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The Role of General Elections Commission on TikTok to Increase Voting Participation in the 2024 Elections

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ABSTRACT

In 2024, Indonesia conducted its fifth general election, which involved voting for various positions including the President, the Vice President, members of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the House of Representatives (DPR), and the Regional Representative Council (DPD). Approximately 60 percent of registered voters for this crucial electoral process were young individuals, highlighting their significant potential to influence the country's political landscape. The role of the General Elections Commission of Indonesia (KPU RI) is crucial in educating young people on the politics, particularly emphasizing their contributions during elections. Political education for the youth has evolved with the emergence of social media platforms, particularly TikTok. This article examines the use of the General Elections Commission's TikTok account (@KPU_RI) as one of the channels for educating young voters, analyzing its content and its potential impact on fostering politically aware and engaged youth. The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative, focusing on descriptive methods. The research findings identified that the General Elections Commission strategically employs TikTok as a means to educate young voters, utilizing edutainment content revolving around four main themes: democracy, institutions, elections, and political participation. Additionally, the General Elections Commission employ a content marketing strategy to enhance the reach and engagement of their content with young voters.

Keywords: *Edutainment, General Elections Commission, TikTok*

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 general election in Indonesia marked a significant moment in the country's democratic history, drawing widespread attention domestically and internationally. Indonesia's electoral process is complex and challenging, especially with its population exceeding 270 million people and a diverse archipelago comprising thousands of islands. The 2024 general election featured the selection of the President, the Vice President, members of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), the House of Representatives (DPR), and the Regional House Representatives (DPD).

The participation of the young generation in elections in Indonesia has been a notable and encouraging trend in recent years. With a significant portion of the population comprised of young people, their engagement in the democratic process is crucial for shaping the country's political landscape. Voters are defined as citizens who meet the requirements to vote during elections. In Indonesia, the criteria for being considered a voter have traditionally included either reaching the age of 17, being married, and hold an Indonesian citizenship. Citizens who become eligible to vote within a five-year period are referred to as pre-voters (Indonesia, 2022).

Approximately 60 percent of the total registered voters for the 2024 elections are young voters (Ahdiat, 2023). The General Elections Commission of the Republic of Indonesia (KPU RI) has established the final voter list (DPT) for the 2024 elections, totaling 204,807,222 voters. The data indicates that most voters for the 2024 elections are predominantly from the Generation Z and Millennial age groups. Approximately 66,822,389 or 33.60% of the voters belong to the Millennial generation, while voters from Generation Z amount to 46,800,161 or 22.85% of the total 2024 election voter list (Ahdiat, 2023). This indicates the significant impact they can have in participating politically to determine the future of Indonesia.

Social media and digital platforms have played a pivotal role in mobilizing and informing young voters, providing them with a space to discuss political issues, share information, and organize campaigns (Kashyap & Jonjua, 2020). Thus, providing them with a decent political education through this channel is essential. Education in the context of elections is the process of instilling values related to elections and democracy in the life of the nation and state (Okunzuwa, 2024). Voter education is intended to enhance voter participation. Participation refers to the involvement of voters throughout the entire governance cycle, encompassing both election periods and non-election periods. Voter education, therefore, is an effort to instill values associated with elections and democracy in the lives of citizens who meet the criteria as voters during elections or are potential voters within the specified timeframe.

Political education for the younger generation has taken on a new dimension through social media platforms, particularly TikTok. This short-form video app has become a powerful tool for engaging and informing young people about political issues in an accessible and entertaining manner. TikTok's user-friendly interface and widespread popularity among youth create an opportunity to foster a politically informed and active generation.

