

## Gen Z Audience Reception of Digital Activism “Tuntutan 17+8” on Instagram

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### ABSTRACT

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The use of social media such as Instagram as a platform for expressing public aspirations, particularly through digital activism, serves as the background of this study. This research aims to analyze how Generation Z receives digital activism “Tuntutan 17+8” on Instagram by examining the role of visual aesthetics, the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), as well as the influence of political background and peer environment in shaping audience engagement. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach based on Stuart Hall’s Encoding-Decoding Reception Theory. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with seven informants selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria. The findings indicate that Generation Z’s reception of digital activism “Tuntutan 17+8” on Instagram can be categorized into two positions, namely dominant-hegemonic and negotiated positions. Informants in the dominant position tend to fully accept and support the messages conveyed, as they are perceived to be relevant and effective in increasing public awareness. Meanwhile, informants in the negotiated position demonstrate a more selective attitude by accepting certain parts of the message while also criticizing aspects of its delivery that are considered inappropriate. In addition, visually appealing elements, such as the use of colors and creative design, are proven to enhance audience interest and facilitate message comprehension. The phenomenon of FOMO also plays a role in encouraging Generation Z’s participation in digital activism “Tuntutan 17+8” on Instagram, although such participation tends to be simple, such as reposting content or giving brief responses. This condition reflects a pattern of slacktivism. Nevertheless, FOMO can also have a positive impact by expanding the reach of information and increasing public awareness of the issue. Furthermore, political background and peer group influence also affect how individuals interpret and respond to messages, as they are shaped through interaction and discussion within their social environment.

### INTRODUCTION

Political discourse in Indonesia has intensified following the 2024 general election, particularly due to widespread public dissatisfaction with government policies. This dissatisfaction has manifested in large-scale protests across multiple cities, which eventually led to the emergence of the “Tuntutan 17+8” a movement initiated by civil society, students, and activists. “Tuntutan 17+8” refers to a digital activism campaign that circulated widely on Instagram, consisting of 17 main demands and 8 additional points addressing socio-political issues such as governance,

justice, law enforcement, and public accountability. The campaign gained strong public attention, especially among Generation Z, through the use of visually striking symbolic colors known as “brave pink” and “hero green”. Brave pink originates from a woman protester wearing a pink hijab who symbolized courage in expressing public voices, while hero green represents an online motorcycle driver (ojol) in a green jacket who became a symbol of sacrifice and injustice during a protest incident. These symbols carry deeper meanings of bravery, solidarity, and empathy, making the campaign more emotionally engaging. Combined

with concise and aesthetically appealing content, this visual identity made the message more recognizable and easier to spread through Instagram features such as Stories, feeds, and reposts, allowing the campaign to function not only as a medium of information dissemination but also as a space for public awareness and collective expression in the digital sphere.

Over time, this movement evolved into a form of digital activism, especially among Generation Z, who actively utilized social media platforms such as Instagram to disseminate messages through visually engaging content. The use of symbolic colors, such as pink and green, became a representation of solidarity and resistance within the movement. Social media is considered an effective medium for rapid information dissemination and for shaping public awareness regarding socio-political issues (Mardini et al., 2024). The rise of digital activism among Generation Z reflects a shift in political participation from conventional to digital spaces. Unlike previous generations who relied on physical demonstrations or traditional media, Generation Z predominantly uses social media as a platform for expressing opinions and engaging in public discourse. This accessibility allows them to participate more actively and efficiently in political conversations. However, not all individuals within this generation interpret digital activism in the same way. Differences in perspectives highlight that audiences are not passive recipients of information but actively interpret messages based on their social background and personal experiences. This aligns with the encoding-decoding theory, which explains that audience reception varies depending on individual contexts (Delya et al., 2022).

