

What's Role of Indonesian Young Voters in Upcoming 2024 Elections?

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Abstract

Indonesian millennials are the largest age-group as Indonesia is experiencing a demographic dividend, where the size of the young productive age population is the largest until 2030. Millennials and Gen-Zers hold about 54 percent of the population of 270 million people, according to official statistics. Meanwhile, the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (2022) also stated that 77% of Indonesian citizens or as many as 210 million people have used the internet. With large numbers and high level of technological literacy, Indonesian millennials hold much responsibility for better results in upcoming election. This article will provide what's role from Indonesian millennials especially in terms of political participation, not only about voting rights but also conduct the flow in how to express their opinion or political preference. Which more or less can impact voting behaviour and influencing the direction of the country in various spheres.

Keywords: Millenials, Politics, Participation

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Introduction

Electoral politics in Indonesia is actually quite interesting to observe because it has a phenomenon of authoritarianism that is almost similar to countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines to countries with authoritarian governments such as Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Indonesia itself is currently entering an era of democracy which is quite stagnant, while some Indonesianist scientists call it democratic regression. This can be seen from Indonesia's democracy index score which has not changed, remaining below Colombia and the Philippines according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) version with a score of 6.71 (Permana, 2023). Even though there are indications of a decline in democracy in Indonesia, Indonesia will still carry out simultaneous elections in 2024 to elect members of the legislative, President also Regional and Local Heads in the same year.

For upcoming election in 2024, Indonesia will enter a new era in electoral politics. This new era is marked by the presence of technologies adaptive and rational young voters. Indonesia's young and new voters in Indonesia are those who born from 1997 till 2012 (including Gen Z) are taking part in upcoming simultaneous election in 2024 for first time. Indonesian Millennials are the largest age-group as Indonesia is experiencing a demographic dividend, where the size of the young productive age population is the largest until 2030. Young voters are predicted to reach 60% of Indonesia's total voters in 2024. Meanwhile, the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (2022) also stated the 77% of Indonesian citizens or as many as 210 million people have used the internet.

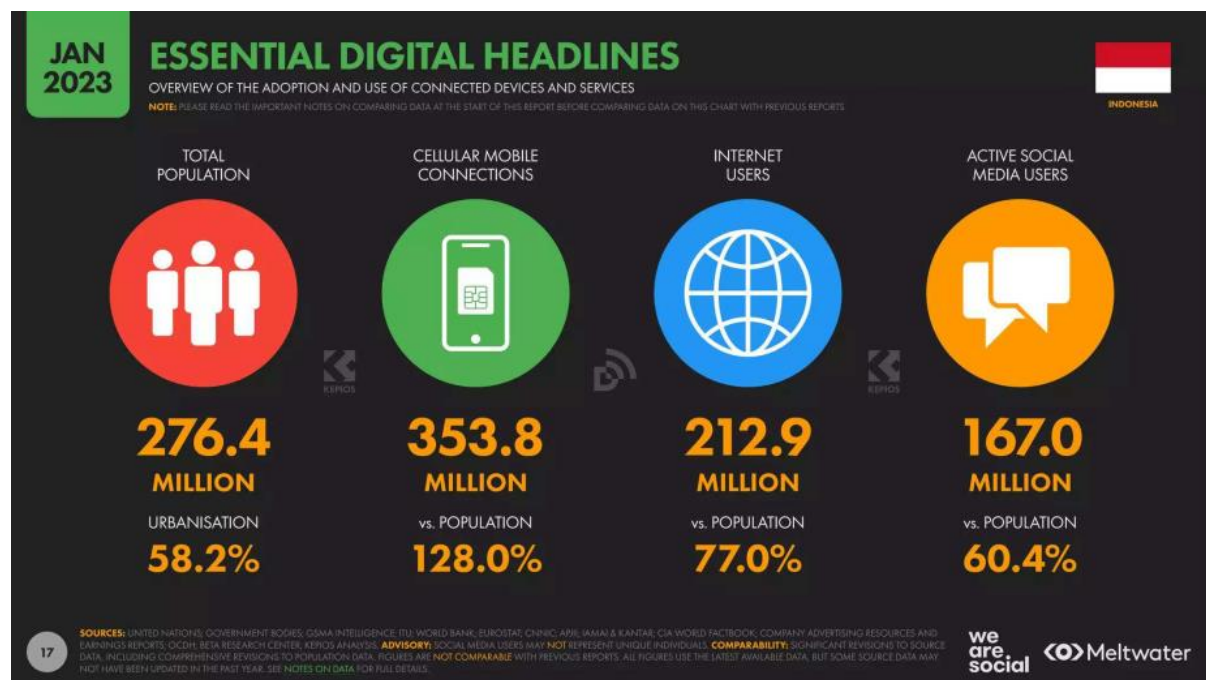


Figure 1. Overview Internet and Social Media User in Indonesia (Source: Hootsuite)

Figure 1 illustrates total active social media users in Indonesia around 167.0 million and it means majority of Indonesian citizens are internet users and use social media for socializing. Not only for that, but also for political activism. In this research, political activism referring to political participation and political affiliation. A social survey conducted various organization in world and resuming in datareportal.com in 2023 found that social media become a tool for most installed by younger generation(datareportal, 2023). The social media including all mainstream social media such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and for chat-base

like WhatsApp, Line, Kakao Talk, Telegram and others. Indonesia's youth which also Indonesia's young voters with mass amount in upcoming election have important role in Indonesia politic, referring to 'Reformasi 1998' who succeeded in overthrowing the Soeharto government that time. Indonesian young voters now should participating in strengthening governance and political participate with democratic mindset (Ida, Saud, & Mashud, 2020).

