

Analysis of @xproject.id's TikTok political communication strategies via the SOSTAC model

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Abstract The rapid development of social media, particularly TikTok, has significantly transformed the patterns of political communication among young people in Indonesia. TikTok is no longer merely an entertainment platform; it has evolved into a new digital public sphere for the dissemination of political messages and civic education. This study analysed the educational political communication strategy based on the SOSTAC Model as implemented by the TikTok account @Xproject.id in enhancing the political literacy of Generation Z in the City of Bogor. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, focusing on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of digital communication strategies. Data were collected through digital observation of @Xproject.id's TikTok content, in-depth interviews with the principal communicator and the account management team, as well as interviews with Generation Z audiences in Bogor as message recipients. The study involved ten informants, consisting of one principal communicator, three members of the content management team, and six Generation Z followers who actively engage with the account. Data were analysed thematically with reference to the six elements of the SOSTAC Model: Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control. The findings indicate that the SOSTAC-based communication strategy implemented by @Xproject.id is effective in enhancing both engagement and political understanding among Generation Z in Bogor. This effectiveness is supported by the use of reflective content relevant to local issues, informal language aligned with youth communication styles, simple and accessible visuals, and intensive two-way interaction through comments and creator responses. The audience demonstrated increased awareness of local policy issues, greater participation in online political discussions, and a growing interest in seeking further political information. These findings suggest that a community-based TikTok account can function as an effective local digital public sphere for youth political education, provided that it is supported by systematic, contextual, and literacy-oriented communication planning.

Keywords: digital political communication; Generation Z ; SOSTAC Model; political literacy

INTRODUCTION

The use of the internet in Indonesia in 2025 has reached 229.43 million users according to data from APJII. This high level of internet usage indicates that the majority of the Indonesian population is already connected, presenting a significant opportunity for social media to function as a platform for educational communication. The percentage of Indonesian social media users who primarily access TikTok is 35.17%, based on the APJII (2025) survey. Building up on this, a case study design is employed because this research seeks to understand the phenomenon within its real-life context (a bounded system), specifically examining how political communication activities are implemented on the TikTok platform and how ongoing social dynamics shape such communication practices.

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The rapid growth of TikTok, which has become the most popular social media platform within a single year according to APJII, demonstrates its ability to surpass other platforms through the presentation of short videos in an engaging and easily consumable format. The Indonesian Internet Profile Survey 2025 shows that TikTok dominates among Generation Z users, with 42.27% identifying TikTok accounts as their most frequently used social media platform. This dominance indicates that communication strategies aiming to reach this demographic must consider TikTok as a primary channel (APJII, 2025). The prominence of TikTok usage among Gen Z further strengthens the relevance of this study. In addition, surveys reported by Jakpat Insight (2025) indicate that 67% of Indonesian Gen Z respondents consider TikTok to be the most informative social media platform, although not all content is focused on political issues.

The development of social media has significantly transformed the global landscape of political communication, particularly in reaching the increasingly digitally literate Gen Z generation. TikTok, as a short-video-based platform, has emerged as one of the principal channels for delivering creative and interactive political messages, especially to young audiences who constitute a key demographic in many countries, including Indonesia (Dewi, 2025). The informant account @Xproject.id was selected as the research site because Bogor is among the cities with one of the highest proportions of young people (Gen Z) in West Java, with internet penetration reaching 88.7% (APJII, 2025).

Previous research has shown that social media can be used to educate citizens, enhance voters' digital literacy, and expand the reach of formal political campaigns (Sari et al., 2023). However, the limitation of prior studies lies in their lack of focus on TikTok specifically and their failure to employ a systematic theoretical framework such as the SOSTAC model to analyse political communication strategies. Social media functions not only as a medium but also as a factor influencing behaviour. For instance, previous research has demonstrated that candidates were able to shift salient issues onto the public agenda through messages on Facebook, although not all issue attributes proved effective in terms of second-level agenda setting (Santana & Camaj, 2015). Other studies have examined how mobility and polarisation functions operate rather than how educational content strategies contribute to the formation of political understanding or literacy among Gen Z. Media can significantly influence issue attribution even when traditional media continue to dominate the public agenda (Yuliatiningtyas, 2023).

Existing studies also indicate that systematic communication strategies have rarely been linked to efforts aimed at improving political understanding, as most research remains focused on support effects rather than learning outcomes. Furthermore, there remains limited research integrating planned communication strategies to analyse prestige behaviour. Candidates consistently employ issues such as education, the creative economy, and youth empowerment as part of their framing strategies targeting young voters, and digital media have proven strategic in shaping both political agendas and public perceptions.

Several previous studies, particularly from Fatmawati et al. (2023); Khamdan et al. (2024); Dewi (2024); Assaefi et al. (2022); Mubarak, (2022) demonstrate that social media plays a significant role in political campaign agendas and in shaping public opinion. Nevertheless, most of these studies still focus on mobilisation, candidate image, and electoral effects, rather than examining how digital communication strategies can enhance political understanding among young people. Moreover, relatively few studies have applied structured communication planning models such as SOSTAC (P.R. Smith, 1990s) to analyse political communication strategies on social media, particularly TikTok.

