

The Voice of Youth in Democracy: An Analysis of Generation Z's Engagement in the 2024 Regional Elections

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the involvement of Generation Z in the organization of the 2024 Regional Elections in Serang Regency, focusing on their participation as members of the District Election Committee. Generation Z is known for its unique characteristics in political and democratic participation, marked by a strong desire to contribute to social change, particularly through electoral engagement. Data reveals that 45% of District Election Committee members in Serang Regency come from Generation Z, indicating their significant interest in the democratic process. Their involvement not only enhances transparency and accountability but also introduces fresh and dynamic perspectives that enrich local democracy. However, Generation Z faces various challenges, including a lack of comprehensive political education and limited understanding of election regulations. Despite these challenges, their high motivation, supported by broad access to information through social media and community backing, drives their active participation. Moreover, training provided by the

government and election organizers improves their technical skills in fulfilling their roles. In conclusion, with proper support, Generation Z holds great potential to contribute to more transparent, accountable, and participatory elections in Indonesia

Keywords

Generation Z, Civic Participation, and the 2024 Elections

Introduction

The role of youth in democracy is crucial as they act as agents of change with significant potential to shape the political future of a nation.¹ According to Budiardjo (2008), youth political participation can strengthen democratic systems by introducing fresh and innovative dynamics into decision-making processes.² Young people often have more progressive perspectives on social, economic, and environmental issues, making their involvement in democratic processes essential for crafting policies that are inclusive and relevant to contemporary challenges.³

In the Indonesian context, Nurhasyim (2020) highlights the strategic role of youth in preserving democratic values, especially amidst advancements in technology that enable political participation through social media and digital platforms.⁴ In this digital era, the rapid and extensive access to information allows young people to engage in various forms of political activities, ranging from online campaigns to

¹ Rifqi Munadhil Wal Hidayah dkk., “Membangun Kesadaran Politik: Pentingnya Partisipasi Generasi Muda Di Era Digital,” *EDUSOS: Jurnal Edukasi dan Ilmu Sosial* 1, no. 02 (2024): 74–77.

² Miriam Budiardjo, “Dasar-dasar ilmu politik edisi revisi,” *Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama*, 2008.

³ Nur Azizah dkk., “Peran Dinamis Generasi Muda Dalam Mendorong Partisipasi Politik di Indonesia,” *Resolusi: Jurnal Sosial Politik* 7, no. 2 (2024): 90–106.

⁴ Dhika Pratama, Teguh Widodo, dan Siti Tiara Maulia, “Penggunaan Media Digital dan Partisipasi Politik Milenial,” *Civilia: Jurnal Kajian Hukum dan Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan* 2, no. 1 (2023): 79–89.

social movements.⁵ This participation is vital for ensuring democracy remains functional and evolves in alignment with the needs of modern society.⁶

Furthermore, research by Setiawan indicates that youth involvement in democratic processes contributes to strengthening democratic institutions.⁷ Setiawan emphasizes the importance of political education for young people to build awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, thereby increasing their active participation in elections and other political activities.⁸ Quality political education can help young people understand the significance of their contributions in maintaining the integrity and sustainability of democracy.⁹

The role of youth in democracy is not only essential for the continuity of political systems but also for driving the creation of more inclusive and equitable policies, as well as strengthening the legitimacy

⁵ Arpandi Arpandi, "Media Online dalam Meningkatkan Partisipasi Politik Masyarakat pada Pemilihan Umum (Pemilu)," *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 3, no. 1 (2023): 843–55.

⁶ Icca Bela Syahputri dan Katimin Katimin, "Pengaruh Aktivis Mahasiswa Dalam Perubahan Sosial Politik Di Era Digital 5.0," *Ganaya: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora* 7, no. 4 (2024): 25–36.

⁷ Naziva Azzahra Rahman dkk., "Membangun Generasi Muda yang Demokratis dan Kritis dengan Adanya Demokrasi Substantif," *Media Hukum Indonesia (MHI)* 2, no. 4 (2024), <https://ojs.daarulhuda.or.id/index.php/MHI/article/view/905>.

⁸ Heru Dian Setiawan dan TB Massa Djafar, "Partisipasi politik pemilih muda dalam pelaksanaan demokrasi di Pemilu 2024," *Populis: Jurnal Sosial dan Humaniora* 8, no. 2 (2023): 201–13.

