

KPU BANDAR LAMPUNG STRATEGY: GOES TO CAMPUS, SCHOOL, AND ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL TO INCREASE GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL PARTICIPATION

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Abstract

This study explores the 'Goes to Campus, School, and Islamic Boarding School' initiative by KPU Bandar Lampung aimed at enhancing political engagement among Gen Z and Millennials. By strategically targeting university students, pesantren, and high school students, KPU recognizes the unique challenges and opportunities each demographic presents in fostering a culture of civic responsibility. The effectiveness of these outreach efforts is analyzed through various methods, including interactive workshops, community engagement, and collaboration with local leaders. This paper discusses the importance of early political education, emphasizing how engaging young people in discussions about governance, democracy, and electoral processes can lead to informed voting behaviors in the future. Additionally, it addresses challenges such as political apathy and varying levels of awareness among students, proposing tailored strategies to overcome these barriers. The findings suggest that KPU's multifaceted approach not only prepares young individuals for participation in elections but also cultivates a lifelong habit of civic engagement. Ultimately, the initiative serves as a model for similar efforts across Indonesia, contributing to a more politically active and informed citizenry in the democratic landscape. The implications of these findings highlight the importance of sustained engagement and innovative outreach in promoting electoral participation among youth.

Keywords: KPU, Gen Z, Millennials, Electoral Participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the world's third-largest democracy, has made significant strides since the Reformasi era began in 1998. The country transitioned from authoritarian rule to a more decentralized, pluralistic democratic system. Elections are held regularly and fairly, and voter turnout is generally high compared to other democracies in the region. However, one persistent issue that Indonesia faces is the varying levels of voter participation, especially among younger generations. The rise of Gen Z (born after 1996) and millennials (born between 1981-1996) as a dominant demographic in Indonesia's population presents both a challenge and an opportunity for electoral bodies such as Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU).

According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), more than 30% of Indonesia's population is under the age of 30¹. This demographic shift means that young voters, many of whom are first-time voters will play a critical role in shaping the

¹ BPS, "Jumlah Penduduk Usia 15 Tahun Ke Atas Menurut Golongan Umur."

future of the country's political landscape. However, despite their numerical strength, young people tend to exhibit lower voter turnout rates compared to older generations, as demonstrated in previous elections, both in Indonesia and around the world. Political apathy, distrust in government institutions, and a perceived lack of meaningful political choices are often cited as reasons for this disengagement.

Bandar Lampung, the capital of Lampung Province, mirrors national trends in voter turnout. With a large portion of the population consisting of young people, KPU Bandar Lampung has recognized the necessity of targeted outreach programs to increase youth voter participation. The KPU's "Goes to Campus", "Goes to School", and "Goes to Islamic Boarding School" strategies represent a concerted effort to engage Gen Z and millennials where they are most accessible: educational institutions. These initiatives aim to foster a deeper understanding of the electoral process, instill a sense of civic duty, and ultimately increase voter turnout among young people in the region.

Youth participation in elections is a global concern, not just unique to Indonesia. In countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and India, electoral bodies have long grappled with the challenge of getting young people to the polls. A common trend observed worldwide is that younger voters often feel disconnected from traditional political structures, which they perceive as outdated or unresponsive to their concerns ². Furthermore, in a fast-paced digital world, where information is abundant and often overwhelming, young voters may struggle to differentiate between reliable and misleading sources of political information.

The advent of social media has changed the political landscape considerably, offering both opportunities and challenges in terms of voter engagement. Social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become powerful tools for political mobilization, but they also contribute to the spread of misinformation, which can breed further political apathy ³. Indonesia, with its high social media usage, especially among young people, must navigate these dynamics carefully if it is to harness the full potential of its youth vote. The KPU's recognition of this challenge is evident in its efforts to integrate digital platforms into its outreach strategies.

² Bhatti, Hansen, and Wass, "The Relationship between Age and Turnout: A Roller-Coaster Ride."