Therefore, this study, titled 'Political Literacy and educational communication strategies on TikTok: an analysis of the SOSTAC Model on the @Xproject.id account, seeks to address this research gap. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of digital political communication strategies grounded in political literacy, as well as to provide practical guidance for young candidates, political education institutions, and civil society organisations seeking to enhance Gen Z's political awareness constructively. Evidence suggests that agenda transfer from candidates to the public does occur, and that different strategies are employed depending on the type of content. Gen Z users tend to package personal and interactive styles within TikTok, indicating that the platform is not merely a campaign tool but also a channel for delivering engaging political educational content to young voters. Various international studies further indicate that TikTok possesses strong potential for virality, interactivity, and algorithmic

mobility. Through the @Xproject.id account, digital literacy and the intensity of watching the X YouTube channel have been shown to significantly influence the fulfilment of political information needs, with a coefficient of determination of 75.5%, while the remaining 24.5% is influenced by other factors not examined in the study. In line of these information, this research aims to answer the following questions: How is the political communication strategy implemented by the @Xproject.id account on TikTok when analysed using the SOSTAC communication planning model (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control)?, What forms of content, communication styles, and political message framing are employed to attract the attention and engagement of Generation Z audiences?, How do members of Generation Z perceive educational political content on TikTok, particularly in relation to their level of political understanding and political literacy?

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach in conjunction with the SOSTAC model to identify situations, objectives, strategies, tactics, actions, and evaluation processes applicable to digital education-based political campaigns on the TikTok platform. A qualitative approach was selected because the research seeks to examine the phenomenon of political communication on TikTok, particularly in relation to how the SOSTAC model (Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control) may be utilised to enhance political understanding among Generation Z. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research is appropriate for exploring perceptions, experiences, and strategic practices. In this study, it is used to investigate the strategic perceptions and communication practices of the @Xproject.id informant, a young public figure who actively constructs political narratives through short videos on TikTok.

The research was conducted between June and September 2025 in Bogor, West Java Province, with a focus on digital communication activities. Bogor was selected because it represents a locality with a substantial population of young voters active on social media. TikTok was chosen as the research platform due to its highest user dominance among Indonesian Gen Z, reaching 42.27% (APJII, 2025). In addition, TikTok demonstrates the highest engagement rate, exceeding 5% per content interaction, significantly higher than Instagram and X (DataReportal, 2024). The platform also functions as a contemporary digital public sphere that mediates political discourse, enabling Gen Z users and public figures to construct political education messages in a persuasive and visually engaging manner.

The analytical method is based on the SOSTAC model developed by P. R. Smith (1990); a strategic communication planning framework widely applied in social campaigns, digital marketing, and political communication. SOSTAC is considered suitable because it provides a structured and measurable planning sequence, beginning with Situation Analysis through SWOT analysis derived from in-depth interviews and contextual assessments of communication environments and audiences; followed by Objectives, which involve the formulation of specific and measurable goals; Strategy, referring to the overarching direction and conceptualisation of the message; Tactics, relating to the implementation of technical tools, media selection, and message style; Action, referring to actual execution; and Control, which concerns evaluation and subsequent improvement (Smith & Zook, 2020).

In this research, the SOSTAC model functions not only as a communication planning instrument but also as a conceptual framework guiding the formulation of research questions for informants. This approach enables a comprehensive analysis of how Gen Z political communicators design, implement, and evaluate communication strategies through TikTok.

The subjects and informants of this study consist of the @Xproject.id account internal key administrators and active followers who meet the main informant criteria. These criteria include individuals aged between 18 and 25 years (classified as Generation Z according to BPS, 2025), who actively use TikTok for at least one hour per day and reside in Bogor Regency. A total of 10-12 informants were involved, comprising three primary communicators from the @Xproject.id digital internal key administrators team and six TikTok users from Generation Z representing active audiences. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, as recommended by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which emphasises participant selection based on relevance and the depth of information they can provide.

The informants included six student participants from universities in Bogor City and Regency who were chosen through purposive sampling based on their level of engagement with

the @Xproject.id account. Selection considered representation from diverse student organisations and campus communities characterised by active social media use, particularly TikTok. The purpose of selecting these informants was to obtain in-depth perspectives on how @Xproject.id content contributes to enhancing political understanding among Generation Z. The six participants consisted of students from the Communication Students' Association (HIMAKOM), two members of a Photography Club, one member of the Student Executive Board (BEM), and two members of a Community Choir Club focused on arts and cultural development within the university environment. Based on the identification results in 2025, the informants were aged between 22 and 24 years.