⁹ Sylke Nissen, "Political Participation: Inclusion of Citizens in Democratic Opinion-Forming and Decision-Making Processes," dalam *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*, ed. oleh Walter Leal Filho dkk., *Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 665–75, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95960-3_42.

of democratic governance.¹⁰ Without active youth participation, democracy risks stagnation and failing to respond to the social changes occurring within society.¹¹ The importance of youth in democracy becomes even more pronounced when considering the unique characteristics of Generation Z, which dominates the current era.¹²

Generation Z, born in the digital age, possesses unique traits that make them key actors in the development of modern democracy.¹³ Their participation in political processes not only signifies political regeneration but also enriches democracy with more progressive and innovative perspectives.¹⁴ According to Pratama, Generation Z's political engagement differs from previous generations due to their upbringing in an environment of easy access to information through technology, enabling them to play a more active role in global social and political issues.¹⁵

In Indonesia, Generation Z's role in democracy has become increasingly evident, especially in elections and digital political campaigns. A notable example is the "Gejayan Memanggil" movement

¹⁰ Exploring Democracy's Resilience, "Mind the gap: can democracy counter inequality?," 2017, <https://www.idea.int/gsod-2017/files/IDEA-GSOD-2017-CHAPTER-6-EN.pdf>.

¹¹ Albert W. Dzur, *Democracy inside: Participatory innovation in unlikely places* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

¹² Peter Levine, *The future of democracy: Developing the next generation of American citizens* (UPNE, 2007).

¹³ Dedi Junaedi dan Faisal Salistia, "Dampak Pandemi COVID-19 Terhadap Pertumbuhan Ekonomi Negara-Negara Terdampak," *Simposium Nasional Keuangan Negara* 2, no. 1 (2020): 995–1013.

¹⁴ Satya Anggara dan Herdito Sandi Pratama, "Masyarakat Jejaring, Media Sosial, dan Transformasi Ruang Publik: Refleksi Mengenai Fenomena Arab Spring dan "Teman Ahok,"" *Paradigma* 9, no. 3 (2019): 287–310.

¹⁵ Inka Nusamuda Pratama, Ayatullah Hadi, dan Rizal Umami, "Penguatan Partisipasi Politik Inklusif Dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Dan Keterlibatan Generasi Z Pada Pemilu 2024 Di Desa Bagik Polak," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bangsa* 1, no. 11 (2024): 2986–93.

in 2019, where thousands of students, mostly from Generation Z, protested revisions to the The Corruption Eradication Commission Law, which were seen as weakening the anti-corruption agency (Lazuardi, 2021). This movement garnered national and international attention, with social media serving as the primary tool for organizing and disseminating information. This demonstrates how Generation Z can leverage technology to amplify their political voice and drive policy changes.

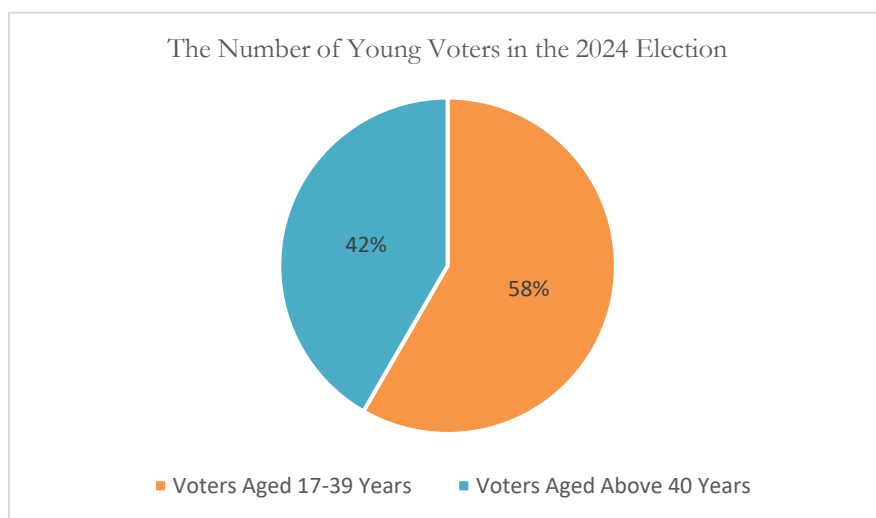
Additionally, Rismawan (2023) underscores Generation Z's potential to enhance political participation among youth through creative campaigns and the use of social media as a political education tool. In various elections, their awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens has grown, as evidenced by the increasing number of young voters in the 2019 elections. Rismawan also highlights the importance of targeted political education for Generation Z to enable them to participate critically and actively in democratic processes, not just as followers but as future leaders.

Thus, the role of Generation Z in democracy is highly significant. They are not merely participants in the political system but also drivers of change capable of utilizing technology to break conventional barriers to political participation. If their potential is harnessed effectively through adequate political education, Generation Z could become a powerful force in ensuring democracy remains relevant and responsive to the challenges of the times.

This projection is supported by data from the 2020 Population Census by the Central Statistics Agency and records from the General Election Commission, which show that the number of voters in the elections reached 190 million people. Central Statistics Agency

categorizes Generation Z as those born between 1997 and 2012, currently aged 8 to 23 years. Meanwhile, Millennials include those born between 1981 and 1996, with an age range of 24 to 39 years.