The General Elections Commission plays a vital role in educating young people about politics, especially their contributions during elections. It is important to encourage them to use their voices in the 2024 general elections. The General Elections Commission uses several social media channels, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

One key advantage of using TikTok for political education is its ability to deliver bite-sized content. Concise and engaging videos capture the attention of younger audiences more effectively than lengthy articles or traditional educational methods (Akbari et al., 2022). Creators on TikTok have leveraged their creativity to break down complex political concepts, policies, and current events into easily consumable content, making politics more approachable for young users. This approach helps break down barriers to political engagement and encourages young people to become more involved in civic discourse. In relation with this, this article aims to examine the General Elections Commission's TikTok account (@KPU_RI) as one of its channels to educate young voters. It will break down its content and its potential to shape a politically literate and active youth, ensuring a brighter future for democratic participation and civic responsibility.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a specific focus on descriptive methods. Qualitative approach explores complex human phenomena through expressions, attitudes, and beliefs (Bunteng, 2022; Lahiri, 2023). This approach aligns with Moleong's definition of qualitative descriptive methods, which involves gathering information through words, images, and other descriptive materials (Royadi et al., 2019). The article conducts a comprehensive analysis of the role played by the General Elections Commission in utilizing the TikTok social media platform to engage young voters in the 2024 general elections. The study specifically examines the activity of the @KPU_RI TikTok account during the 2023 general elections, spanning from November 28, 2023 - February 10, 2024.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education and entertainment are two pillars that shape individuals and societies (Budiaty & Rochmat, 2019; Petrušić, 2021). Education provides the foundation for intellectual growth, critical thinking, and personal development

(Sellars et al., 2018). Through formal schooling and informal learning experiences, individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and values that enable them to navigate the world's complexities. Beyond the classroom, entertainment is pivotal in enriching lives and encouraging social cohesion (Naerland & Dahl, 2022). Whether through literature, film, music, or sports, entertainment offers a platform for self-expression, cultural exchange, and emotional connection. It catalyzes relaxation, enjoyment, and escapism, providing much-needed respite from the stresses of daily life. Additionally, entertainment can be a powerful educational tool, conveying important messages, sparking dialogue, and challenging societal norms.

Education and entertainment, or edutainment, form a dynamic duo that fuels personal growth and societal advancement (Katsaliaki & Mustafee, 2015). By blending informative content with engaging narratives, they have the potential to inspire, enlighten, and transform individuals and communities. As technology evolves, the boundaries between education and entertainment become increasingly blurred, offering new opportunities for innovation and collaboration. By harnessing the power of both, we can create a world where learning is not only accessible but also enjoyable and where entertainment serves as a catalyst for positive change and collective progress.

Hansen & Machin (2018) defined edutainment content as a form of media content aimed at providing information, guidance, or teaching through enjoyable and entertaining experiences. Its purpose is to enhance knowledge and influence user behavior. Edutainment content is necessary to understand cultures that require awareness and analysis of learning styles that suit the characteristics of students, in this case, Generation Z (Fossard & Bailey, 2016). Edutainment originates from two different words: education and entertainment. Combining these two words into edutainment constitutes a fun learning method designed by integrating the educational domain with entertainment concepts, making the learning activity enjoyable. The benefit of edutainment is making the learning process quick and effective. Moreover, it evokes positive feelings such as enjoyment, achieving optimal learning outcomes, and enhancing student motivation and interest in learning.

One of the primary responsibilities mandated by the General Elections Commission is to conduct an election campaign. This campaign aims to disseminate information about the election stages, schedules, and programs while increasing voter participation. In Regulation No. 10/2018 on Election Socialization, Voter Education, and Community Participation in the Implementation of General Elections issued by the General Elections Commission, it is stated that to increase public participation, the General Elections Commission has three essential responsibilities:

1. Encouraging public participation through voter education;
2. Providing information by statutory regulations;

3. Offering equal opportunities for everyone to participate in elections.

First-time voters defined those who reach the voting age and will exercise their right to vote for the first time in elections. With the election cycle in Indonesia held every five years, the age range for first-time voters is typically 17 to 21 years. On average, this group of voters consists of individuals pursuing higher education and young professionals, essentially high school graduates. First-time voters are considered a strategic target for several reasons. First of all, the number of first-time voters in each election is quite substantial. Secondly, they are Indonesian citizens (WNI) casting their votes for the first time, necessitating proper guidance to ensure a solid understanding of democracy. Last but not least, they represent the future leaders, and by exploring and understanding their perspectives on democracy, we can provide them with what they need as a foundation for the future.

In order to boost voter participation in the 2024 elections, General Elections Commission is necessary in providing education for the first-time and young voters. This is vital because these individuals might be unfamiliar with the election process and lack general political knowledge. The voter education program aims to build knowledge, raise awareness, increase participation, and boost the comprehension and capabilities of the public in elections.