Table 1. Informants

No	Name	Student activity units	Begin follow X project	Age (Years Old)	Types of interviews
1	D S	HIMAKOM	2024	23	Luring
2	A D	HIMAKOM	Feb 2025	22	Luring
3	N F	Photography Club	2023	22	Luring
4	A M	GOOD	2024	23	Offline, online
5	D P F	Photography Club	2024	24	online
6	M T	Choir Club	2024	23	Offline, online
7	H	Creator	2025	29	online

Source: Author (2025)

These informants were chosen to represent the main characteristics of Generation Z, particularly those that are actively using social media, being critical of social and political issues, and are involved in student activities. The researchers tried to explore the perceptions of understanding and their strategies regarding political communication carried out by the informant of project.id on the TikTok platform, in an effort to build constructive political literacy among young voters. To ensure data credibility, four criteria are used as explained in Table 2, Trustworthiness from Lincoln & Guba (1985).

Table 2.Data credibility

Criteria	Implementation
Credibility	Triangulation of sources (informants, media team, audience), member checking, and ongoing observation.
Transferability	A detailed description of the context and characteristics of Gen Z Bogor so that the results can be compared in other locations.
Dependability	Audit trail of interview transcripts and observation notes.
Confirmability	Researcher reflection and documentation of each stage of analysis.

Source: Author (2025)

Research ethics assures the confidentiality of informants who participate voluntarily, and all data is collected for academic, non-political, purposes. The SOSTAC model is not only an analytical framework, but also a basis for compiling questions, each SOSTAC element is operationalised into several groups of questions to informants. SOSTAC is seen as providing a strong conceptual structure because it exhibits a systematic framework for understanding the digital political communication planning process, encouraging data-based planning and continuous evaluation, suitable for application in the context of fast-changing social media such as TikTok, relevant to the strategic communication theory paradigm (Hallahan et al, 2007).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this study will be explained sequentially based on the SOSTAC Model with the results of in-depth interviews. Based on the results of interviews with informants, the political situation among Gen Z indicates a shift in perspectives on politics, from what was initially perceived as rigid and elitist to one that is more accessible, fluid, and based on personal

experiences. Informants stated that the younger generation tends to reject formal political styles and prefers messages conveyed through a light-hearted style, engaging visuals, and relevance to everyday life. Informant from HIMAKOM (D.S., 23 years old) said on 23 March 2025:

"Nowadays, young people don't want to be lectured about politics. They prefer it when politics is connected to things they've personally experienced, like justice, work, or equality. When delivered through TikTok in a relaxed manner, it resonates."

The same statement was conveyed by an informant from BEM (A.M., 23 years old) on 2 February 2025, who emphasised that TikTok makes political issues easier to access and understand.

"I used to rarely watch political content, but on TikTok, it's in short, light-hearted videos. So, we can understand it without having to read long news stories. Politics becomes like a part of everyday conversation."

Results Gen Z's primary motivation for using TikTok as another medium for political communication is its ease of access, the platform's interactive nature, and its algorithmic appeal, which displays content tailored to users' interests. Furthermore, TikTok allows them to engage directly through comments, duets, and reactions, which strengthens their sense of participation and connection with the communicator. A Community Informant from the Choir Club (M.T., 23 years old) 1 March 2025 said:

"What makes TikTok so engaging is that we can join in. For example, if there's content from the X Project about tolerance, many people immediately start discussing it in the comments section. So, it's not just watching, it's like having a conversation."

It shows that the INFORMAN of @Xproject.id leverages TikTok's interactive nature by producing content based on light-hearted social reflection and philosophy. This type of content fosters engagement, strengthening the image of a smart and reflective young communicator. The "@Xproject.id's strength is having a young, intelligent, critical image, which fits the characteristics of Gen Z. Informants consider that his relaxed, honest, and reflective communication style makes his political message more easily accepted. The content created is interactive, but invites the audience to think, which, according to HIMAKOM informants on 25 March 2025: "Making politics feel reasonable and not boring in the midst of heated politics"

In addition, consistency in creating educational content strengthens the credibility of the INFORMAN of @Xproject.id, an authentic young political figure in the digital space. The main weakness is the limited source of credit, and the audience reach which is still dominated by the dictionary intellectual group. An informant from the Photography Club (N.F., 22 years old) stated:

"@Xproject.id's content is great, ma'am, but sometimes the topics are heavy for laypeople. Maybe because it's only targeted at college students or those who are socially aware."

This shows that despite having high educational value, penetration into the Gen Z segment is broader and still a challenge. Informants agreed that TikTok has a strong foundation as an interactive, viral, and participatory political communication platform. Informant D.P.F. (24 years old) from Clun Photography added:

"There's a lot of educational political content on TikTok now, especially after the 2024 election. People are more open to learning about politics in a light-hearted way."

It suggests that the post-election momentum has created a new space for educational political campaigns that can be leveraged to raise Gen Z's political awareness. Although the potential is great, the threat remains, especially political polarisation, disinformation, and negative comments on social media. Several informants admitted that political discussions on TikTok often devolve into debates that trigger emotions. A.M (BEM, 23 Years Old) said:

"When discussing politics on TikTok, people often misunderstand or even attack people personally. The goal is to educate."

