

## **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF GENERATION-Z IN ACHIEVING GOALS #1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ELIMINATING POVERTY) IN INDONESIA**

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### **Abstract**

Generation-Z's social participation is a method in this research to achieve SDGs development, especially in goal point one; Elimination of Poverty in Indonesia. This is in line with the current phenomenon where the issue of poverty is likely to become a challenge in Indonesia after the COVID-19 pandemic. This research presents survey data from the involvement of Generation Z through the various characteristics and potentials they have. In sustainable development, Generation Z or Gen-Z is one of the important players because they are considered capable of spreading sustainability literacy and promoting the 2030 agenda.

**Keywords:** SDGs, No Poverty, Generation Z, Social Participation

### **INTRODUCTION**

The most significant sustainable development challenge facing the world today is eliminating absolute poverty in all its forms and dimensions towards 2030. Poverty is the first point of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because this phenomenon itself is unlikely to disappear completely. In addition, the impact of absolute poverty will be a challenge to the social and political order in the future. According to the World Bank, extreme poverty increased in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this trend has continued in 2022. This combination of crises could lead to an additional 75 million to 95 million people living in extreme poverty by 2022, compared to pre-Covid-19 pandemic projections (UNStats, 2022; The World Bank, 2023). The World Bank also estimates that about 8.5 percent of the world's population (685 million people) will be absolute poor by the end of 2022, and the poverty rate is now declining very slowly, at only 2 percent per year (Fengler, Kharas and Friday, 2022). In Indonesia itself, the economy has experienced a crisis since the second quarter of 2020. This

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situation reduces the ability to meet daily needs, especially for households directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 15, 2021, BPS released a report stating that as of March 2021, 10.14% of Indonesia's population or 27.54 million people were poor (Izzati, 2021).

The relationship between Generation Z (Gen-Z) and poverty is important because by 2030, Gen-Z will be the largest component of the workforce worldwide. Several studies relevant to the topic were conducted by Sirui Li, Ismail & Albani, and Hidayat & Hidayat. Li stated that there is a new symptom of poverty among Gen-Z called "*exquisite poverty*" as a lifestyle of Gen-Z born by a culture of consumerism as a result of the mismatch between ideals and reality, as well as the inequality between income and consumption (Li, 2023). Furthermore, the study on "Poor Generation Z: Values, talents, and challenges of life in the 21st century and the future" discusses the growth of change in countries and societies, especially in economic, political and social development based on the current context of globalization and cyberspace as well as its impact on poor Gen-Z. The main issue raised by the research relates to the current debate about Gen-Z with respect to their identity, value, potential, and talent. What is the identity and values of Gen-Z poor people, how to develop their potential and talents to encourage them to create innovative ideas, and thus how they can utilize their potential and talents in facing future challenges with other youth who are not poor (Abdullah, Ismail and Albani, 2018). Then, there is a study that states that Gen-Z is the generation most at risk of poverty, and most adversely affected by the lack of intergenerational income mobility. In addition, they are the group most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, following school closures and job losses. The negative trends this generation faced before the pandemic were exacerbated during outbreaks and *lockdown* measures. Welfare, educational success and Gen-Z labor market integration have a major impact on the general welfare of society, as well as productivity growth, and also on the overall economy now and in the future (Hidayat and Hidayat, 2021). Of the three studies, no one has analyzed specifically about Gen-Z's social participation in the achievement of SDGs, especially Goal Number 1, namely Poverty Eradication. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explain how Gen-Z's social participation towards the achievement of SDGs #1, namely the eradication of absolute poverty by 2030.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

To explain the problem that has been formulated above, the author makes use of the concept of Social Participation. As a social concept, social participation can explain the behavior of a group of people in responding to a social phenomenon. Social participation is an important aspect of later life; however, there is no consensus on how to define social participation (Levasseur *et al.*, 2010; Schormans, 2014). The two most frequently mentioned components or domains of social participation include (1) engagement and (2) activity and interaction (Levasseur *et al.*, 2010; Schormans, 2014). Levasseur *et al.* (2010, p 2148) define social participation as "one's involvement in interactive activities with others in a society or

community." It can be said that social participation can have both subjective and objective dimensions and can be measured quantitatively and/or qualitatively (Schormans, 2014). Thus, this concept will be used to analyze Gen-Z's social participation in responding to efforts to achieve SDGs #1, namely the eradication of absolute poverty.