³ Zúñiga, Molyneux, and Zheng, "Social Media, Political Expression, and Political Participation: Panel Analysis of Lagged and Concurrent Relationships."

In other parts of Southeast Asia, countries like Malaysia and the Philippines have also implemented youth-centric initiatives to boost electoral participation. For example, Malaysia's Undi18 movement successfully lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, providing young people with a more direct voice in their country's political future ⁴. This international context highlights the importance of youth participation as a global democratic issue, reinforcing the need for local electoral bodies such as KPU Bandar Lampung to continuously innovate their strategies to attract young voters.

Youth engagement is crucial for the health and sustainability of Indonesia's democracy. As the demographic makeup of the country skews younger, it is imperative that these new voters are not only aware of their voting rights but also actively participate in shaping the country's future. Civic engagement among young people is not merely about showing up on election day; it involves fostering a generation that is politically informed, socially conscious, and ready to hold elected officials accountable.

Political participation is often seen as an indicator of a vibrant democracy, where citizens feel empowered to influence governmental decisions. In a democratic system like Indonesia's, youth voters have the potential to be a transformative force, capable of pushing for progressive reforms, ensuring that the government remains responsive to the needs of all its citizens. However, without proper engagement, the risk of alienation and disengagement looms large, potentially leading to decreased voter turnout and weakened democratic processes ⁵

Studies have shown that early civic education and exposure to political discourse are crucial in shaping lifelong voting habits. This is where the role of educational institutions becomes paramount. Schools, universities, and religious boarding schools (*pesantren*) serve as critical environments for imparting knowledge about citizenship, civic responsibility, and the electoral process ⁶. By engaging young people in these settings, KPU Bandar Lampung is not only encouraging short-term electoral participation but also investing in the long-term health of Indonesia's democratic institutions.

Despite the potential that Gen Z and millennials hold as a political force, there remains a significant gap between their numbers and their actual participation in elections. Data from the 2019 presidential elections in Indonesia revealed that

⁴ Siang Ling and Puyok, "The Impacts of Undi 18 on Political Participation, Awareness and Readiness."

⁵ Rudi Santoso, "Dynamics And Enforcement Of Election Legal Issues In Lampung Province."

⁶ Mulyo, "Peran Serta Kontribusi Pondok Pesantren Dalam Catatan Sejarah Bangsa Indonesia."

although younger voters constituted a significant portion of the electorate, their turnout was lower than expected. This trend is particularly evident in Bandar Lampung, where voter turnout among young people has consistently lagged behind that of older generations.

Several factors contribute to this disengagement. First, many young people lack a thorough understanding of the electoral process and the importance of their vote. Civic education is not always emphasized in school curricula, and for those in Islamic boarding schools, political engagement may be seen as less relevant compared to religious studies. Second, political apathy is widespread among young people, who often feel that their vote will not make a difference or that political leaders are not responsive to their concerns. Finally, the rise of misinformation and disinformation on social media has further complicated the ability of young people to engage with credible political information ⁷.

KPU Bandar Lampung's "Goes to Campus", "Goes to School" and "Goes to Islamic Boarding School" strategies aim to address these issues head-on. By bringing the electoral process into educational institutions, KPU hopes to make politics more accessible and relevant to young people. However, the effectiveness of these strategies remains to be fully assessed, particularly in terms of their ability to overcome the barriers that have historically prevented young people from engaging in the political process.

The overarching goal of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of KPU Bandar Lampung's outreach strategies in increasing voter participation among Gen Z and millennials. Specifically, the research seeks to: assess the impact of the "Goes to Campus" program on university students political awareness and voter turnout, examine the effectiveness of the "Goes to School" initiative in fostering political engagement among high school students, investigate the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the "Goes to Islamic Boarding School" program in reaching students in pesantren, and Explore the role of digital media and social platforms in enhancing KPU's outreach to young voters. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of KPU Bandar Lampung's strategies, offering recommendations for future improvements and adaptations that can be applied both locally and nationally.