Based on the results of interviews and observations, a SWOT analysis was obtained to answer the following analysis situation. As the SWOT chart on Table 4.

Table 4. SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths The informant of @Xproject.id has a young, intelligent, and critical image, which fits the character of Gen Z. He also consistently creates educational and reflective content, which strengthens his political credibility.</p>	<p>Weaknesses The limited resources of the creative team, the audience reach is still limited, not all Gen Z segments are covered.</p>
<p>Opportunities TikTok, as the dominant platform for Gen Z in Indonesia, provides ample space for interactive, viral, and participatory communication. The trend for educational political content is increasing following the 2024 elections.</p>	<p>Threats Political polarisation, disinformation, and negative comments on social media can diminish the credibility of messages. Changes to TikTok's algorithm can also reduce content reach.</p>

Source: Author (2025)

Situation analysis

The interview findings indicate a clear transformation in Generation Z's orientation towards political communication. Politics, previously perceived as rigid, elitist, and distant from everyday life, is now increasingly understood as something accessible, relatable, and embedded in personal experience. Informants consistently emphasised that younger audiences are less receptive to formal or didactic modes of political messaging and instead prefer communication that is conversational, visually engaging, and directly connected to lived realities such as justice, employment, and equality. This shift suggests that effective political communication strategies for Gen Z must prioritise experiential relevance and narrative proximity rather than institutional authority or technical rhetoric.

TikTok emerges from the data as a structurally advantageous platform for this demographic. The informants highlighted three principal affordances that explain its appeal as a political communication medium: accessibility, interactivity, and algorithmic personalisation. Short-form video reduces cognitive barriers to entry, allowing complex issues to be understood quickly without requiring sustained attention. At the same time, interactive features such as comments, duets, and reactions create a participatory communication environment in which audiences do not merely consume messages but actively engage with them. This participatory dimension strengthens perceived relational closeness between communicators and audiences, thereby enhancing message resonance and retention.

The findings also demonstrate that the @Xproject.id communicator occupies a strategically advantageous positioning within this media ecology. Informants repeatedly described the communicator as embodying attributes valued by Gen Z: youthfulness, intelligence, critical thinking, authenticity, and reflective communication. Such characteristics function as symbolic capital, enabling the communicator to construct credibility and trust in a digital environment often characterised by scepticism towards political actors. The relaxed yet thoughtful communication style appears to facilitate cognitive accessibility while simultaneously encouraging reflective engagement, thereby making political discourse appear reasonable and intellectually stimulating rather than polarising or tedious.

However, despite these strengths, the data reveal structural limitations that constrain message diffusion. The most prominent weakness concerns audience segmentation: current reach appears concentrated among intellectually oriented or university-affiliated audiences, suggesting that the content may be perceived as cognitively demanding for broader segments of Gen Z. This indicates a potential mismatch between message complexity and audience diversity, highlighting the need for adaptive framing strategies capable of maintaining educational depth while improving accessibility for less politically engaged viewers. Resource limitations within the creative team further restrict production capacity and scalability, which may affect consistency and long-term growth.

The broader communication environment presents substantial opportunities. Informants noted that the post-2024 election context has stimulated heightened interest in political learning among young people, creating a favourable climate for educational political content. TikTok's dominance among Indonesian Gen Z users, combined with its viral affordances, positions the platform as an effective channel for agenda dissemination and civic engagement. This suggests that political education initiatives that leverage platform-specific formats particularly short,

visually compelling, and dialogic content are likely to achieve higher levels of reach and interaction.

Nevertheless, the threat landscape remains significant. Informants identified political polarisation, misinformation, hostile commentary, and algorithmic volatility as persistent risks. These factors may undermine message credibility, distort interpretation, or discourage constructive discussion. In particular, emotionally charged exchanges in comment sections may shift discourse from deliberative engagement to antagonistic confrontation, thereby weakening the educational objective of political communication. Algorithmic changes also represent an external structural risk, as they can unpredictably affect content visibility regardless of message quality. Taken together, the SWOT analysis indicates that the communicator's symbolic credibility and platform suitability constitute strong strategic assets, while limited resources and segmented audience reach represent internal constraints. Externally, favourable political learning trends and TikTok's participatory infrastructure provide significant opportunities, yet these are counterbalanced by risks associated with polarisation, disinformation, and platform governance. From a strategic perspective, these findings suggest that successful political communication aimed at Gen Z must integrate adaptive content design, audience diversification strategies, and credibility-protection mechanisms to sustain engagement while preserving educational value.