'Young generation or new demographic is arriving in today's workplace that cannot imagine a world without Google or mobile phones.' (Tapscott & Williams, 2006) This seems to justify that platform like social media and google have too much power in building public opinion and public trust. Most important matters, new technologies and politics should collaborative more for looking the reality about people's demand and needs. Not only governments should collaborate with e-government, but also political party. Collaboration between politics and political party should be matters for increasing democracy, like the rising of digital party from 'Five Star Movement' in Italy, 'Pirate Parties' in Northern Europes countries and many more. The term about 'digital party' referring from Paolo Gerbaudo, for describing 'platform party,' to indicate its adoption of the platform logic of social media, is to the current informational era of ubiquitous networks, social media and smartphone apps – what the mass party was to the industrial era or the cynically professionalised 'television party' was during the post-Cold War era of high neoliberalism (Gerbaudo, 2019).

Charateristic of Indonesian Young Voters in Upcoming Election

The participation of Indonesian youth in active politics is actually legally supported. Not only as a voter, active participation such as joining a political party and becoming a member of the legislature. The minimum requirement to register as a candidate for legislative member is currently at least 21 years old according to Indonesia law number 7 of 2017. Meanwhile, the minimum age for registering as a candidate for regent is 25 years and to become a candidate for governor is at least 30 years old based on Indonesia law number 10 of 2016. There are several characteristics of young voters in Indonesia in the upcoming general election.

Such as *digital behaviour (with high literacy on technology)* and *negative perceptions about younger generation have capability for running politics matters.*

This can be seen from the number of elected legislators aged over 50 years who have continued to increase from the election results in 2014 and 2019. The proportion of national legislative members over 50 years of age around 40%. However, in 2014, the elected legislative national members over the age of 50 years of age become 45.7%. Furthermore, in the 2019-2024 period, this percentage keeps increasing but not more 55%. The limited quota for young people has been reflected in the candidacy for members of the national legislative. Based on data from the 2014 national level legislative candidates, only 24.8 & were filled by people with a maximum age of 40 years. Furthermore, in the 2019 election, young politicians who will run for the national level legislative election are still around 6%.

Indonesian young voters in upcoming election with digital behavior adhering with social media and google as main source can became the most loyalist supporter but also rabble-rouser. With high literacy on technology and familiar with social media algorithm, Indonesian young voters can be influencing others or just affected with hoax and black campaign which can destroy political systems or even certain politicians image. But, the most

important for upcoming election in 2024, does this two characters affected Indonesian young voters for increasing voter turnout (higher participation than before).

Role of Indonesian Young Voters in Upcoming 2024 Elections

Mobilization and Distraction: Loyalist Supporter or Rabble-Rouser?

Overall, studies measuring political use of social media constantly found positive to affect political participation (Bachmann & Gil de Zuñiga, 2013). Political participation with low effort pertains to all activities requiring a relative small amount of time and energy (e.g. sharing political information, signing a petition, whereas high effort political participation refers to more time and consuming energies in example protesting, writing a comment in politicians social media account (Krishnan & Netemeyer RG, 2002). This distinction is crucial because political participation as a behavior, is clearly driven by goals and interest. This effort is crucial for the question of whether someone acts or not, rather than the distinction between online and off-line. Indonesia young voters use media social for mobilization their support or refusal regarding policies or political views. Unfortunately, not accompanied by high voter turnout, there is no definite research showing the success of the media for increasing formal participation such as voting and joining political parties. Some scholars called it 'Social Media Political Participation Paradox' which happen in US, New Zealand etc. More importantly, how does social media tools in Indonesian young voters can bring higher voter turnout in upcoming elections? Indonesian young voters are motivated to engage with political activities in social media but also high potentially distracted by entertainment-oriented content on social media. High likely join political online discussion in social media (non institutionalized participation).

Conclusion

With large numbers and high level of technological literacy, Indonesian millennials hold much responsibility for better results in upcoming election. The younger generation of voters is adaptive in changing trends in the digital world. Despite the characteristics and the role of Indonesian young voters, these only my hypothesis for further research. Indonesian party also doesn't have much preparation for utilizing Indonesian young voters to involve in formal participation. There are still major obstacle for Indonesian youth to engage as active political actors. These obstacles are inseparable from the vortex of oligarchs, both at the local and national levels.

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