The emergence of “Tuntutan 17+8” is closely linked to a series of socio-political events that triggered public outrage, including controversial policies and incidents involving law enforcement during protests. These events gained widespread attention through their circulation on social media, which amplified emotional responses and encouraged broader participation. The involvement of influencers, activists, and public figures further accelerated the spread of the movement, transforming it into a large-scale digital campaign. This demonstrates how digital platforms function not only as communication tools but also as spaces for mobilization and collective action, enabling individuals from various backgrounds to participate in advocacy efforts (Priageng et al., 2024).

Instagram plays a crucial role in shaping digital activism due to its visual-oriented features and interactive capabilities. The platform allows users to engage through activities such as posting, sharing, liking, and commenting, which collectively enhance the dissemination of information. The use of visual elements, including colors, symbols, and creative

designs, increases audience engagement and facilitates message comprehension. Research has shown that visual communication in political messaging can significantly influence audience perception and participation, especially among younger users (Maestre & Medero, 2024). This highlights Instagram’s effectiveness as a medium for digital activism, particularly in creating emotionally engaging and easily shareable content.

Despite its effectiveness, digital activism also generates both support and criticism. On one hand, it is perceived as a modern and inclusive form of political participation that allows rapid mobilization and widespread awareness. On the other hand, it is often criticized for encouraging superficial engagement, commonly referred to as slacktivism, where participation is limited to low-effort actions such as reposting or liking content without deeper understanding. These contrasting perspectives make it important to analyze how Generation Z interprets digital activism, particularly in the context of “Tuntutan 17+8” movement. Therefore, this study aims to examine the reception of Generation Z towards digital activism on Instagram, focusing on how they accept, negotiate, or critique the messages presented, as well as how social media shapes political awareness and participation in the digital era (Fazrina et al., 2025).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is supported by previous research on digital activism, social media campaigns, and audience reception to provide a strong theoretical foundation and identify research gaps (Padaniyah & Haryono, 2021). Prior studies show that digital platforms are effective in increasing public awareness and engagement, especially among Gen Z. For example, Greenpeace’s digital movement successfully utilized various platforms to attract participation through interactive features (Nurhalizah et al., 2025), while feminist activism on Instagram highlights the importance of visual content and user interaction in strengthening solidarity (Phitaloka & Purwaningtyas, 2021). Other studies also demonstrate that social media campaigns, such as #TOLAKPOLITIKDINASTI and #AllEyesonRafah, can mobilize public opinion, build awareness, and even encourage offline action, although challenges like misinformation remain (Priageng et al., 2024).

This research adopts Stuart Hall’s encoding–decoding theory as its primary analytical framework. Hall argues that communication is not a linear process but involves encoding by message producers and decoding by audiences, who actively interpret messages based on their social and cultural backgrounds (Hall, 1973). Audience reception is categorized into three positions: dominant-hegemonic

(full acceptance), negotiated (partial acceptance with personal interpretation), and oppositional (rejection). In the digital era, the diversity of information sources further expands interpretative possibilities, making audiences more active and critical in constructing meaning (Delya et al., 2022). This theory is particularly relevant in understanding how Gen Z interprets digital activism content on social media.

Digital campaigns serve as strategic tools to raise awareness, influence attitudes, and encourage action among audiences. Social media platforms enable campaigns to become more interactive and participatory, allowing users to engage through likes, comments, and shares, thereby transforming them into both message consumers and producers (Cahlia & Marni, 2025). The effectiveness of digital campaigns is often influenced by creativity, uniqueness, and emotional appeal, which can increase the likelihood of content going viral. As a result, digital campaigns not only disseminate information but also shape public opinion and collective action (Fauzy & Ratnawati, 2025).

Digital activism represents a transformation of traditional activism into online spaces, enabling broader and more inclusive participation (Rochmawati & Alamiyah, 2024). While it offers advantages such as rapid dissemination and low cost, it is often associated with slacktivism, where participation is limited to symbolic actions like liking or sharing content. However, some scholars argue that even minimal participation can still raise awareness and contribute to larger movements. The phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) also plays a role in encouraging participation, particularly among Gen Z, who tend to engage with trending issues to avoid social exclusion (Cahyadi, 2021). Social media algorithms further amplify issues that gain high engagement, enabling campaigns to spread widely across audiences.