This research is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of literature on youth political participation in Indonesia, an area that remains underexplored despite the critical role that young voters play in the country's

⁷ Riyanti and Prasetyo, "Political Education of New Voters Through Civic Education in Indonesia."

democratic future. Second, the study provides practical insights for electoral bodies like KPU on how to design and implement effective youth outreach programs. By examining the effectiveness of different strategies in various educational settings, the research will highlight best practices that can be adapted and replicated in other regions of Indonesia.

Moreover, this study has broader implications for understanding how electoral bodies can engage with diverse youth populations in different cultural and educational contexts. The findings will be particularly relevant for policymakers, educators, and civic organizations that seek to promote democratic participation among young people. Finally, the research addresses the pressing issue of digital media's role in modern elections, offering insights into how electoral bodies can harness the power of social media to engage and inform young voters while mitigating the risks of misinformation.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to analyze the effectiveness of the *Goes to Campus, School, and Islamic Boarding School* initiative by KPU Bandar Lampung in fostering political engagement among Gen Z and Millennials. Data is collected through semi-structured interviews with KPU officials, educators, and students, as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) to gauge youth perspectives. Observations of interactive workshops and document analysis of KPU's outreach materials further complement the data. Thematic analysis is used to identify key patterns related to political awareness, engagement strategies, and barriers to participation. This methodological framework provides a comprehensive evaluation of how KPU's initiative influences youth political participation and civic responsibility.

III. DISCUSSION

a. Effectiveness of the "Goes to Campus" Strategy: A Focus on University Students

The "Goes to Campus" strategy employed by the KPU Bandar Lampung has been a significant initiative aimed at increasing voter participation among university students. University students are an essential demographic, as they are not only highly literate but also generally more aware of current political issues. The initiative leverages the intellectual environment of campuses to foster informed and engaged voters, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the political opinions of young people are heard through their participation in elections. However, the success of this strategy must be evaluated in terms of its outreach mechanisms, the level of engagement it fosters, and the actual impact it has on voter turnout.

1. Reaching University Students through Targeted Campaigns

The university environment presents unique opportunities for the KPU to interact with students in a structured and concentrated manner. Campus settings allow for direct, face-to-face engagement through a variety of mediums such as seminars, workshops, and debates. KPU Bandar Lampung's decision to implement the "Goes to Campus" initiative was a well-calculated move, given that university students are already accustomed to attending academic and extracurricular events, making them more accessible as a target group.

The primary benefit of holding voter education events on campus is the ability to interact with large groups of students in a formal setting, encouraging more students to attend and engage with electoral issues. KPU's events often cover topics such as the role of elections in democracy, the importance of young voters, and the technical process of voting.⁸ These topics, when combined with interactive Q&A sessions, can demystify the electoral process for students who may be first-time voters or politically disengaged.

However, the key challenge remains: how to ensure that such campaigns translate into real, measurable increases in voter participation. Research shows that university students are highly influenced by their social and academic environment. Therefore, embedding voter education into the regular programming of university events, possibly even integrating it into the curriculum, can significantly amplify the reach and effectiveness of these campaigns.

2. Engagement Levels among University Students

The success of the "Goes to Campus" strategy can be assessed by examining the engagement levels of students during and after these programs. Engagement can be measured by both qualitative and quantitative means. Qualitatively, indicators such as the depth of discussions during KPU's on-campus events, the questions raised by students, and their interactions with the electoral commission staff provide insights into the program's immediate effectiveness.⁹ Quantitatively, metrics such as voter registration rates on campuses, the number of students who attend KPU events, and eventual voter turnout among university students in local or national elections offer concrete data on the impact of these efforts.

Initial feedback from KPU events has been positive, with many students expressing interest in electoral processes and appreciating the commission's efforts to bring voter education directly to their campuses. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these

⁸ Santoso, "Peran Komisi Pemilihan Umum Dan Partai Politik Dalam Mewujudkan Demokrasi Berintegritas."