Social participation theory has been used to analyze the achievement of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs between 2000 and 2015). A number of studies on the MDGs utilize this theory at various levels of analysis, one of which is on reducing poverty and hunger among the community. For example, community participation in human resource development in Gadingkulon Village, Malang, East Java in 2016. Community participation is involved in human resource development through education and health in collaboration with the government and private sector. The aim is to facilitate the community in providing training and education, as well as increasing the participation of educated communities to actualize every skill and knowledge possessed (Baiku, Milla and Suprojo, 2019). In an evaluative study of the success of the MDGs, it is stated that a governance model is needed that can enable greater community participation, belonging, and influence, as well as cross-sectoral action. Civil society participation and accountability are critical to the process of developing and implementing strong new policies (Lomazzi, Borisch and Laaser, 2014).

Community participation in the form of *ownership* has been studied in a study that looks at the failure of the MDGs in Nigeria. It was concluded that lack of a sense of belonging (participation), discontinuity of development plans, absence of clear policy documents, politically motivated projects, corruption, excessive politicization of programs and lack of proper education about the MDGs led to poor performance (Ojobanikan, 2022). The concept of social participation has been applied in analyzing community participation in the SDGs. Some important issues in increasing social participation of citizens are sharing information and rallying social networks to overcome poverty. It also describes a cycle in which citizens themselves are the main actors in generating information to increase citizen participation, and the information generated through the process leads to further citizen participation (Ozaki and Shaw, 2022). Higher education social participation has been studied in case studies at the *Public University of Navarre* including research, development, and a kind of community service in the form of establishing collaborations with social networks and businesses to fight poverty (Martínez-Virto and Pérez-Eransas, 2021). Social participation, both by the community in general and by universities which of course involves the participation of students as a young generation has proven very useful in helping the government to eradicate poverty. In the context of this study, social participation is shaped by experiences and projections of the future, and projections are shaped by beliefs and opinions about current achievements and perceptions of the role of Gen-Z. These five aspects will be used to analyze how the potential participation of Gen-Z in achieving SDGs #1, namely poverty eradication.



Figure 1. Analysis of Gen-Z's participation in efforts to achieve SDGs#1

Based on social participation theory, it can be said that the level and quality of Gen-Z's social participation in achieving SDGs #1 is influenced by the projected achievement of SDGs #1, and the projection is influenced by their opinions or opinions regarding the achievement of SDGs #1 today. The more confident that the current SDGs #1 target has been achieved as planned, the more optimistic Gen-Z's attitude in projecting the achievement of SDGs #1 by 2030, and that makes them more participatory in efforts to achieve the SDGs #1 target.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Gen-Z's participation and contribution is critical in achieving SDG #1 because of their unique characteristics and potential to drive change. They are more aware and concerned about issues such as depletion of natural resources, globalization, terrorism, and pandemics. They represent a large portion of the population and will be the main workforce by 2030, playing a leading role in creating a sustainable future and achieving the SDGs (Hamadeh, 2022; Pinho and Gomes, 2023). Gen-Z can be encouraged to be key actors to promote the 2030 agenda and spread sustainability literacy in their communities. The attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of this generation have been shaped by various global issues, making them more socially aware and advocates of the SDGs than previous generations. They are the first generation to be truly global, connected across borders through social media and digital devices. Its potential to drive change and global connectivity makes it an indispensable and strategic component in building a sustainable future. It can be concluded that the uniqueness of Gen-Z's behavior, global connectivity, awareness and concern for global issues, positions them as key actors in driving global change, including SDG #1 and the broader 2030 agenda (Hamadeh, 2022).

This research uses a general design mixture between quantitative and qualitative. The blended research design combines at least one qualitative research component and one quantitative research component. This method is often done with an interactive approach between quantitative and qualitative according to Maxwell and Loomis (Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017). Researchers use mixed method research when quantitative or qualitative data alone is not enough to answer the research question posed, in addition to being able to combine theory making and hypothesis testing in one study, which is not usually done in stand-alone qualitative or quantitative research (George, 2022). In the context of this study,

mixed methods are used so that extensive quantitative data can be deepened in meaning by utilizing a number of qualitative data obtained.

Both primary and secondary data were collected in this study. Primary data are obtained from survey activities, while secondary data are obtained from literature reviews and document materials. The survey was conducted on students of the International Relations study program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta semester 1 and 5 and obtained as many as 202 units of data samples. In the survey, a number of questions have been made with alternative answers that are quantitative and free descriptions that are qualitative. Thus, it is expected that the data will support each other when data analysis is carried out.