Instagram, as a visual-based platform, plays a significant role in digital activism by combining aesthetic appeal with interactive features. Its tools—such as stories, reels, and feeds—allow users to create engaging content that influences how messages are perceived. Visual elements like color, design, and composition enhance emotional engagement and message interpretation (Cahyadi, 2021). Instagram also facilitates two-way communication, where users actively respond and participate, blurring the boundaries between content creators and audiences. Despite its advantages, challenges such as misinformation remain, highlighting the importance of digital literacy (Hakim et al., 2024).

Gen Z, as digital natives, are highly active internet users and play a significant role in digital participation. Their engagement in social and political issues often occurs through online platforms, reflecting a shift

from traditional forms of participation to more flexible and accessible digital practices (APJII, 2025). Their participation is influenced by factors such as personal interest, moral responsibility, and exposure to information. Additionally, peer groups significantly shape their perspectives and behaviors, as individuals tend to align with the norms and opinions of their social circles. Peer influence can also trigger FOMO, encouraging individuals to follow trends and participate in digital discussions to maintain social relevance (Herawati et al., 2022). However, peer interactions can also foster critical discussions and broaden perspectives, making them an important factor in shaping audience reception.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore how Gen Z interprets digital activism related to the Tuntutan 17+8 campaign on Instagram, using reception analysis based on Stuart Hall's encoding–decoding theory, which emphasizes that audiences actively construct meanings influenced by their social and ideological backgrounds (Hall et al., 1980). The subjects of this research are members of Generation Z who meet specific criteria. The informants are individuals aged between 18–27 years old (born between 1997–2012). They consist of diverse political backgrounds, including those who voted for candidates 01, 02, or 03 in the 2024 election, those who abstained, individuals active in political organizations, and those who participated in demonstrations in August 2025. In addition, all informants are active Instagram users, are familiar with the “Tuntutan 17+8” campaign, and have opinions or perspectives regarding the campaign.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

In this study, the researcher applied two main data collection techniques :

1. Observation : Conducted to directly examine the digital activism campaign on Instagram. In this method, the researcher acted as both participant and observer. The observation focused on analyzing Instagram content related to the “Tuntutan 17+8” campaign, including posts, stories, comments, visual design elements, and user interactions. This technique aimed to understand how messages are delivered, how visual elements such as pink and green colors are used symbolically, and how audiences engage with the campaign.
2. In-depth interviews : Conducted to obtain detailed and personal insights from the informants. This method involves direct interaction through structured yet flexible question guidelines, allowing informants to express their perspectives in depth. The interviews were designed to explore how Gen

Z individuals interpret, respond to, and participate in the digital activism campaign on Instagram.

## RESULT

This section presents the findings of the study on digital activism “Tuntutan 17+8” on Instagram as a form of social and political engagement among Generation Z. It serves as a bridge between the theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter and the empirical findings obtained from the field. By examining both the characteristics of the research object and the research subjects, the findings can be understood within a broader and more contextual perspective of digital media use among young audiences.

The object of this study is the digital activism campaign “Tuntutan 17+8” on Instagram. This research focuses on how the campaign is constructed and represented through various forms of content, including feed posts, Instagram Stories, comments, and symbolic visual elements such as the use of pink and green backgrounds on profile pictures. These elements are analyzed to understand how messages are packaged in a visually appealing, concise, and easily digestible format, as well as how these messages are distributed and interpreted by audiences on social media.

The research subjects consist of Generation Z individuals aged 18–27 years who are active Instagram users and are familiar with or have been exposed to the “Tuntutan 17+8” campaign. The informants come from diverse backgrounds, including those who participated in the 2024 election, those who abstained, individuals involved in political organizations, and those who have participated in social movements. This diversity allows the researcher to capture a range of perspectives regarding digital activism and social issue engagement among Generation Z.

