenced the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that digital technology has a significant impact on the formation of public opinion, including in terms of its influence on political and cultural opinions (Sevignani, 2022).

The use of social media has become a very popular platform for sharing information and ideas. This factor influences how people obtain, evaluate, and use information, as well as how they evaluate the credibility of information sources. Social media also affects the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics (Helbing et al., 2023). In this context, studies have shown that social media has a significant impact on the formation of public opinion, including in terms of its influence on political and cultural opinions. In addition, the use of digital technology and social media affects the way people form opinions on various topics, including political opinions. This factor influences the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that digital technologies and social media have a significant impact on the formation of public opinion, including in terms of their influence on political and cultural opinions (Timotheou et al., 2023).

The use of digital technology and social media affects the way people form opinions on various topics, including political opinions. This factor influences the way people interact and communicate, as well as how they form opinions on various topics. In this context, studies have shown that digital technology and social media have a significant impact on the formation of public opinion, including in terms of their influence on political and cultural opinions. The active participation of the public in public discussions through digital platforms also contributes to the formation of dynamic public opinion. Online forums, social media comments, and digital petitions provide a space for citizens to voice their views and engage in the democratic process more directly. It can strengthen civil society by ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered (Guerra et al., 2017).

Collaboration between technology and civil society can also lead to innovations in the way information is conveyed and disseminated. For example, citizen journalism initiatives and collaborative platforms can increase public engagement and provide a richer perspective in reporting and analysis of social issues. Technology can be a powerful tool to empower people to form more data- and fact-based opinions (Ramadhani & Prihantoro, 2023). Ultimately, the formation of public opinion in the digital age towards a more inclusive and knowledgeable civil society requires the cooperation of all parties. By harnessing the potential of technology and addressing emerging challenges, people can form more informative, critical, and constructive opinions. This will lead to the creation of a stronger, democratic, and empowered society.

Challenges And Opportunities in Managing Public Opinion in The Digital Age

Mengelola opini publik di era digital menghadirkan berbagai tantangan sekaligus chance. The rapidly evolving information and communication technology has changed the landscape of how public opinion is formed and disseminated. Organizations, governments, and individuals must now understand this new dynamic in order to effectively manage public opinion. One of the main challenges is the spread of false information or hoaxes. With the speed and breadth of the internet, misinformation can easily spread and affect people's perceptions. This necessitates an intensive effort to verify facts and educate the public about the importance of credible sources of information. Governments and social media platforms must work together to identify and remove misleading content (Koskelainen et al., 2023)

In addition, echo chambers on social media reinforce the challenge of managing public opinion (Setiadarma et al., 2024). Social media algorithms often display content that matches users' views and preferences, thus reinforcing existing opinions and reducing exposure to different perspectives. This could lead to a polarization of public opinion, where groups of people become increasingly detached and it is difficult to dialogue constructively.

However, the digital age also brings great opportunities to manage public opinion more effectively. Wider access to information allows the public to be more informed about current issues. Organizations and governments can leverage social media and other digital platforms to disseminate information directly to the public, enabling faster and interactive responses to emerging issues (Khrais & Gabbori, 2023b). Digital platforms also enable broader and inclusive public participation. Through online surveys, digital petitions, and discussion forums, people can be directly involved in the decision-making process. It reinforces democratic principles by ensuring that diverse voices are heard and considered in policy formation.

The presence of influencers and public figures on social media can also be an effective tool in managing public opinion. They can convey positive and educative messages to their followers, helping to shape public perception of certain issues. However, it is important to ensure that they are responsible for disseminating accurate and not misleading information. Transparency and accountability are key in managing public opinion in the digital age. Governments and organizations need to present honest and open information, and answer public questions and concerns quickly and clearly. This will build trust and reduce uncertainty among the community (Ausat, 2023)

Digital education is an important element in facing this challenge. People need to be equipped with good digital literacy skills, in order to recognize valid information and avoid hoaxes. Education programs that focus on digital literacy and ethics of social media use must continue to be developed and disseminated (Guerra et al., 2017). Ultimately, the challenges and opportunities of managing public opinion in the digital age require a holistic and collaborative approach. By understanding digital dynamics and utilizing technology wisely, we can form a more informative, critical, and constructive public opinion. This will help create a stronger, empowered, and future-ready society.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the formation of public opinion in the digital era is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Social media and other online platforms have an important role to play in shaping public opinion. A better understanding of the process of forming public opinion in the digital age is needed to develop effective communication strategies and build a more democratic society. However, challenges such

as the spread of hoaxes and polarization of opinion have also arisen, necessitating intensive efforts to improve digital literacy and ensure information transparency. Meanwhile, opportunities to strengthen democracy through more inclusive and interactive participation are also increasingly open. Better literacy, transparency, and wise use of technology are key to managing healthier and constructive public opinion in the digital age.