Data collection techniques are carried out using three ways, namely (1) *literature review*; (2) FGD (*Forum Group Discussion*); and (3) surveys. Literature reviews are conducted using internet-based applications such as *Mendeley*, *Reaearch Gate*, and *Google Scholar*, as well as other internet-based electronic data sources. FGDs are conducted in discussions among student group members in the classroom, and primary data are obtained from survey activities using questionnaires shared electronically with *Google Forms*. The survey included a combination of multiple-choice questions, Likert scales, dichotomous questions, open-ended questions, and ordinal questions. The combination of these three sources will mutually reinforce the picture of the findings or results to be analyzed.

Analysis of the data is carried out in several stages. First, analyze Gen-Z's confidence in the achievement of SDGs #1 at least until the end of 2022; Second, analyze their **optimism** regarding the achievement of SDGs #1 by 2030; Third, analyze their **role** to support the achievement of SDGs #1; Fourth, analysis of Gen-Z's experience in various activities related to SDGs #1; and fifth, analysis of Gen-Z's **projected** social participation in achieving SDGs #1.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Generation Z (Gen Z) includes children and teens born after 1995 or 1996. Globally, in 2018, it was estimated that in 2019, Gen-Z numbered 2.47 billion out of 7.7 billion or 32% of the entire population, surpassing the 2.43 billion Millennial figure (Milotay, 2020). Figure 1 shows the birth period of Gen-Z who passed on the previous generation (Millennials).

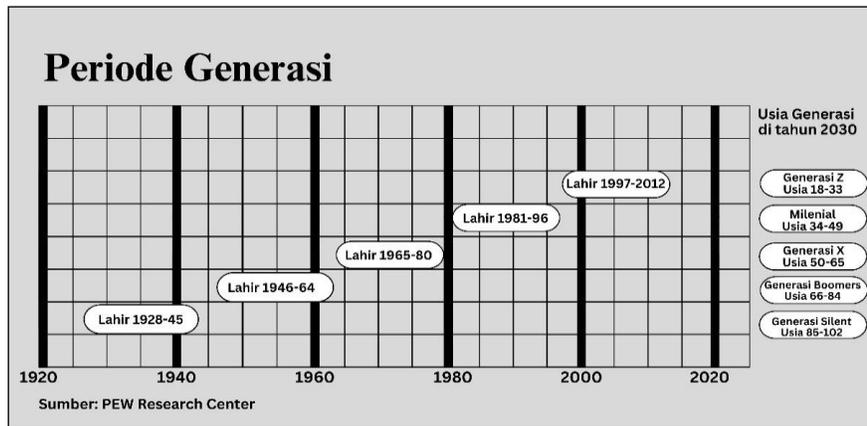


Figure 2 Generation Periodization

According to the PEW Research Center, other names for Gen-Z are Postmillennial Generation and *iGeneration* (iGen). However, Gen-Z designations are much more popular than other designations (Dimock, 2019). With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-2021, the growing Gen-Z are the teenagers most affected by the pandemic crisis with school closures and job losses so that they are also referred to as the lost generation (Milotay, 2020).

Gen-Z grew up in adolescence starting in 2015 which was the end of the implementation period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) program. The MDGs are then continued with the SDGs until 2030. At that time, Gen-Z along with older Millennials made up the majority of the productive age young generation (between 18 to 49 years old). As young citizens, more educated, and mastering digital literacy, Gen-Z is an agent of innovation to achieve the goals of SDGs (Agung *et al.*, 2022), not only for partial, but for all seventeen SDGs points by affirming that Gen-Z can play an active role in seizing cutting-edge opportunities to achieve all SDGs agendas and recommending that Gen-Z play a role in improving people's literacy and behavior about the 17-SDGs (Hamadeh, 2022). An Instagram social media-based research analyzed Gen-Z's attitudes, actions, and involvement in social movements. The research concluded that Gen-Z has a relatively deep concern for the future of the earth because it relates it to their own future. Most Gen-Z show deep concern about the persistence of poverty, inequality as negative implications of development that exploits nature, unbalanced ecosystems, and human ignorance about environmental sustainability (Hidayat and Hidayat, 2021).

Poverty is a condition in which a person or group of people experience a lack of basic resources to meet the minimum standard of living, including access to adequate housing, clean water, healthy food, basic education, employment opportunities, health care, and even experience social exclusion so that they live their daily lives with fear for their future (New Brunswick, 2009). It must be noted that the term poverty is a multidimensional, complex,

contextual concept, and can be absolute or relative (Gweshengwe and Hassan, 2020). Caution in placing the term poverty is important because it will influence subsequent analyses of the phenomenon of poverty. The UN measures poverty by the amount of money needed to meet basic needs or in relation to the economic status of other members of society (Humanity, no date).