⁹ Matnuh et al., "Internalisasi Literasi Politik Bagi Pemilih Pemula Melalui Mata Pelajaran PPKn Di Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri 5 Banjarmasin."

events succeed in raising awareness, particularly in clarifying misconceptions about voting procedures and the broader significance of electoral participation.

However, one area that needs more exploration is the long-term retention of the information presented. While many students attend these sessions, it remains unclear how much of the knowledge and enthusiasm persists beyond the event. Research indicates that voter education campaigns need reinforcement through sustained engagement to have a lasting effect. Follow-up activities, such as student debates on political issues, mock elections, or even online quizzes that reinforce the material covered during KPU's visits, could improve retention and deepen the educational impact.

3. Barriers to Participation

Despite the positive reception of the "Goes to Campus" strategy, there remain several barriers that may limit its overall effectiveness in increasing voter turnout among university students. Understanding these barriers is essential for refining the approach and ensuring it reaches its full potential.

a. Apathy and Political Disillusionment

A common issue among university students, and young people in general, is political apathy¹⁰. Some students feel that their vote will not make a significant difference or that the political system is too corrupt to merit their involvement. Addressing this sense of disillusionment is crucial for KPU's efforts to be effective. KPU needs to incorporate messaging that emphasizes the power of individual votes and the role that young voters can play in shaping the future of their country. Presenting case studies of past elections where youth participation had a notable impact could help counteract feelings of political futility.

b. Time Constraints and Competing Priorities

University students often face significant time pressures due to academic workloads, extracurricular activities, and, in some cases, part-time employment. These competing demands can make it difficult for students to prioritize voter education and engagement activities¹¹, even when they recognize the importance of political participation. KPU must be strategic in its scheduling of events, ensuring that they do not conflict with exam periods or other major academic commitments. Furthermore, online resources and on-

¹⁰ Sarfaraz et al., "Reasons for Political Interest and Apathy among University Students: A Qualitative Study."

¹¹ Yudistira Pratama and Yulisa Kalbarini, "The Phenomenon Of Students Working Part Time."

demand webinars can offer flexible alternatives for students who cannot attend in-person events.

c. Lack of Familiarity with the Political Process

Many university students, especially those voting for the first time, may be unfamiliar with the mechanics of voting, such as how to register, where to vote, or how to fill out a ballot correctly. KPU has worked to address these gaps through its voter education initiatives, but more work is needed to ensure that students feel confident about the entire process. One potential solution is the creation of a “Voter Help Desk” on campus, where students can receive one-on-one assistance with any election-related queries. This could be staffed by student volunteers trained by KPU, making the help desk a peer-led initiative.

4. The Role of University Leadership and Faculty in Electoral Engagement

University administrators and faculty play a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of the “Goes to Campus” initiative. Their endorsement and support are crucial for ensuring that voter education programs are integrated into the university’s broader mission of civic responsibility and critical thinking. University leadership can help by:

a. Institutionalizing Voter Education

Universities have the capacity to incorporate voter education into their official programming, ensuring that students are exposed to these topics as part of their holistic development¹². For instance, voter education could be included as part of orientation programs for first-year students, where they are introduced not only to campus life but also to their civic duties.

b. Encouraging Faculty Involvement

Faculty members, especially those in political science, law, and social science departments, can be instrumental in fostering discussions about the importance of voting. By incorporating electoral education into their courses or encouraging students to attend KPU events, faculty can reinforce the message that voting is not only a civic duty but also an integral part of being an informed citizen. Moreover, faculty can act as mentors, encouraging students to engage critically with the political process and to see voting as part of a larger commitment to societal improvement.

c. Creating Incentives for Student Participation

Universities can further support the “Goes to Campus” strategy by creating incentives for students to engage with voter education programs. For instance, students who attend a certain number of KPU-sponsored events could receive academic credit or recognition through a co-curricular

¹² Heryanto, *Media Komunikasi Politik: Relasi Kuasa Media Di Panggung Politik*, 91.

transcript. Such initiatives could increase turnout at voter education events and incentivize deeper engagement.

