

# Strategy For Strengthening Political Literacy of Youth Through Political Education Based on Social Media

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**Abstract.** The aim of this article is to analyse strategies for strengthening youth political literacy through improving social media-based political education and examining supporting and inhibiting factors for strengthening youth political literacy through improving social media-based political education. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This research data collection used interview, observation, and documentation techniques, as well as pattern-matching data analysis techniques in the form of domain analysis and pattern simplification. The research findings are (1) The Yogyakarta Special Region KPU effectively enhances youth political literacy by leveraging social media platforms, podcasts, and films, thereby making political education more engaging and accessible for Generation Z, fostering their involvement in the democratic process. (2) Strengthening youth political literacy through social media offers significant opportunities for building future generations, but it also presents challenges that require careful management, including combating misinformation, promoting ethical communication, and ensuring equal access to digital resources.

## 1 Introduction

As a democratic country, government in Indonesia is conducted by the people as stated in Chapter 1 number (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that sovereignty rests with the people and is carried out based on law. In implementing people's sovereignty, Indonesia changes leadership every five years through general elections. General elections are a process of channelling people's political aspirations to decide the desired leader directly, universally, freely, and secretly (Fadjar, 2018; Hady, 2016). In the election stages, three determining elements are the key to election success: the integrity of election organizers, committed election participants, and rational and authoritative voters (Abhan, 2019). The level of rationality and authority of society refers to the commitment of society as voters not to vote based on money, the seduction of power, and

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individual political compensation. The level of rationality and authority of voters in elections is not at once found without a certain process of understanding. The country needs a process to turn citizens into voters with character so that they can choose the best leaders who can lead the nation toward better governance.

To realize good voter character, such as being voluntary, independent, rational, and intelligent, knowledge, awareness, and a sense of responsibility to guide decision-making when voting in the election need to be considered (Manik et al., 2015). Based on this desire, a country, through election organizers, has eased voters to obtain political education through programs such as election socialization and voter education. Political education has political content, including political loyalty and feelings, political knowledge and insight, which causes a person to have an awareness of political issues and political attitudes (Affandi, 2019). Political education is regulated in Chapter 1, number 4 of Law Number 2 of 2011 as a process of learning and understanding the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of every citizen in their lives. Political education can be interpreted as a political orientation to take part well and optimally as a good citizen in the context of politics and elections (Dewantara et al., 2019; Hardian et al., 2021; Yuliandari et al., 2023).

In the implementation of voter education, groups are targeted, one of which is beginner voters, such as university students, high school students, and young workers. New voters can be interpreted as all citizens who are still going to vote between the ages of 17-22 years and are still classified as irrational voters. (Sutisna, 2017). From this statement, it is known that it is essential for new voters to receive good political education and direction to have a good knowledge of democracy. Currently, first-time voters in the 17-22 age range are citizens born in the 2001-2006 range or Generation Z. Indonesia Gen Z Report survey (IDN Research Institute, 2022) shows that the percentage of Generation Z's political literacy level is 53%. Based on this data, it is known that 47% of Generation Z have never read or accessed political news at all. Another ironic fact shows that only 41% of Generation Z are ready to take part in the 2024 elections, while 59% of them take an apathetic attitude, such as not caring or being neutral. The data presented shows that there has been an improvement in political education patterns to increase youth political participation in the upcoming democratic party.

Political participation is a voluntary activity of citizens taking part in the process of selecting national leaders, either directly or indirectly (Affandi, 2019; Budiardjo, 2008; Karamoy, 2015). Political participation is essential for citizens as a form of exercising citizens' rights and obligations in democracy as a nation-building effort. In general, the level of political participation of citizens is usually equated with voter participation in an election. This level of participation is usually measured through the percentage of voters in an election, which is then compared with the number of citizens entitled to vote. In fact, the results of the research by Karamoy (2015) show that the level of political participation of the younger generation is related to the level of intellectuality and social communication of individuals and groups. The intellectual level of youth will be directly proportional to the awareness that requires these individuals to take part in making future regulations. In line with this, a proficient level of individual social communication will give rise to better knowledge, which will also give rise to good participatory awareness.

The development of time and era has given rise to transformations in the form of social communication patterns because of technological developments. Individual and group communication, which was initially only conducted conventionally, is now developing into digital through social media (Saputra, 2013). This change in the form of communication also influences the lives of Generation Z, which is the first generation that has been exposed to technology from an early age, so they are focused on digital technology (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2021). Based on that, social media plays an essential role in the lives of youth. Indonesian data, Gen Z report (IDN Research Institute, 2022) shows that Generation Z's social media access level is at 86%. The young generation's high access to social media

requires all information, such as political education, to be able to adapt to these conditions. Based on these empirical facts, this research was conducted to analyse strategies for strengthening youth political literacy through improving social media-based political education.

## **2 Method**

It was conducted using qualitative methods with a case study type of research. As case study research, this research seeks to understand the background of an individual or group interaction in a social unit in depth, intact, holistic, intensive, and naturalistic (Nurdin & Hartati, 2019). The case study research was chosen because the researcher intended to analyse the strategy of strengthening political literacy conducted by the General Election Commission (KPU) of the Special Region of Yogyakarta through improving social media-based political education.