Reference

- Aan Setiadarma, Ahmad Zaki Abdullah, Priyono Sadjijo, & Dwi Firmansyah. (2024). Tinjauan Literatur Transformasi Sosial dalam Era Virtual. *Khatulistiwa: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sosial Humaniora*, 4(1), 232–244. <https://doi.org/10.55606/khatulistiwa.v4i1.2930>
- Alenezi, M. (2023). Digital Learning and Digital Institution in Higher Education. *Education Sciences*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13010088>
- Apeti, A. E. (2022). *Household welfare in the digital age: Assessing the effect of mobile money on household consumption volatility in developing countries*.
- Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion and Its Influence on Economic Decisions. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.61100/tacit.v1i1.37>
- Bayes, R., Bolsen, T., & Druckman, J. N. (2023). A Research Agenda for Climate Change Communication and Public Opinion: The Role of Scientific Consensus Messaging and Beyond. *Environmental Communication*, 17(1), 16–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2020.1805343>
- Bearman, M., Nieminen, J. H., & Ajjawi, R. (2023). Designing assessment in a digital world: an organising framework. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 48(3), 291–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2022.2069674>
- Bremer, B., & Bürgisser, R. (2023). Public opinion on welfare state recalibration in times of austerity: Evidence from survey experiments. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 11(1), 34–52. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2021.78>
- Garritzmann, J. L., Neimanns, E., & Busemeyer, M. R. (2023a). Public opinion towards welfare state reform: The role of political trust and government satisfaction. *European Journal of Political Research*, 62(1), 197–220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12501>
- Garritzmann, J. L., Neimanns, E., & Busemeyer, M. R. (2023b). Public opinion towards welfare state reform: The role of political trust and government satisfaction. *European Journal of Political Research*, 62(1), 197–220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12501>
- Guerra, P., Rodrigues, M., & Saraiva, R. (2017). O outro lado da cidade: dinâmicas de apropriação de espaços residenciais periféricos. *Filosofia Revista Da Faculdade de Letras Da Universidade Do Porto*, 34, 113–132. <https://doi.org/10.21747/21836892/fil34a7>

- Helbing, D., Mahajan, S., Fricker, R. H., Musso, A., Hausladen, C. I., Carissimo, C., Carpentras, D., Stockinger, E., Argota Sanchez-Vaquerizo, J., Yang, J. C., Ballandies, M. C., Korecki, M., Dubey, R. K., & Pournaras, E. (2023). Democracy by Design: Perspectives for Digitally Assisted, Participatory Upgrades of Society. *Journal of Computational Science*, 71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jocs.2023.102061>
- Hoang Anh Tuan, D., Minh Tung, P., Hoang Tien, N., & Khac Truong Thanh, V. (n.d.). Factors affecting the quality of relationship between private service providers and public institutions in Vietnam. In *Int. J. Public Sector Performance Management* (Issue Y).
- Jardine, E., Porter, N., & Shandler, R. (2024). Cyberattacks and public opinion – The effect of uncertainty in guiding preferences. *Journal of Peace Research*, 61(1), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433231218178>
- Khrais, L. T., & Gabbori, D. (2023a). The effects of social media digital channels on marketing and expanding the industry of e-commerce within digital world. *Original Research*, 11(5), 64–75.
- Khrais, L. T., & Gabbori, D. (2023b). The effects of social media digital channels on marketing and expanding the industry of e-commerce within digital world. *Original Research*, 11(5), 64–75.
- Koskelainen, T., Kalmi, P., Scornavacca, E., & Vartiainen, T. (2023). Financial literacy in the digital age—A research agenda. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 57(1), 507–528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joca.12510>
- Polizzi, G. (2023). Internet users' utopian/dystopian imaginaries of society in the digital age: Theorizing critical digital literacy and civic engagement. *New Media and Society*, 25(6), 1205–1226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211018609>
- Ramadhani, R. W., & Prihantoro, E. (2023). Digital Movement of Opinion #BLACKLIVESMATTER in Creating Public Opinion About Black Lives Matter. *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia*, 8(1), 39–48. <https://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v8i1.726>
- Rhee, K., Crabtree, C., & Horiuchi, Y. (2024). Perceived Motives of Public Diplomacy Influence Foreign Public Opinion. *Political Behavior*, 46(1), 683–703. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-022-09849-4>
- Sevignani, S. (2022). Digital Transformations and the Ideological Formation of the Public Sphere: Hegemonic, Populist, or Popular Communication? *Theory, Culture and Society*, 39(4), 91–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221103516>
- Sutrisno, S. (2023). Changes in Media Consumption Patterns and their Implications for People's Cultural Identity. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), 18–25. <https://doi.org/10.61100/tacit.v1i1.31>

- Timotheou, S., Miliou, O., Dimitriadis, Y., Sobrino, S. V., Giannoutsou, N., Cachia, R., Monés, A. M., & Ioannou, A. (2023). Impacts of digital technologies on education and factors influencing schools' digital capacity and transformation: A literature review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(6), 6695–6726. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11431-8>
- Tkáčová, H., Pavlíková, M., Stranovská, E., & Králik, R. (2023). Individual (Non) Resilience of University Students to Digital Media Manipulation after COVID-19 (Case Study of Slovak Initiatives). *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20021605>
- Turyadi, I., Risal Tawil, M., Ali, H., Sadikin, A., Manajemen, P., Ekonomi, F., Al-Ghifari, U., Muhammadiyah Kendari, U., Baubau, P., Teknologi dan Bisnis Haji Agus Salim Bukittinggi, I., Ekonomi dan Bisnis, F., & Lambung Mangkurat Banjarmasin, U. (2023). THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS SUCCESS. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 12(02). <http://ejournal.seaninstitute.or.id/index.php/Ekonomi>
- Wlezien, C. (n.d.). *News and Public Opinion: Which Comes First?** *Journal of Politics*, forthcoming. <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/jop>
- Zhang, J., & Chen, Z. (2023). Exploring Human Resource Management Digital Transformation in the Digital Age. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-023-01214-y>