The decline in global poverty has been successful and steady since 1995, but the COVID-19 pandemic has reversed that progress. The number of people in extreme poverty increased for the first time in a generation. Currently, rising inflation and the impact of the war in Ukraine may hinder further progress (Kliuchnyk, 2023). The challenges of climate change and exposure to disasters threaten international efforts to eradicate poverty by 2030 because the poorest and most vulnerable are affected (Shepherd *et al.*, 2013). The combination of these crises could lead to 685 million absolute poor people by 2022, an increase of between 75 million and 95 million people (UNStats, 2022). Even beyond the number of absolute poor, we must be aware of the 3 billion people in the world who live on the threshold of poverty (vulnerable economy) (Fengler, Kharas and Friday, 2022). With all these challenges, the UN estimates that by 2030 there will still be 575 million people in absolute poverty, only one-third of the world's countries will be able to reduce half of their poorness, and there will still be 39.5% (about 3.3 billion) of the world's citizens living on the poverty threshold (United Nations, no date). It can be said that the problem of poverty is the main obstacle to achieving other goals in the SDGs so that it must get more careful attention (Leal Filho *et al.*, 2021).



Source: Survey Results, Questions No. 6

Figure 3. Gen-Z's Opinion on SDGs Achievement (n=202)

Based on the survey data in Figure 3 above, most Gen-Z doubts the achievement of SDGs, even as many as 30% say they believe that SDGs have not been achieved until now. Only

16% are confident it has been achieved. This indicates that in general Gen-Z is not satisfied with efforts to achieve SDGs. This dissatisfaction is caused by various reasons, including lack of confidence in the capabilities of governments and international institutions, and lack of public understanding or awareness about SDGs. There are also those who consider that the SDGs are too idealistic and unrealistic, considering that there are still many countries that have not succeeded in achieving the MDGs which have fewer and more goals and targets simple. Another factor is the wide inequality, discrimination, and conflict that still occur in various parts of the world, all of which hinder the process of sustainable development and leave most people poor and vulnerable. In addition, some are of the view that it is global political instability that has made the SDGs target difficult to achieve, especially the polarization of Washington's camp against Moscow and Beijing which is increasingly narrowing.

Do these doubts make Gen-Z pessimistic about the achievement of the SDGs in 2030? The following table shows the cross-tabulation between Gen-Z's opinions on the achievement of the SDGs and their attitudes towards the prospects for the SDGs going forward.

*Table 1. The relationship between opinions on the achievement of the SDGs (2022) and attitudes towards the prospects for achieving the SDGs (2030)*

	Very optimistic	Optimis	Netral (Skeptis)	Pessimist	Very pessimistic
<b>I believe it has been achieved</b>	5	23	5	0	0
<b>I doubt it</b>	4	34	48	6	0
<b>I believe it has not been achieved</b>	4	20	21	14	1
<b>I don't know</b>	1	8	7	0	0

Source: Survey results, Cross-tabulations of questions No. 6 and 7.

There is interesting data in table 1 above. Although most Gen-Z doubted the achievement of SDGs, even as many as 30% expressed confidence that SDGs to date have not been achieved, this did not dampen their optimism. Both doubters and those who believe that

the SDGs goals have not been achieved, it turns out that most are equally optimistic or at least neutral (skeptical). Only 10% of the 201 respondents expressed pessimism and were very pessimistic. It is understandable that Gen-Z is quite able to understand the lack of success in these achievements, especially in 2020-2021 there was a COVID-19 pandemic that caused a health and economic crisis around the world.

A number of factors that caused this optimism were revealed, among others, media factors for the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in SDGs, and public awareness about the things that are on the SDGs agenda. Media, including social media, plays an important role, especially in the dissemination and promotion of SDGs information and knowledge. Lately, many NGOs and activist groups have begun to develop that are committed to SDGs points that make the implementation of the SDGs agenda not only coordinated *top-down* by the government, but NGOs and the activist community also have an important contribution in realizing the ideals of the SDGs. Public awareness is currently getting higher in matters that are in line with the SDGs agenda thanks to the increasing level of education and literacy. The SDGs have raised global awareness of important issues such as poverty alleviation, health, education, and the environment.