5. Potential for Long-Term Impact

The “Goes to Campus” strategy has great potential for long-term impact if it is integrated into a broader, sustained effort to cultivate political engagement among university students. Short-term successes, such as increased voter registration or high attendance at KPU events, are positive indicators, but the ultimate goal is to foster a generation of politically active, informed citizens who continue to vote in future elections. For this reason, KPU should consider adopting a longitudinal approach to studying the impact of its campus programs. By tracking the voting behavior of students over multiple election cycles, KPU could gather valuable data on the effectiveness of its outreach strategies¹³. Additionally, maintaining ongoing relationships with university alumni could help ensure that civic engagement does not end with graduation.

6. Enhancing Inclusivity and Diversity in University Outreach

One of the strengths of university environments is their diversity. Students come from different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, and regions, each bringing unique perspectives and challenges to electoral participation. The “Goes to Campus” initiative must recognize and address these diverse needs to ensure that voter outreach is inclusive of all university students. For instance, some students may face financial barriers that limit their ability to travel to polling stations or obtain necessary identification documents. Others may be international students or come from regions with distinct political challenges. Tailoring outreach efforts to recognize these diverse circumstances can enhance the inclusivity of KPU's voter education initiatives¹⁴. Moreover, KPU should collaborate with student organizations that represent marginalized groups, such as student unions or diversity councils, to ensure that its message reaches all corners of the student population.

a. Challenges in Reaching Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren)

The “Goes to Pesantren” strategy of KPU Bandar Lampung, aimed at increasing electoral participation among students in Islamic boarding schools, or pesantren, poses a unique set of challenges. Pesantren are religious institutions where students, often referred to as santri, receive Islamic education, with a focus on spiritual, moral, and ethical development based on Islamic teachings. While

¹³ R and Munir, “Communication Strategy Of The General Election Commission To Increase Community Participation In Using The Right To Vote In The 2019 Election In Nganjuk District.”

¹⁴ Santoso, “Peran Komisi Pemilihan Umum Dan Partai Politik Dalam Mewujudkan Demokrasi Berintegritas.”

pesantren play a significant role in shaping the worldview of young Muslims in Indonesia, reaching this demographic for voter education presents specific obstacles due to cultural, religious, and institutional factors.

1. Cultural and Religious Context of Pesantren

The culture of pesantren revolves around Islamic education, which emphasizes religious learning and moral conduct. The curriculum is typically centered on the study of Islamic scriptures (tafsir, hadith, fiqh), Arabic language, and spiritual development¹⁵. In this context, engaging students in discussions about politics and elections can be challenging, as some pesantren may prioritize religious studies over civic education. Additionally, in certain cases, political discussions may be seen as inappropriate or secondary to religious teaching.

Moreover, many pesantren adhere to the guidance of their kyai (Islamic religious leaders), whose authority plays a central role in shaping the mindset and values of students. If the kyai does not actively promote or endorse participation in the electoral process, students may be hesitant to engage in political activities, including voting¹⁶. This cultural deference to religious leadership can create a barrier to reaching santri with voter education messages, particularly if those messages are perceived as conflicting with religious priorities.

To navigate this challenge, KPU needs to develop a culturally sensitive approach that aligns voter education with the Islamic values upheld by pesantren. Framing electoral participation as a moral and religious duty, grounded in principles of justice (*'adl*), leadership (*khilafah*), and accountability (*mas'uliyah*), can help bridge the gap between civic engagement and religious education. By emphasizing the compatibility between Islamic teachings and democratic values, KPU can present voting not only as a civic duty but as an ethical responsibility that aligns with the broader principles of Islam.