General Elections Commission is strategically utilizing social media as a tool to educate young voters. Social media proves to be an instrumental tool in reaching out to young voters, given its proximity to their daily routines and the fact that they regularly access these platforms. Hence, General Elections Commission aims to leverage its educational outreach and engagement potential.

TikTok, primarily known for its short-form video content and viral trends, has emerged as a surprisingly effective tool for education. With its massive user base spanning diverse demographics, TikTok offers a unique platform to disseminate educational content in an engaging and accessible manner. Educators and content creators have tapped into TikTok's format to deliver bite-sized lessons on various topics. General Elections Commission saw this opportunity and made use of TikTok as one of its tools to educate young voters.

TikTok is gaining significant popularity as a trending social media platform in Indonesia. According to data from 2022 provided by wearesocial.com, TikTok holds the fourth position in terms of the most utilized social media platforms in Indonesia, trailing behind WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Indonesia has the second spot globally with 112.97 million TikTok users. In 2022, the majority of TikTok accounts in Indonesia were owned by individuals aged 18 to 24, totaling 50 million accounts, followed by users aged 25 to 34, constituting approximately 44.5 million TikTok accounts, (Nurhayati-Wolff, 2023). Additionally, it is noteworthy, each TikTok user in Indonesia spends an average of 29 hours per month on the platform, per wearesocial.com's 2022 data. These statistics

underline TikTok’s potential for use by General Elections Commission in disseminating information about elections, particularly in educating young voters.

General Elections Commission opened their official TikTok account on 12 April 2022. The account focuses on sharing content related to Indonesia’s general elections. Currently, it has 72.500 followers and 268.500 likes. It is “Akun Resmi Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia. #KPUMelayani” (Official account of KPU RI, #KPU Served).

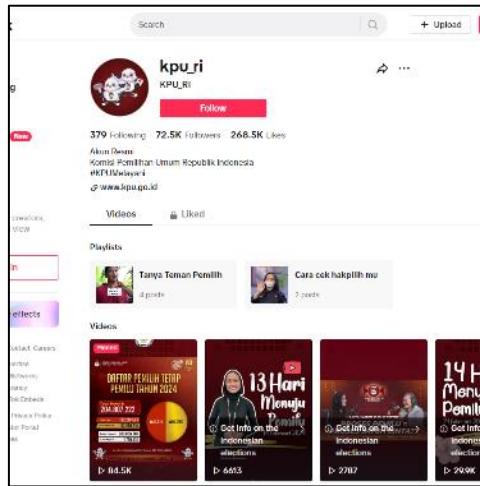


Figure 1. The Official TikTok Page of the General Elections Commission (@kpu_ri)

The 2015 Voter Education Guidelines published by the General Elections Commission state that the content to be presented in voter education is crucial in achieving the goals of voter education. This content serves as an instilled and disseminated value system. Several voter education materials can be categorized into four (4) primary themes: democracy, institutional, election, and political participation. These themes serve as the foundation for the values of individuals as citizens living in a democratic nation.

Democracy



Figure 2 & 3. The democracy-themed content found in General Elections Commission TikTok post

These contents are a few examples of the content that focuses on democracy content. Since the beginning of the republic era, Indonesia has been applying democracy as its political system. Democracy is considered the best system to accommodate the people’s needs. Democracy themes include the definition of democracy, characteristics of a democratic country, the position of citizens in a democratic country, the position of citizens in a democratic country, and strengthening democracy value.

Institutional



Figure 3 & 4. The institutional-themed content found in the General Elections Commission’s TikTok posts

One way to understand democratic power is through the presence of governmental organs or branches within a country. Each of these branches possesses distinct characteristics and functions. These organs are essential for the functioning of the state, and it is to them that citizens look for accountability. When discussing state institutions, it’s important to address:

1. What state institutions entail;
2. The various branches of state power;
3. The allocation of state power as outlined in the constitution;
4. The obstacles faced by state institutions;
5. How citizens interact with and influence state institutions.