Objectives

Based on the results of the Internal key informant interview with the @Xproject.id Gen Z followers in Bogor, it was obtained that the main purpose of creating TikTok political content is not merely to build a biased political narrative but rather to increase the understanding of political knowledge and critical awareness among Gen Z. TikTok is used as an educational space and relatively connects politics with the context of everyday life. The @Xproject.id internal key informant explained that the vision was created to educate Gen Z about the substantial meaning of politics, not just a campaign to support certain figures or parties. In an interview Internal key informant H @X project.id Delivers on 20 January 2026:

"I don't want politics to be seen solely in terms of who wins or loses. Politics is about how we think critically and participate in social life. So, I aim my TikTok content at broadening perspectives so that young people aren't apathetic but also aren't blind."

This statement shows that the communicator's orientation is to increase political literacy (Political Literacy) in a way that is adaptive to the characteristics of Gen Z. Through a relaxed speaking style, philosophical analogies, and simple language, F tries to reduce the distance between political concepts and the daily lives of young people. Informant from HIMAKOM (A.D., 22 years old) on 20 March 2025 added:

"The X Project's content made me realise that politics isn't just about elections. It also discusses values, responsibilities, and our role in society. So, it's more about political education, not campaigning."

The analysis shows that this educational objective is in line with the principles of Strategic Communication for empowerment, where political communication as a tool to strengthen citizen awareness is not merely general persuasion (Hallahan et al., 2007). Educational function: Building digital dialogue engagement is also directed at creating participatory and dialogic spaces between communicators. The informant of the @Xprojetc.id enables more active two-way communication through comments, duets, and live streaming. INFORMAN @X project.id stated on his account 5 January 2026:

"Just giving political lectures is no longer effective. Gen Z wants to be talked to, not lectured to. That's why I often use a question-and-answer format or read their comments to make it feel like a discussion."

This approach shows that one of the main goals of TikTok communication strategists is to develop emotional closeness and a sense of ownership of political issues. Content that is interactive creates productive digital participation, where the audience is not only a viewer, but also a contributor of ideas and opinions. This was also expressed by an informant from BEM (A.M., 23 years old):

"What I love about the X Project is that when we comment, we sometimes get a direct reply or it's used as material for new content. It makes us feel involved, not just informed."

This finding strengthens the assumption that TikTok functions as a digital deliberation arena where participatory political discourse is in line with the principles of the public sphere (Herbermas, 1989), which are adapted in the context of new media. The source of political image formation, although not explicitly politically oriented, political communication activities provide the informant of @X Project as a critical, inspiring young figure, organically form consistent content, and credibility of the message. According to the Choir Club Informant (M.T., 23 Years) on 1 March 2025:

"At first, I didn't know who F I was, but because he frequently appeared on FYP with great content, I became interested in following him. Gradually, I developed a sense of trust, as if this person truly understands social issues and isn't just looking for popularity."

This suggests that electoral support can emerge from the secondary effects of a credible and consistent educational strategy. In the context of the SOSTAC Model, it illustrates the relationship between Objectives and the direction of communication, which indirectly creates educational value.

Strategy

To see the strategy in the SOSTAC Model, use the results of interview quotations by describing them according to the SMART principle (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Based on the results of interviews with the informant and internal key informant of @Xproject, the main direction of the political communication strategy on TikTok is to build emotional and intellectual connections with Gen Z through authentic, educational, and socially relevant messages. The INFORMAN emphasised that the success of political communication on social media depends on the message's ability to speak Gen Z's language without losing the substance of political values. In an online interview, the INFORMAN explained on 5 January 2026:

"I realise that Gen Z is critical but gets bored easily. So, the message has to be close, personal, but still meaningful. For example, I discuss ethics or social responsibility, but with light-hearted examples like 'how do we use privilege properly?' The politics are still there, but it doesn't feel preachy."

The statement states that communication strategies must be based on political humanisation, packaging political values into narratives that are relevant to everyday life, conveying reflective, relatable information. The concept of the strategic value message of the main message developed at @Xproject.id focuses on three elements of Reflective Politics, inviting the audience to think rather than just react, humanist narratives using true stories and light humour and personal experiences, critical but positive, highlighting social and political issues without triggering polarisation. Informant from HUMAKOM (D.S., 23 Years Old) stated:

"What makes the difference is the way he talks. F doesn't blame anyone but invites us to think together. So, we are more open."

The messaging strategy aims to create a conscious, reflective dialogue, not a politically controversial one. This strategy aligns with the Gen Z character, which dislikes hierarchical communication and prefers authenticity and purpose-driven content. The implementation of strategies based on the SMART Principle (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) is used as a reference for developing strategies so that each political message has a measurable and realistic direction, as explained in Table 5.

In Table 5, this strategy ensures that political messages are not only thematically relevant, but also performatively and temporally sustainable. Language strategy and message visualisation in the interview the informant X project on 5 January 2026 also emphasised the importance of choosing strategic communication language and visuals:

"Overly academic sentences often get skipped in the first five seconds. So, I changed the writing style: it's still profound but easy to digest. Visuals also need to be dynamic, using subtitles, quick transitions, and warm colours to avoid stiffness."