However, specifically for the SDGs 1 agenda, namely poverty eradication, it seems that GenZ feels more pessimistic. A number of respondents' comments reflect this,

*"My pessimism stems from the fact that there is still unfulfilled equity in basic food sources and rampant poverty globally." (Survey data)*

*"I am pessimistic since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic because the number of individuals living in poverty has increased from previous predictions. While the goal of SDGs is to eradicate poverty. ... Not to mention the increase in food prices in a number of countries compared to the 2015-2019 period. So, there is a possibility that many people around the world will still be trapped into extreme poverty by 2030." (Survey data)*

*"I am pessimistic about SDGs 1 (in Indonesia) because there are still rampant corruption cases, so to alleviate poverty, the development of law and justice in my opinion is a matter that must be prioritized." (Survey data)*

*"Efforts to end poverty make us feel optimistic, but seeing the reality of widening inequality and economic inequality makes me pessimistic." (Survey data)*

The next data concerns experience, self-perception, and participation projections. Experience relates to the question of whether the respondent has experience involved in activities related to the SDGs. Then, self-perception relates to the question of whether Gen-Z believes that they can play a significant role in achieving the SDGs. While the projection of participation refers to their willingness to participate in the SDGs agenda in the future. On the experience aspect, the data showed that most respondents had no experience (136 people or

68%). But in terms of self-perception, the data shows that most respondents answered "confident" (181 people or 90%) that Gen-Z will be able to play a significant role in achieving the SDGs. A small percentage answered "doubtful" (19 people or less than 10%) and only 2 people answered "unsure" (1%). Furthermore, in terms of their projections to be willing to participate in future SDGs activities, most stated "able" (142 people or 71%), 26% were undecided, and only 4% answered "unable".

Analysis of the correlation coefficient between the five variables shows the following results:

*Table 2. Correlation coefficient between variables*

	<b>Belief</b>	<b>Optimism</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Projection</b>
<b>Belief</b>	-	0,21	-0,01	-0,07	0,04
<b>Optimism</b>	0,21	-	0,21	0,00	0,15
<b>Role</b>	-0,01	0,21	-	0,08	0,21
<b>Experience</b>	-0,07	0,00	0,08	-	0,29
<b>Projection</b>	0,04	0,15	0,21	0,29	-

Source: Processed from survey results

Table 2 above shows that the variable 'Confidence' has a fairly significant correlation with the variable 'Optimism' and a weak positive correlation with the variable 'Experience'. Meanwhile, 'Optimism' had little correlation with the variables 'Role' and 'Projection', but did not correlate with the variable 'Experience'. Whereas, 'Role' has a weak positive correlation with the variable 'Experience' and a moderate positive correlation with 'Projection'. It is the 'Experience' variable that has the strongest correlation with the 'Projection' variable. The correlation coefficient between the variables 'Experience' and 'Projection' shows a low to moderate positive correlation. This suggests that as 'Experience' increases, 'Projection' tends to increase as well, even if the relationship is not strong enough.

Next, qualitatively will summarize participation in any form desired by Gen-Z. The survey data shows a diverse spectrum of Gen-Z participation. Especially for the SDGs 1 (poverty eradication) agenda, their projected participation includes assistance for the poor and people with hunger problems, social actions to support poverty alleviation, including personal actions to donate, and conducting social education to raise awareness about the importance of poverty eradication.

## **CONCLUSION**

From this research, it can be concluded that Gen-Z generally has doubts about the projected achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to date, especially in the context of Goal Number 1, namely the elimination of absolute poverty, although it is still

understandable because poverty in Indonesia and around the world is increasing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with predictions of an increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty in 2022. In this context, Gen-Z is considered the generation most at risk of poverty, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation as they grow and develop into adulthood.

The contribution of this research to the science of International Relations lies in the analysis of Gen-Z's social participation in the achievement of SDGs #1. There are flaws in previous research that have not specifically analyzed Gen-Z's social participation towards this goal. Gen-Z is considered an agent of innovation that can play a key role in achieving the SDGs, but there has not been much research to explore their potential and contribution, especially in the context of poverty eradication.

The limitations of this study include the focus of data collection with a survey that only included 202 International Relations students at the University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta as a sample, so the generalization of the results does not adequately represent other Gen-Z components. In addition, the study is more descriptive in nature and further analysis may be needed to gain deeper insights into the factors influencing Gen-Z's social views and participation. Recommendations for follow-up research involve expanding the sample to include Gen-Z from a variety of backgrounds and social contexts. In addition, further research can focus on a deeper analysis of the factors influencing Gen-Z's social views and participation, as well as identifying concrete strategies to increase their contribution to achieving SDGs #1. Thus, advanced research can provide more comprehensive insights into the role of Gen-Z in the sustainable development agenda.

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