Election

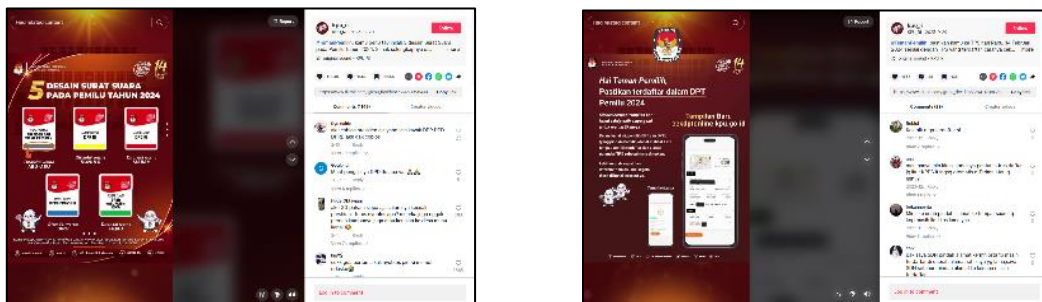


Figure 4 & 5. The election-themed content found in the General Elections Commission TikTok posts

Elections become a crucial element in a democratic state. During elections, the people participate in choosing leaders who will hold positions within state institutions and provide feedback on the current governance through reward and punishment. Elections are held periodically to ensure a circulation of leadership. Some of the themes related to democracy include:

1. Understanding of elections;
2. Principles of free and fair elections;
3. Electoral systems;
4. Electoral institutions and their functions;
5. Stages of elections;
6. Effectiveness of elections as the sovereignty of the people.

Political Participation



Figure 6 & 7. The political participation-themed content found in General Elections Commission TikTok posts

Participation is the heart of elections and democracy. Without participation, elections and democracy lose their meaning. Participation ensures the sovereignty of the people, and the government of, by, and for the people finds its concrete form. Discussions on voter participation include:

1. Understanding of participation;
2. Functions of participation;
3. Forms and arenas of participation during the election period and post-election period;
4. Challenges of participation;
5. Enhancing participation effectiveness.

In content creation, content marketing can be associated with this research. Content marketing involves creating and distributing valuable content to the audience, building strong relationships, and increasing understanding of the values held by the brand or organization (Du Plessis, 2017). In this context, the content created by the General Elections Commission team must meet the

organization's needs but still be valuable for the audience, especially the young generations.

Content marketing is done by creating and disseminating informative and useful content to its audience. Content marketing is not aimed solely at promoting products. The primary goal of content marketing is to build the company's brand and inform others, provide information, or entertain them. The Content Marketing Institute (2024) defines the term as "a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing relevant, consistent, and engaging content to retain a clearly defined audience." Aligned with this concept, the General Elections Commission utilizes its TikTok account to disseminate information about the general elections to young voters through consistently engaging content.

Content marketing aims to generate interest in what is offered on social media in the form of content. Furthermore, according to Pulizzi & Rose (2017), a content pillar is a helpful framework for companies to identify topics relevant to their audience and ensure that the content aligns with them. They also suggest choosing content pillars that can be broken down into more specific topics that are easily understood by the audience. It can be identified that the content pillars of @KPU_RI's TikTok account consist of four pillars, which are the four primary themes that must be included in the content: democracy, institutional, election, and political participation.

These four themes can be inserted into each piece of content, aiming at citizens who are not merely knowledgeable about the subjects discussed but, more significantly, to empower them as adept members of society. This involves applying the existing potential within the community and making the most of democratic institutions to maximize the people's interests.

CONCLUSION

In order to increase young voter participation in the 2024 general elections, the General Elections Commission plays a crucial role by educating first-time and young voters. This voter education program aims to enhance knowledge, raise awareness, encourage participation, and improve public comprehension and capabilities regarding elections. The General Elections Commission strategically utilizes TikTok as a tool to educate young voters. TikTok, known for its short videos and viral trends, is surprisingly an effective educational platform. With its wide-ranging user base spanning various demographics, TikTok provides a unique way to share educational content in an engaging and accessible manner. Knowing this opportunity, General Elections Commission has incorporated TikTok into its efforts to educate young voters. The General Elections Commission's posts on TikTok must include four main themes: democracy, institutions, elections, and political participation.

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