Table 5. SMART components

SMART components	Implementation of Strategy in TikTok X Project	Researcher Analysis
Specific	Developing messages that emphasise ethical issues, social responsibility, and public participation without bringing in party identity.	This strategy keeps the focus of communication on universal values that Gen Z easily accepts.
Measurable	Measuring effectiveness through engagement rate (likes, comments, shares) and video viewing duration.	This quantitative indicator helps assess the extent to which political messages attract attention and spark dialogue.
Achievable	Create content with a short duration (30-60 seconds) and a light narrative style so that it is easy for young audiences to digest.	This strategy is realistic considering Gen Z's fast and visual content consumption habits.
Relevant	Connecting political messages with trending topics (social issues, education, environment).	Demonstrates a fit between political messages and Gen Z's emotional interests.
Time-bound (Time-bound)	Design a regular posting schedule twice a week, especially around political momentum or current public issues.	This strategy maintains continuity of communication and consistently strengthens digital presence.

Source: Author (2025)

Based on researchers' observations of 30 TikTok content from the X Project, a pattern was found: messages were delivered using direct speech, a positive tone, and simple graphic elements such as quotes or clips from everyday life. This format effectively maintains the audience's attention and strengthens the communicator's credibility. The visual strategies used support the concept of *edutainment*, namely, education packaged with light entertainment, so that political issues do not feel heavy but remain substantial.

Integration of strategy and overall value of observation interviews, researchers found that the communication strategy used by the informant shows integration between: The idealistic values of political integrity and responsibility, the cultural approach of Gen Z humour, spontaneity and participation, adaptive digital techniques of consistent storytelling and real-time interaction uploads. This is reflected in the interview with BEM (A.M., 23 years old):

"There was a segment discussing the 17+8 demonstration. From my perspective, the INFORMAN seemed to be crafting a political message in a way that resonated with our generation. The issues were serious but delivered in light language. So, viewers were kept thinking but not bored."

The researcher's analysis shows that this strategy is effective because it combines emotions, rationality and moral values in a digital narrative so that the message can be accepted by resistance. Researchers designed a systematic table 6 based on the SOSTAC Model. The following is an explanation.

Table 6. Strategic dimensions

Strategy dimensions	Focus strategy	Implementation	Impact
Message direction	Educational, reflective, non-confrontational	Social value-based narrative	Improving Gen Z's political literacy
Language style	Relaxed, relevant, and inclusive	Everyday language and light analogies	Expanding audience reach
Visualisation	Dynamic and adaptive	Subtitles, video clips, music trends	Increase engagement
Time consistency	Scheduled uploads	2 times per week	Maintaining visibility and algorithms
Feedback	Interactive and participatory	Reply to comments, live Q&A	Strengthening the sense of audience involvement

Source: Author (2025)

Tactics

Implementation of communication strategy techniques based on the results of informant interviews, the type of content created by @Xproject.id focuses on reflective - educational content with a short content format that is raised "we don't need to be great, but responsible" which displays the INFORMAN speaking directly in front of the camera with a simple, calm, room tone in the informant interview stating:

"I deliberately make videos in a conversational style, not a speech. For example, in the video 'We Don't Need to Be Great, But We Need to Be Responsible,' I encourage the audience to think about social responsibility, not just blame the situation. Politics should be relevant to everyday life, not jargon."

This type of content is designed to tap into Gen Z's reflective and emotional side, rather than simply provide information. 40-60-second videos with brief on-screen text are the primary format to align with TikTok's fast-paced media consumption characteristics. F's style of language in each piece of content is personal, empathetic, and value-driven. He avoids formal political jargon and uses light yet meaningful language. INFORMAN @Xproject.id Delivers on 4 April 2025 stated:

"Language is crucial. I don't want to sound like an official. So, I use colloquial language, like 'we,' 'me,' or 'friends.' But I still convey the values I want to convey, such as honesty, fairness, or participation."

This approach reinforces the impression of authenticity and emotional closeness with the audience. In the researchers' analysis, this style falls into the category of strategic conversational tone, a political communication style that blurs the gap between the communicator and the public (Hallahan et al., 2007). Informant from HIMAKOM (A.D., 22 Years) on 25 March 2025:

"When F talks, it feels like he's being talked to, not lectured to. So, his message is easy to get stuck in, even though the topic is heavy."

From the researcher's observations of TikTok content@Xproject.id, the visual elements used demonstrate the principles of simplicity, consistency, and visual intimacy. The video backdrop is often a simple room with natural lighting, without any excessive effects. Caption overlays such as "Responsibility is more important than ambition" used to reinforce the main message the informant explains:

"I don't want the visuals to be too glamorous, because that creates a distance. Young people today actually prefer realism. The important thing is adequate lighting, clear sound, and the message. Sometimes I add subtitles so it's still understandable when watching without sound."