This research was conducted using data collection techniques in the form of interviews with the Head of the Division of Socialization, Voter Education, Community Participation, and Human Resources of the Yogyakarta Special Region General Election Commission. Apart from that, the researcher also conducted interviews with representatives of youth. Apart from using data collection techniques through interviews, researchers also use observation and documentation techniques to obtain more in-depth data results. It also used the pattern-matching data analysis method in the form of domain analysis with pattern matching (explanatory/descriptive), as explained by Yin (2014) in Untari and Suharto (2020). In the Pattern Matching data analysis method, three stages of analysis must be conducted, namely the expected results as a pattern, explanation of the comparison as a pattern, and simplification of the pattern.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

### **3.1 Implementation of Political Education through Social Media**

Based on Article 12 of Law 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, one of the tasks of the KPU is to socialize the implementation of elections and/or related to the duties and authority of the KPU to the public. This task is important to conduct as a form of implementing Political Education. Through existing implementation, the public will have knowledge about the concept, urgency, stages, and what contributions can be made in organizing elections. The Yogyakarta Special Region KPU conducts this task by dividing voters into categories based on age, namely beginner voters and advanced voters. The interesting part of this effort is the enthusiasm of the Yogyakarta Special Region KPU in joining new voters who in many surveys show reluctance to get involved in government political issues due to various national problems.

They were strengthening youth political literacy by improving social media-based political education to increase political knowledge for youth. With the aim of building political literacy for youth, the Yogyakarta Special Region General Election Commission (KPU DIY) has various programs that are packaged formally and informally by involving various elements of society as supporters of the program to strengthen youth political literacy by using social media in their political education. This program is conducted to instill politically conscious behaviour by adjusting the approach according to the tastes and character of youth who are Generation Z. There are forms of strengthening political literacy through improving social media which have been conducted by the Yogyakarta Special Region general election commission, including creating democracy and election podcasts,

making short films and election documentaries, and sending digital content through media accounts.

### *3.1.1 Podcast*

Podcasts are audio recordings about a particular topic that can be accessed on the internet by anyone at any time (Prasetyo, 2024; Puadah et al., 2022). Democracy and election podcasts are one of the political education media owned by the Yogyakarta Special Region General Election Commission, namely recordings that are distributed via YouTube accounts. This podcast is open and can be accessed by anyone with a device that can connect to the internet, such as a smartphone, laptop, or tablet. In this podcast, there are usually speakers or speakers who discuss topics related to current political issues, the democratic system, preparation and implementation of general elections, and challenges in supporting democratic stability and implementing general elections.

With this democracy and election podcast, the Yogyakarta Special Region General Election Commission has succeeded in packaging political content that is usually considered too formal and dull into content that is interesting and easy for youth to digest. The creation of this democracy and election podcast is the result of an adoption by the general election commission of the Republic of Indonesia and general election commissions in other regions, which is packaged according to the tastes of the youth of the Special Region of Yogyakarta.

### *3.1.2 Election short films and documentaries*

As a strategy to communicate with the younger generation who likes watching films, the Yogyakarta Special Region KPU has also adopted films as a medium to strengthen political literacy. This film was made with an implied message about the importance of youth and community participation in elections. In making this short film and documentary, the Yogyakarta Special Region KPU involved the talented young generation in the Yogyakarta Special Region. Apart from trying to accommodate the talents of youth, the strategy for selecting youth as actors in these films is the result of adopting peer counselling theory, where an effortless way to approach like-minded people is through peer counsellors. Age or peers (Endang, 2015; Firman, 2019). It is hoped that young characters as film characters can become a reference for other young generations who are reluctant to take part in democracy and cut apathy within themselves.

### *3.1.3 Dissemination of Digital Content Through the Yogyakarta Special Region KPU Social Media Accounts*

The development of social media, which increases every year, offers excellent opportunities for the development of digital content. In the current digital era, sending information is increasingly more accessible and faster through social media accounts. The Yogyakarta Special Region KPU also took advantage of this by designing various digital content through social media accounts to send election-related information to the public. To perform its duties in holding elections, the Yogyakarta Special Region General Election Commission actively uses its social media accounts to conduct outreach and education to the public.

Currently, the Yogyakarta Special Region KPU is one of the election-organizing institutions that is always up to date in sending information through its social media accounts. The contents have information about voter registration, the voting process and procedures, the stages of deciding the final voter list, and the announcement of election results. The content compiled by the Yogyakarta Special Region General Election Commission includes

infographics, short videos, memes, and other informative images that are fun to attract the interest of the younger generation so that it is easier to understand various information related to elections and stimulate them to participate and take part in this democratic process.