As an illustration, the 2020 Population Census recorded that the 15-39 age group accounted for approximately 41.06% of the population, or around 110.8 million people. When compared to the total number of voters in the 2019 elections, which reached 190 million, it is estimated that around 58% of voters came from the young age group. CSIS predicts that the proportion of young voters aged 17 to 39 will approach 60% in the 2024 elections.



Source: <https://tirto.id/dominasi-suara-gen-z-dan-milenial-dalam-pemilu-2024-gEgl>

A survey conducted by CSIS revealed an increase in youth voter participation between the 2014 and 2019 general elections. In the 2014 election, 85.9% of respondents stated that they exercised their voting rights, while 11.8% admitted to not voting, and 2.3% did not provide an answer. In the 2019 election, voter participation rose to 91.3%, with only 8% opting not to vote and 0.7% not responding.

The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews with 1,192 respondents aged 17 to 39 years across 34 provinces in Indonesia.

It was carried out from August 8 to 13, 2022, offering insights into the increasing engagement of young voters in elections.

Method

This research employs a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. The selection of this method and approach aims to provide a deeper understanding of the issues being studied. Qualitative data is expressed in the form of personal documents, field notes, statements, actions, respondent responses, and other documents. Data collection in qualitative research can be conducted through interviews, observations, and document analysis. A literature review, also referred to as a literature study, involves the process of collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant textual sources to support research. This includes analyzing existing works related to the research topic.¹⁶

Result And Discussion

1. The Role of Generation Z in Democracy

Generation Z, born in the digital age and raised amidst rapid technological advancements, possesses unique characteristics that distinguish them from previous generations, particularly in the realm of political participation. Wong (2020) states that this generation exhibits a strong desire to contribute to social change, whether through direct involvement in elections or other forms of advocacy, such as digital-based initiatives. This indicates that Generation Z is not merely a spectator in the political system but an active participant aiming to realize tangible changes in issues that matter to them.

¹⁶ Sugiyono Sugiyono, "Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D," *Alfabeta, Bandung*, 2017.

According to Twenge (2017), Generation Z demonstrates significant concern for social issues such as social justice, environmental preservation, and government transparency. These traits reflect their critical mindset, often making them more vocal in expressing their views, either directly or through social media. Their engagement with these issues suggests that Generation Z is not only focused on the present but also considers the long-term impact of policies on the future.

In the context of the 2024 Regional Elections, data from the District Election Committee in Serang Regency shows a significant increase in Generation Z's involvement as election organizers. Approximately 45% of District Election Committee members are aged 20–27, with the majority belonging to Generation Z. Most of them are university graduates with substantial experience in social activities, student organizations, and election organizing. This reflects Generation Z's strong interest in participating directly in the democratic process and contributing to the functioning of democracy in Indonesia.

Generation Z's involvement not only brings practical benefits to the electoral process but also introduces fresh and innovative perspectives. Their experience in social and student organizations equips them with managerial, leadership, and communication skills that are crucial for fulfilling their responsibilities as election organizers. Moreover, their familiarity with technology enables them to introduce innovations in various aspects of election administration, such as utilizing social media for voter outreach or implementing technology for election monitoring.

However, despite their considerable potential, Generation Z faces challenges in their involvement in election administration. One notable challenge is the lack of comprehensive political education. Many of them may not fully understand election regulations or technical mechanisms within the electoral process. Therefore, training and guidance from the government and related institutions are essential to ensure their participation is effective and impactful.

Overall, the increasing involvement of Generation Z in organizing the 2024 Regional Elections in Serang Regency is a positive indication for the advancement of democracy in Indonesia. Their presence brings the much-needed energy to rejuvenate democratic processes and contributes significantly to the success of election administration. If their potential continues to be nurtured effectively, Generation Z can become a driving force in creating a democracy that is more inclusive, participatory, and aligned with the needs of modern society.

2. The Importance of Youth Involvement in Election Administration

Youth involvement in election administration plays a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability, as emphasized by Budiardjo (2008). Their participation spans various roles, from voters to organizers such as District Election Committees. Budiardjo highlights that the active engagement of young people enriches the democratic process with fresh perspectives and innovative approaches. Similarly, Haryanto (2020) underlines that youth involvement in electoral

organizations enhances the quality and transparency of elections, contributing to a more credible democratic system.

In Serang Regency, the increasing participation of young individuals, particularly Generation Z, in District Election Committee demonstrates their growing awareness and interest in democratic processes. Data shows that 45% of District Election Committee members are aged 20–27, indicating a significant presence of Generation Z. These young organizers bring a unique combination of enthusiasm, innovation, and skills acquired through educational and extracurricular activities. Their involvement highlights their commitment to playing an active role in shaping the electoral process and strengthening democracy in Indonesia.