Data collection was conducted using in-depth interviews to explore informants’ experiences, perceptions, and forms of participation in the campaign. Through this method, the researcher was able to gain deeper insights into how Generation Z interprets digital activism content, the motivations behind their engagement, and the factors influencing their participation. The following section presents a brief profile of the research informants.

**Table 1.** Informant Data

No.	Informant	Age
1.	Informant 1	24
2.	Informant 2	25
3.	Informant 3	21
4.	Informant 4	23

5.	Informant 5	21
6.	Informant 6	23
7.	Informant 7	22

The findings indicate that Generation Z participants position Instagram as a central platform for engaging with social and political issues, including the “Tuntutan 17+8” campaign. The campaign’s use of visually appealing, concise, and aesthetically curated content plays a significant role in attracting attention and facilitating understanding among audiences. Informants reported that their participation ranges from active engagement, such as discussing and sharing content, to more symbolic actions like reposting, which are often influenced by social dynamics such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Despite the presence of such tendencies, the campaign remains effective in increasing awareness and expanding the reach of information, highlighting that digital activism on Instagram functions not only as a medium of information dissemination but also as a space for interaction, interpretation, and varying levels of audience engagement among Generation Z.

## DISCUSSION

### *Political Background and the Role of Peer Groups in the Reception of Digital Activism ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ on Instagram*

Political background is shown to significantly shape the depth of audience engagement, particularly in how individuals evaluate and respond to digital activism content. Individuals with higher levels of political awareness tend to critically assess the message, relate it to broader socio-political contexts, and question the intentions behind the content. This supports previous findings that exposure to political environments, such as organizational involvement or discussions, enhances individuals’ critical thinking abilities in interpreting media messages (S. Putri et al., 2025). Consequently, audiences with political exposure demonstrate a more reflective and analytical approach, while those with limited exposure may engage in a more surface-level understanding of the content.

*“Of course it has an influence, since this is also a political issue. I feel that the values I believe in are aligned with the ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ digital activism. Therefore, I see this digital activism as a form of collective movement that needs to be voiced in digital spaces, one of which is Instagram.”*

#### **Informant 1, 23 January 2026**

*“From the beginning, my background in political organizations, as well as my daily discussions with friends and others, have significantly influenced my mindset regarding digital activism.”*

#### **Informant 2, 3 February 2026**

Based on the statements, it can be observed that political background plays a significant role in shaping how they perceive the ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ digital

activism on Instagram. This makes the study interesting, as different backgrounds lead to diverse interpretations of the same message. Their prior experiences, values, and involvement in political environments influence the way they interpret the messages conveyed in the campaign, as well as how they position themselves toward the issue (Naufaldi & Susanti, 2023).

The role of peer groups further emphasizes that meaning-making is not an isolated process but occurs within social environments. Through interactions such as discussions, sharing content, and exchanging opinions, individuals collectively construct their understanding of digital activism. Social environments act as spaces for negotiating meaning, where individuals reshape and reinforce their perspectives through communication with others. This collective process allows individuals to validate their interpretations while also being exposed to alternative viewpoints, ultimately influencing how they perceive the issue (Amali et al., 2024). Therefore, audience interpretation is shaped not only by personal experience but also by the dynamics of their social interactions.

*“Secondly, it is also influenced by friends and social circles. Some of my circles also support the campaign, and when we share the same stance, we often exchange content on TikTok or Instagram related to similar issues so that we can discuss them together.”*

**Informant 3, 7 February 2026**

*“In my opinion, what influences me the most is my peer environment, how we discuss things and how we interpret them. As university students and part of Generation Z, our conversations become a learning process, especially in understanding how messages on social media are delivered and how audience reception becomes an important aspect to be discussed.”*

**Informant 7, 5 March 2026**

Based on the statements of the four informants, it can be observed that the immediate social environment plays a significant role in shaping both the level of awareness and the way informants interpret the digital activism of the 17+8 Demands on Instagram. Close social circles, particularly friendships and peer groups, act as influential spaces where ideas are exchanged, discussed, and collectively constructed (Afif, 2025).