The existence of this digital content makes it easier for youth to understand the entire process of general elections. The effectiveness of increasing political literacy through social media is beyond doubt, as is the case with similar research by Rosadi, B., Darmawan, C., and Anggraeni (2020), which shows that conveying political messages via social media has a significant impact on the political literacy of the younger generation with presentations reaching 77.5%. In other research, Antari (2018) also shows that the level of youth's daily apathy is not comparable to that of those on social media. These youth tend to be more flexible in commenting and expressing their political stance. The existence of various kinds of digital content on these social media accounts means that citizens, especially the younger generation in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, feel helped and increasingly understand the importance of their role in general elections and can express their voting rights appropriately and wisely.

### **3.2 Opportunities and Challenges in Strengthening Youth Political Literacy through Optimizing Social Media-Based Political Education**

The implementation of strengthening political literacy for youth through social media creates opportunities that can be seized as a start in building future generations. Social media-based political education has an essential function in building meaningful youth political literacy. Based on this, universities, government institutions, and community institutions must pay special attention to the use of social media as a means of political education for youth. The opportunities that came out from the process of strengthening youth political literacy through improving social media-based political education are listed below.

First, easy access to social media makes it possible for youth to gain political literacy anywhere and anytime without being limited by space and time. The ease of access means that youth can connect with the general election commission intentionally or not. This intentional access occurs when youth deliberately use social media to obtain information for their political literacy. The opposite of this, Accidental Access, is when the For Your Page (FYP) feature means that the younger generation will inadvertently be presented with election content that has been created by the general election committee in the Special Region of Yogyakarta on the home page of youth's social media. Apart from that, social media also increases the ease of youth interacting and taking part with election organizers, election participants, and other voters in various online political and electoral activities. From social media, these youth can then provide opinions, hold discussions, and expand networks with various levels of society, both within the Special Region of Yogyakarta and other areas.

Second, the existence of varied content is also a supporting factor in increasing political literacy through social media-based political education. Varied content such as articles, videos, infographics, and photos allow them to obtain complete political information without having to feel bored, as is the case with the usual formal political education process. Creating creative content requires an analysis of the target market in the form of content tastes that youth like, language styles that youth like, and what social media platforms are being widely used by youth.

Third, accelerate the dissemination of political information. Accelerating information dissemination in increasing political literacy based on social media is also a supporting factor that enables youth to obtain political information faster and more up to date. It is considered more attractive for youth in the Special Region of Yogyakarta because this rapid information can balance the need for dissemination of political information, which is always dynamic or

changes every second. Fast response in creating political and democratic content will support youth enthusiasm in using social media as a medium to increase their political literacy.

Fourth, the existence of easy access facilities such as gadgets and internet connections that youth already have makes them prefer to increase their literacy online. It is in line with the opinion of Role, M. T. B., Kurniawan, A., & Sari (2022) that the need for access to facilities such as gadgets and internet connections that youth already have makes them prefer to seek political literacy through social media. The various supporting factors above show that improving social media-based political education can increase knowledge about political issues with more accessible and more efficient methods, thereby producing youth who are more active and participatory in various political and democratic processes.

Even though social media is a good suggestion for increasing youth political literacy, the implementation of this process also has challenges that cannot be ignored. First, individuals wrongly use social media for personal or group interests. Invalid information and hoaxes spread on social media can influence the younger generation's belief and understanding of politics. Therefore, efforts need to be made to verify the veracity of information obtained from social media so that everyone who is strengthening political literacy does not fall prey to misinformation. It is like the results of research by Nurrahmi & Syam (2020) that social media is one of the sources of political information most widely accessed by the younger generation, but it has a lot of polarization and hoaxes. Therefore, it is essential to remember that information obtained from social media needs to be verified so as not to give rise to misunderstandings or even hoaxes.

Second, people's lack of understanding of the ethics and procedures for communicating on social media can cause polarization and conflict among new voters. The existence of unhealthy habits in communication, which sometimes offend and discriminate against some aspects of ethnicity, religion, race, and group which usually appear in the discussion process on political and social media, often makes the younger generation reluctant to continue their political literacy activities. Therefore, there is a need for education about ethics and reasonable communication procedures on social media so that there is no friction between one young voter and another young voter.

Third, the existence of people who are less skilled in using social media can be an obstacle to obtaining political information. Differences in levels of competence and skills between teenagers usually occur due to different individual backgrounds. Therefore, efforts are needed to increase access to social media and the skills of teenagers. Fourth, limited means of access are an obstacle in increasing the political literacy of the younger generation. Differences in geographic location mean that certain areas in the Special Region of Yogyakarta cannot access the internet network optimally. Apart from that, other facilities, such as gadgets, are usually not owned by every young voter in the Yogyakarta area. In this case, the relevant government is needed to be able to provide adequate facilities, such as internet networks in certain areas, to optimize programs to increase youth political literacy through social media-based political education.

## **4 Conclusion**

The development of the era and technology makes everything transform and adapt to conditions. Political education is a form of increasing political literacy and must also be transformed to achieve the goal of understanding citizens, especially the younger generation. Improving social media for political education has the potential to be effective in increasing political literacy among the younger generation. However, using social media in political education must be balanced with supporting facilities and infrastructure, effective communication ethics on social media, and responsibility for everyone so that the truth of any political information spread on social media can be maintained.



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