2. The Role of Kyai and Religious Leaders

As mentioned earlier, the kyai holds significant influence over the daily lives and beliefs of pesantren students. In most pesantren, the kyai is not just a religious teacher but also a moral guide and a source of wisdom for the community. Consequently, any successful voter education program targeting pesantren must involve the kyai and other senior religious figures. Without their support, efforts to engage students in discussions about politics and elections may face resistance. One of the challenges KPU faces is gaining the trust and cooperation of the kyai, especially in cases where political involvement may be seen as controversial or

¹⁵ Fiqih, "Peran Pesantren Dalam Menjaga Tradisi-Budaya Dan Moral Bangsa."

¹⁶ Rofiq, "Konseling Kiai Terhadap Manajemen Pesantren."

inappropriate. In some pesantren, there may be concerns that engaging with political processes could politicize the institution, create divisions among students, or distract from their religious education¹⁷. Additionally, some kyai may be wary of external influences on their students, especially from governmental or non-religious organizations.

To address these concerns, KPU should approach pesantren outreach with a clear understanding of the kyai's role and the sensitivities surrounding political education in religious settings. Engaging kyai in dialogue and explaining the non-partisan nature of voter education is critical. KPU must emphasize that its goal is not to promote any specific political party or candidate but to empower students with the knowledge and tools to participate in the electoral process as informed citizens. Additionally, KPU can work to build long-term relationships with religious leaders by collaborating on programs that reinforce both civic and religious values. For example, KPU could organize seminars or workshops that address themes of ethical leadership in Islam, the responsibilities of a Muslim voter, or the Islamic concept of 'shura' (consultation) in decision-making. By involving kyai in the design and delivery of these programs, KPU can ensure that its messages are framed in a way that resonates with the religious convictions of both the teachers and students.

3. Structural Barriers in Pesantren

Unlike universities or public schools, pesantren often operate with different structural and logistical constraints that may impede KPU's voter education efforts. For one, many pesantren are located in rural or remote areas, making them harder to reach with regular outreach programs. The infrastructure of some pesantren may not be conducive to large-scale voter education events, and the lack of technological resources, such as internet access or multimedia equipment, can further complicate efforts to engage students through digital campaigns or online educational tools.

Additionally, the academic calendar of pesantren may differ from that of regular schools, and the daily schedule of students is often filled with religious studies, leaving little room for extracurricular activities like voter education sessions. Pesantren may also have limited access to non-religious educational materials, which could affect students' exposure to broader civic education topics, including elections, governance, and democracy.¹⁸

¹⁷ Cibro, Salminawati, and Usiono, "Modern Pesantren : The Politics Of Islamic Education And Problems Of Muslim Identity."

¹⁸ Sabarudin, *Pesantren Dan Nilai-Nilai Demokrasi*, 78.

To overcome these structural barriers, KPU must adopt a flexible and adaptive approach. One potential solution is to collaborate with local governments or NGOs that already have a presence in rural areas to help deliver voter education materials and organize events. KPU could also create mobile voter education units that travel to remote pesantren, providing in-person workshops or seminars tailored to the specific needs of each institution.

Furthermore, KPU should consider incorporating voter education into existing religious or community events that are already part of the pesantren's schedule. For instance, during large religious gatherings or community outreach programs, KPU could set up booths or stations where students can learn about the voting process or register to vote. This strategy allows KPU to work within the structural constraints of the pesantren while still delivering critical voter education messages.

4. Perceptions of Politics within Pesantren

In addition to the cultural and structural challenges, there are often varying perceptions of politics within pesantren communities that can influence the success of voter outreach efforts. In some pesantren, political involvement may be viewed with skepticism, especially if past political events have led to disillusionment or disenchantment with the electoral process. Negative perceptions of politics can stem from experiences of corruption, electoral fraud, or political manipulation, which may lead students to view elections as inherently flawed or untrustworthy¹⁹.