Visuals like this were chosen to make the message feel honest and authentic, in line with the Gen Z In University X trend of valuing authenticity more (*authentic content*) compared to high aesthetics. The informant from the Photography Club (D.P.F., 24 years old) added:

"I actually like F's simple videos. The background is plain, but the message is profound. It's like he's speaking from the heart."

Results Based on interviews and observations, the X Project content production process is carried out independently and efficiently with the following steps: Theme Planning: Content ideas are derived from current social issues (e.g., corruption, the environment, or public morality) that are linked to the values of everyday life. Short Script Writing: F writes a draft of the main points, without a full script, to keep it sounding natural. Video Production Using a smartphone camera and a simple tripod. Editing is done with the application *CapCut* to add subtitles, soft background music, and simple transitions. Scheduled Uploads Content is uploaded twice a week consistently (Wednesday and Sunday) at 7:00 PM the time considered most active by the Gen Z audience. According to the informant of @XProject.id, M.R on 4 April 2025:

"What's important isn't the tool, but the consistency and honesty of the message. We use simple tools but focus on meaning and a consistent upload rhythm."

Interaction tactics in addition to content creation, communication tactics also include interaction strategies and message distribution. F actively responds to comments and conducts live broadcasts (*live TikTok*) to discuss topics raised by the audience. An informant from BEM (A.M., 23 years old) said:

"I once commented on one of his videos, and F responded in a new one. It was like we were having a real conversation, not just watching."

This strategy creates a digital discursive community where audiences feel they have a real space to participate. In the researchers' analysis, this is a crucial part of the digital political engagement strategy, transforming audiences from passive consumers into active participants (Loader et al., 2014). The consistency of production tactics and content presentation in Table 7.

Table 7. Content production and presentation tactics

Aspect	Applied practices	Objective
Content type	Reflective-educational, short monologue	Building political awareness without confrontation
Language style	Relaxed and inclusive conversation	Increasing closeness with Gen Z
Visualisation	Simple, natural, with text captions	Emphasize the authenticity and honesty of the message
Tools & editing	Smartphone, tripod, CapCut, simple subtitles	Production efficiency and consistency
Digital interaction	Reply to comments, Q&A, live session	Increase participation and engagement
Upload frequency	2 times per week, 40-60 seconds/video	Maintaining algorithms and closeness to the audience

Source: Author (2025)

Action (Program Implementation)

The TikTok X Project's content is managed by a small, four-person core team, with F I serving directly as the primary communicator and concept director. This team consists of the informant/content director who determine the main idea, write a short script, and be the main character in the video. Responsible for the core message, values, and narrative of the political communication. Internal key informant 1 (Editor & Visual Designer).

Table 8. Project stage four production

Stages	Main activities	Output
Ideation (Theme Planning)	Determine topics based on current social issues or the results of observing audience comments.	Draft ideas and key messages.
Production (video production)	The recording was done using a cell phone camera against a simple backdrop. F spoke directly into the camera to maintain spontaneity.	Raw video files are 30-60 seconds long.
Editing & review	The editing process includes adding subtitles, soft background music, and relevant visuals. F reviews the final product before uploading.	Final video ready for publication.
Publishing & interaction (upload & respond)	N.F. schedules TikTok posts during peak hours (7:00 PM-9:00 PM WIB). A.M. then monitors comments and engagement.	Publication and audience feedback.

Source: Author (2025)

In charge of video recording, editing, adding subtitles and light visual elements using *CapCut*. Internal key informant 2 (Media Strategist & Scheduler) Manages upload schedules, analyses engagement and chooses the best time for publication (prime time). A.M (Community Manager) Manages interactions with the audience (comments, Q&A, live sessions), while monitoring public sentiment and providing feedback reports to the team. Informant X project on 4 April 2025 reveals reasons for creating the Team:

"I deliberately created a small team to remain flexible and agile. Everyone knows their role. We work like a community, not a large corporation. Ideas can come from anyone, but they must align with the X Project's values—educational and reflective."

This team structure makes coordination much more dynamic; production becomes more efficient without lengthy bureaucracy and can respond quickly to current social issues. From the interview results, the results of the interview with Internal key informant 1 and Internal key informant 2 showed that operational implementation was carried out in a semi-scheduled manner, with a system-wide *content cycle*. Each week, the X Project team goes through four core stages of production (Table 8).

This shows the existence of narrative ethical control where the content is selected based on educational principles and social responsibility and the message must be in line with the values of @X projevt.id intellectual, reflective and ethical. Internal collaboration creative dynamics operational process collaboration between team members takes place in an informant but productive manner communication is carried out through WhatsApp and Google Dribbble groups for various files and ideas keyword informant A.M (community manager) said:

"Usually, ideas come from audience comments. For example, someone might ask, 'What does social justice mean today?' Then we discuss it in a small meeting, and it becomes the topic of next week's video."

This approach creates a feedback loop between the team and the public—the audience is not just a recipient of the message, but also a source of inspiration for the content. The researcher's analysis shows that this work pattern is a form of adaptive communication process, namely the integration of communication strategy and audience participation in shaping the direction of the message. Table 9 explains the implementation analysis based on the SOSTAC Model.