Generation Z, characterized by their digital nativeness, contributes significantly to election administration through their adept use of technology and social media. Their digital literacy enables them to improve voter outreach, disseminate information effectively, and monitor electoral processes. Their technological proficiency also allows for innovative solutions, such as enhancing voter education campaigns through social media and employing digital analytics to track voter behavior and turnout. Furthermore, their commitment to inclusivity and representation is evident, as reflected in the testimony of a Generation Z female District Election Committee member from Pulo Ampel District, who stated that their involvement is essential for fostering democracy and applying knowledge gained during their academic journey.

However, despite their enthusiasm and potential, young people face challenges in election administration, primarily due to

limited political education and training. These gaps can hinder their understanding of electoral laws, regulations, and technical procedures. Addressing this issue requires structured training programs and mentorship, which can enhance their readiness and effectiveness. Additionally, their digital expertise can be leveraged to amplify public awareness and participation in the electoral process.

The active involvement of Generation Z in election administration signifies a step toward democratic renewal. Their participation not only ensures effective and transparent electoral processes but also symbolizes a shift toward a more inclusive and participatory democracy. By taking on leadership roles and bringing innovative perspectives, Generation Z demonstrates their capacity to drive meaningful change and uphold democratic values. While challenges persist, targeted initiatives can unlock their full potential, ensuring that their contributions continue to strengthen Indonesia's democracy.

3. Challenges and Motivations in Participating in Elections

Despite their significant potential, young people face several challenges in engaging with the electoral process. Putri (2021) identifies the primary obstacle for Generation Z as the lack of adequate political education and outreach. Many young people have limited exposure to the electoral system, which affects their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the democratic process. While their motivation is often driven by social media, which serves as a platform for them to engage with public issues, this reliance on digital platforms may not always translate into

informed and meaningful participation. However, the accessibility of information via social media remains a key driver for their involvement, as it allows them to stay updated on current issues and participate in online discussions.

Kavanagh (2019) highlights that Generation Z tends to be motivated by activities that they perceive as having a positive impact on their communities. This insight aligns with findings from interviews and surveys conducted with members of the District Election Committee in Serang Regency. According to these findings, several factors contribute to Generation Z's involvement in election administration. These include broad access to information through social media, support from local communities, and a strong desire to learn more about the democratic process. Many young District Election Committee members view their participation as an opportunity to contribute to their communities and acquire valuable skills.

Efforts from local governments and election organizers to provide training have further encouraged youth participation. These training programs are designed to equip young District Election Committee members with the necessary technical skills and knowledge to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. The training covers aspects such as election regulations, voter outreach strategies, and technical procedures for election administration. Such initiatives help bridge the knowledge gap and enhance their confidence in performing their duties.

However, there are still significant barriers to youth involvement in election administration. A common issue is the lack of technical experience among young participants, which can make it difficult for them to navigate the complexities of electoral

processes. Additionally, their understanding of election regulations is often superficial, which may hinder their ability to make informed decisions or address challenges that arise during the electoral process. Haryanto (2020) emphasizes that another challenge lies in the insufficient dissemination of information regarding the roles and responsibilities of District Election Committee members. Many young individuals feel unprepared for the tasks assigned to them, which can reduce their effectiveness and engagement.

To overcome these challenges, it is essential to implement more comprehensive political education programs and targeted outreach efforts. By addressing the gaps in knowledge and experience, young people can be better equipped to contribute meaningfully to the electoral process. Furthermore, leveraging the strengths of Generation Z, such as their technological proficiency and community-oriented mindset, can amplify their impact and enhance the overall quality of election administration.

In conclusion, while challenges such as inadequate political education and technical experience persist, the enthusiasm and motivation of Generation Z remain strong drivers for their involvement in elections. By providing them with the necessary resources, training, and support, these barriers can be mitigated, enabling them to play a pivotal role in promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the democratic process.

Conclusion

Generation Z exhibits unique characteristics in their political and democratic participation, marked by a strong desire to contribute to social change, particularly through elections. In the 2024 Regional

Elections in Serang Regency, Generation Z's involvement as members of the District Election Committee reached 45%, reflecting their significant interest in taking an active role in the democratic process. Their participation not only enhances transparency and accountability but also introduces fresh and dynamic perspectives that enrich the democratic system. However, Generation Z faces challenges, particularly in political education and understanding election regulations. Despite these hurdles, their motivation remains high due to broad access to information through social media and strong community support. Additionally, training programs provided by the government and election organizers play a vital role in equipping them with the necessary skills. With the right support and resources, the immense potential of Generation Z to contribute to transparent and accountable elections in Indonesia can be fully realized. Their enthusiasm and innovative approach make them a key asset in strengthening democracy for the future.

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