### ***The Role of Instagram Features in Shaping the Meaning-Making Process of Digital Activism***

Instagram, as a digital platform, plays a significant role in enabling participatory communication and accelerating the spread of digital activism. Features such as repost, story sharing, and “add yours” reduce barriers to participation, allowing users to engage quickly and effortlessly with content. According to Rorimpandey (Rorimpandey, 2016), digital media blurs the distinction between message producers and

audiences, transforming users into active communicators within the information flow. This transformation is evident in how users not only consume content but also actively contribute to its dissemination, creating a networked pattern of communication that amplifies the reach of digital activism.

*“Instagram Stories can use the ‘Add Yours’ template feature, if I’m not mistaken. It is a clickable template, and there are also carousel feed posts, which are often created by members of the public, particularly creative activists.”*

**Informant 1, 23 January 2026**

*“In my opinion, features such as feed posts and Stories make the demands clearer, especially when they are presented in feed posts. At that time, the campaign was very massive on Stories, and it was also eye-catching, particularly due to the use of striking pink and green colors.”*

**Informant 7, 5 March 2026**

Based on the statements of the two informants, it can be concluded that the use of Instagram features plays an important role in shaping how digital activism messages are delivered and understood. Features such as ‘Add Yours’ templates, feed posts, and Stories enable information to be presented in a more interactive, structured, and visually engaging manner. As a result, these features not only enhance the clarity of the campaign’s messages but also increase their visibility and attractiveness, making it easier for audiences to engage with and interpret the digital activism of ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ on Instagram (Lawe, 2025).

### ***The Role of Visual Aesthetics in the ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ Digital Activism on Generation Z’s Reception on Instagram***

Visual aesthetics are also found to be a crucial factor in capturing attention and facilitating understanding, particularly among Gen Z audiences. The use of bold colors, creative layouts, and concise messaging aligns with their preference for visually engaging and easily digestible content. Visual elements not only enhance the attractiveness of content but also function as tools for simplifying complex issues into more accessible formats. This supports the argument that visual communication can improve comprehension and increase engagement by presenting information in a more appealing and structured way (Natalia et al., 2025). As a result, visually driven digital activism is more likely to attract attention and encourage interaction.

*“Some people are usually reluctant to read, but what makes the ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ digital activism interesting is its aesthetic aspect. The use of visually appealing elements attracts those who are less interested in reading. The texts combined with striking colors, such as brave pink and hero green, reflect the creativity behind the campaign. In this way, the message*

*becomes easier to understand and more accessible.*”

**Informant 1, 23 January 2026**

*“In my opinion, beyond its aesthetic aspect, the meaning behind the colors brave pink and hero green is quite profound. The color pink represents courage, while green reflects sadness. I personally feel concerned and saddened when I see it, especially when thinking about the issue involving the police.”*

**Informant 5, 24 February 2026**

Based on the statements of the two informants, it can be observed that visual aesthetics play a significant role in shaping how Generation Z receives and interprets digital activism content on Instagram. The use of visually appealing elements, such as color combinations, typography, and layout, makes the content more engaging, especially for audiences who tend to avoid text-heavy information, as it allows messages to be conveyed in a more accessible and easily understood manner (R. F. Putri, 2025). At the same time, visual elements also carry symbolic meanings that influence emotional responses, as seen in the interpretation of colors such as brave pink and hero green, which represent courage and sadness and evoke empathy toward the issue.