Table 9. Analysis of the implementation of the SOSTAC Model

Aspect	Implementation	Impact on political communication
Human resources	Small team (4 people), flexible role distribution.	High efficiency, fast coordination.
Production process	Routine, simple, based on social issue reflection.	Messages remain contextual and relevant.
Quality control	Revision of messages before publication, ethical discussions.	Ensuring political credibility and educational value.
Audience participation	Content ideas from public comments & discussions.	Increase engagement and sense of ownership.
Time continuity	Two uploads per week, regular evaluation.	Maintaining exposure and consistency of political messages.

Source: Author (2025)

Control and evaluation of control

Based on interviews with the internal key informant, the evaluation process is ongoing and based on engagement data and public response. He emphasised that content success isn't solely measured by the number of views, *views* or *likes*, but primarily from the quality of interactions and changes in audience perspectives on political issues. The internal key informant conveys:

"For me, content is considered successful not because it goes viral, but because someone says, 'Bro, I now understand that politics isn't just about parties.' So, the measure isn't popularity, but awareness."

Table 10. Forms of evaluation measurement

Indicator types	Measurement form	Explanation
Quantitative (digital metrics)	Number of views, likes, shares, comments, and retention rate (how long the audience watches the video).	This data is obtained through the feature <i>TikTok Analytics</i> and is used to assess the algorithmic performance of content.
Qualitative (engagement & sentiment)	Analyse the content of comments, direct messages (DMs), and responses in live sessions.	Measuring the level of audience understanding, support, and reflection on the political message conveyed.

Source: Author (2025)

This approach demonstrates that the key indicators of success are qualitative and educational, not solely quantitative metrics. This aligns with the X Project's vision of using TikTok as a means of political literacy, not a propaganda tool. Content Performance Evaluation

Indicators: Based on interviews and observations of the @Xproject.id TikTok account, the team used two types of evaluation indicators: quantitative (digital metrics) and qualitative (audience sentiment) (See Table 10).

In terms of originality, the findings of this study contributions to the scholarship on digital political communication, particularly in the Indonesian Gen Z context. First, the study demonstrates how the SOSTAC model can be operationalised not merely as a planning toolkit but as an analytic framework for mapping the full strategic cycle of political education on TikTok—from situational reading and objective-setting through to tactical execution, team-based implementation, and continuous evaluation. Second, the findings highlight a distinctive form of reflective political communication on TikTok: rather than prioritising mobilisation, partisan persuasion, or candidate branding, @Xproject.id foregrounds values-based, non-confrontational narratives that translate political concepts into everyday experiences, thereby reducing psychological distance and supporting political literacy development. Third, the study identifies an evaluation logic that is both metric-informed and meaning-driven: success is assessed not only through platform analytics (views, retention, engagement rates) but, crucially, through qualitative indicators of learning and reflection captured in comment discourse and live interactions. Finally, the results reveal an adaptive feedback loop mechanism in which audiences function as co-producers of agenda and content themes, positioning TikTok as a deliberative micro-public sphere where participation shapes strategy in real time. Collectively, these contributions extend existing literature that has largely centred on electoral effects and mobilisation by offering a structured, planning-based account of how political education strategies can be designed, enacted, and ethically controlled within a highly interactive short-video environment.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that TikTok has significant potential as a new space for educational political communication for Generation Z. Through the application of the SOSTAC Model (Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, Control), political communication strategies can be formulated systematically, measurably, and oriented towards learning, not just electoral persuasion. A situational analysis shows that Gen Z, who are active in the university environment exhibits a strong inclination toward reflective and informal politics. They are more receptive to political messages presented in a light-hearted visual style, casual language, and narratives relevant to everyday life. The primary goal of communicating through TikTok is to build political literacy, raise critical awareness, and create a space for participatory digital dialogue.

The communication strategy implemented focused on educational, reflective, and inclusive messages, using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) principle. Meanwhile, technical tactics such as the use of short monologue videos, conversational language, simple visual elements, and active interaction (through comments and live sessions) successfully strengthened audience engagement.

Operations are carried out collaboratively by a small, flexible team, with clear roles for creators, editors, and digital community managers. Adaptive work processes address current issues, ensuring content remains contextual and relevant. Continuous evaluation is conducted through analysis of digital metrics (views, likes, engagement rate) and qualitative feedback from audience comments, demonstrating increased political understanding and interest in social issues.

Conceptually, this research confirms that the SOSTAC Model can be adapted as a strategic approach in digital political communication planning based on educational and ethical values. TikTok functions not only as an entertainment medium but also as an effective participatory public space (digital public sphere) for building critical political awareness among Gen Z. Thus, this study recommends that young candidates, political education institutions, and civil society organisations integrate the SOSTAC model into their digital communication strategies to improve the political literacy of young people in a sustainable, interactive, and responsible manner.

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