### ***The Phenomenon of FOMO in Generation Z’s Participation in ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ Digital Activism on Instagram***

The emergence of FOMO highlights the influence of social pressure in shaping digital participation, especially within highly connected online environments. Continuous exposure to similar content across Instagram creates a sense of urgency and relevance, prompting individuals to engage even without fully understanding the issue. This phenomenon is often associated with slacktivism, where participation tends to be symbolic and low-effort, such as reposting or liking content (Fazrina et al., 2025). However, despite its superficial nature, this form of engagement still contributes to increasing the visibility and circulation of digital activism, making it an important aspect of online participation.

*“They often express that Generation Z is now more politically aware and should be more open-minded, and statements like that make me feel a sense of panic, like FOMO, wondering what is actually going on.”*

**Informant 7, 5 March 2025**

*“I eventually started reading about it and became interested because the issue seemed ongoing, especially with the pink and green symbols. In the end, I decided to post about it as well because my friends were all posting it too. I’m not sure whether they were all experiencing FOMO or actually understood the issue.”* **Informant 4, 13 February 2026**

Based on the statements of the two informants, it can be concluded that FOMO plays a significant role in encouraging Generation Z’s participation in the

“Tuntutan 17+8” digital activism on Instagram. Feelings of social pressure, curiosity, and the desire to stay relevant within peer groups drive individuals to engage with the issue, even when their understanding may be limited (Perdana, 2023). This indicates that participation is not always driven by deep awareness, but is also influenced by collective trends and social dynamics within their environment, making FOMO an important factor in shaping patterns of digital activism among Generation Z.

*“In essence, I agree with the ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ campaign, and people should not be discouraged by the idea of FOMO. Just because something is labeled as FOMO does not mean you should hesitate to express your views. As long as the FOMO leads to something positive, it is completely acceptable.”*

**Informant 5, 24 February 2026**

*“Yes, there may be people who participate because of FOMO, but in the end, more people become aware of the information and gain a deeper understanding, such as the meaning behind the logo and the demands themselves.”*

**Informant 1, 23 January 2026**

However, several informants argued that FOMO should not always be viewed negatively in the context of digital activism. Instead, it can serve as a positive driver that encourages participation and increases public awareness (Firjarahman et al., 2024). As reflected in the statements, engaging due to FOMO does not necessarily diminish the value of participation, as it can lead individuals to seek further information and develop a deeper understanding of the issue. Therefore, as long as FOMO results in constructive actions, such as expressing opinions and spreading awareness, it can be considered a beneficial factor that supports the wider reach and impact of the “Tuntutan 17+8” digital activism on Instagram.

### ***Generation Z’s Position in the Reception of ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ Digital Activism on Instagram***

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Generation Z’s reception of the “Tuntutan 17+8” digital activism on Instagram can be categorized into two main positions, namely dominant-hegemonic and negotiated positions, as proposed in Stuart Hall’s Encoding-Decoding Theory. These positions reflect how audiences actively interpret messages based on their backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, rather than passively accepting the content presented to them (Hall et al., 1980).

#### **Dominant-Hegemonic**

*“I fully agree with the ‘Tuntutan 17+8’ digital activism because the values align with what I believe in, so I see it as a collective movement that needs to be voiced.”* **Informant 1, 23 January 2026**

*“I think the campaign is very relevant, and the way it is delivered on Instagram makes it easier for people*

*like us to understand and support it.” Informant 7, 5 March 2026*

*“I support the campaign because it represents what many people are feeling, and Instagram helps amplify those voices.” Informant 3, 7 February 2026*

Based on the statements of the informants in the dominant-hegemonic position, it can be concluded that Generation Z tends to fully accept the messages conveyed in the “Tuntutan 17+8” digital activism on Instagram. This acceptance is influenced by the alignment between the values presented in the campaign and the informants’ personal beliefs, making them view the activism as relevant, meaningful, and necessary to be supported. In this position, informants interpret the message in accordance with its intended meaning, indicating a high level of agreement and a strong sense of identification with the issue being communicated (Rachmi et al., 2024).

### **Negotiated**

*“I agree with some parts of the campaign, but I still filter the information and don’t fully accept everything that is shared.” Informant 4, 13 February 2026*

*“I support the issue, but sometimes I question the way it is presented or how people respond to it on social media.” Informant 5, 24 February 2026*

Based on the statements of the informants in the negotiated position, it can be concluded that Generation Z does not entirely accept the messages of the “Tuntutan 17+8” digital activism on Instagram, but instead selectively interprets them. Informants in this position tend to agree with the general idea of the campaign while still critically evaluating certain aspects, such as the content, delivery, or responses surrounding it. This shows that audiences are active in constructing meaning, balancing between acceptance and personal judgment, which reflects a more critical and reflective engagement with digital activism content (Hafizd et al., 2023).

Based on the findings from seven informants, the reception of the “Tuntutan 17+8” digital activism on Instagram can be divided into two positions: four informants are categorized within the dominant-hegemonic position, while three informants fall into the negotiated position. This distribution indicates that the majority of Generation Z informants tend to fully accept the messages conveyed in the campaign, as they perceive the content to be aligned with their personal values and relevant to current social issues. Meanwhile, the remaining informants demonstrate a negotiated reception, where they partially accept the message but still critically evaluate certain aspects, such as the tone, representation, or delivery of the content. This variation highlights that although there is a tendency toward acceptance, a significant portion of the audience remains selective and reflective in

interpreting digital activism messages, reinforcing the notion that audience reception is inherently diverse and shaped by individual perspectives and social contexts (Hall et al., 1980).

Overall, the variation in audience reception demonstrates that Gen Z actively negotiates meaning when engaging with digital activism rather than accepting messages at face value. Audiences tend to be more critical and selective in interpreting information, especially in digital environments where content spreads rapidly and may contain biases. This leads to diverse responses toward the same message and reinforces the idea that interpretation is shaped by both individual reasoning and social influence (Nurhabibah & Farid, 2025). Therefore, the effectiveness of digital activism depends not only on message dissemination but also on how the content is constructed, perceived, and interpreted by its audience.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that digital activism related to the Tuntutan 17+8 movement on Instagram plays a significant role in shaping Generation Z’s engagement with social and political issues, particularly through visually appealing and concise content that effectively captures attention and facilitates audience understanding. Instagram functions not only as a medium for information dissemination but also as an interactive space that enables discussion, peer influence, and the formation of collective awareness. In this study, out of a total of seven informants, four demonstrated a dominant-hegemonic position by fully accepting the message, while three others occupied a negotiated position, meaning they partially accepted the message while remaining selective and critical toward both its content and delivery. The phenomenon of FOMO also emerges as a key driver of participation, although it is not always accompanied by deep understanding, often resulting in forms of slactivism. From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the encoding-decoding theory of Stuart Hall by showing that audience reception in the digital age is increasingly shaped by platform features, algorithmic exposure, and social dynamics, which intensify negotiated readings due to heightened visibility and social pressure. In terms of practical implications, the findings suggest that digital activists and social campaigners should balance aesthetic appeal with message clarity and avoid overly provocative or polarizing narratives in order to foster more meaningful engagement rather than merely symbolic participation. However, this study is limited by the relatively small number of informants and its focus on a single platform, indicating the need for future research to involve more diverse samples and

cross-platform analysis to better understand the complexity of digital activism and audience reception.

### Author Contribution

Khoirun Ni'mah was responsible for carrying out all stages of the research, including developing the research concept, designing the study, collecting and analyzing data, and writing the manuscript. The author also integrated relevant theoretical perspectives and formulated the overall discussion and conclusions of the study. Ratih Pandu Mustikasari, S.I.Kom., M.A., provided supervision throughout the research process, offering guidance, evaluation, and constructive input to strengthen the academic quality and structure of the paper. The author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

### Declaration of interest

The author states that there are no financial interests or personal relationships that may have influenced the results or interpretation of this research.

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