In these environments, voter education efforts may face resistance from both students and teachers, who see little value in participating in what they perceive as a corrupt system. This sense of political disillusionment can be particularly strong in pesantren that prioritize religious values and may view worldly politics as inconsistent with spiritual or moral purity. To address these perceptions, KPU must work to rebuild trust in the electoral system within pesantren communities. This requires a twofold approach: first, by promoting the ethical aspects of political participation, and second, by addressing concerns about electoral integrity. KPU can emphasize the role of elections as a mechanism for accountability, leadership selection, and the protection of justice all of which are compatible with Islamic principles. Furthermore, KPU should highlight any reforms or safeguards in place to prevent corruption and ensure free and fair elections, demonstrating that the electoral process is transparent and trustworthy.

¹⁹ Putra, "Manipulasi Pemilu Dalam Proses Pencalonan Pada Pemilihan Bupati Dan Wakil Bupati Sekadau Tahun 2015."

KPU could also create programs that focus on real-life examples of how elections have positively impacted communities, particularly in areas such as social justice, economic development, and community leadership. By showcasing the tangible benefits of political participation, KPU can counteract the perception that politics is irrelevant or inherently corrupt.

5. Adapting Voter Education to the Pesantren Environment

The unique learning environment of pesantren requires that voter education programs be adapted to fit the pedagogical style of these institutions ²⁰. In pesantren, learning is often communal and interactive, with a strong emphasis on oral transmission of knowledge. This provides an opportunity for KPU to develop interactive, discussion-based voter education sessions that align with the existing teaching methods of pesantren.

For example, KPU could organize informal discussion groups (*halaqah*) where students can discuss topics related to elections and civic duty in an open, dialogue-based format. These sessions could be facilitated by both KPU staff and religious teachers, ensuring that the content is framed in a way that resonates with the students' religious and moral values. Such an approach allows students to engage with electoral issues in a familiar setting and through a method of learning that they are comfortable with.

KPU should also consider creating tailored voter education materials that reflect the values and teachings of Islam. For instance, brochures or pamphlets could include quotes from the Quran or hadith that emphasize the importance of leadership, justice, and community participation. By embedding Islamic values into voter education materials, KPU can make the message of political participation more relevant and accessible to santri.

6. Digital Outreach and Technology Use in Pesantren

One of the challenges that KPU faces in reaching pesantren is the limited access to digital technology in some institutions ²¹. While urban pesantren may have access to the internet and digital devices, many rural or traditional pesantren have limited technological infrastructure. This restricts KPU's ability to use online campaigns or digital tools as part of its voter education strategy for this demographic. In pesantren with limited access to digital resources, KPU must rely more on traditional, in-person outreach methods, such as workshops, lectures, and printed materials. However, for pesantren that do have internet access, KPU could explore

²⁰ Solichin, "Implementasi Kebijakan Pendidikan Dan Peran Birokrasi."

²¹ Muid, Arifin, and Karim, "Peluang Dan Tantangan Pendidikan Pesantren Di Era Digital (Studi Kasus Di Pondok Pesantren Al-Islah Bungah Gresik)."

the use of digital platforms to deliver voter education content. For instance, creating a dedicated online platform or app for pesantren students, featuring educational videos, quizzes, and interactive content on voting and elections, could be an effective way to engage tech-savvy students. Additionally, KPU could work with pesantren that have access to social media platforms to promote voter education content tailored to the Islamic context. For pesantren with limited internet access, KPU could consider implementing offline digital solutions, such as distributing voter education materials via USB drives or CDs that can be used on computers within the pesantren. These materials could include interactive multimedia content, making them more engaging and informative for students.

7. The Importance of Long-Term Engagement

Finally, one of the key challenges in reaching pesantren students is ensuring that voter education efforts have a lasting impact beyond a single electoral cycle. Like university students, pesantren students often require sustained engagement to fully internalize the importance of voting and civic participation. One-off events or workshops may raise awareness, but long-term engagement is needed to build a culture of political participation within pesantren communities.

To achieve this, KPU should consider developing long-term partnerships with pesantren, involving them in ongoing civic education programs that extend beyond election periods²². For example, KPU could establish “Civic Education Clubs” in pesantren, where students can engage in regular discussions on civic responsibility, governance, and leadership from both an Islamic and democratic perspective. These clubs could be facilitated by pesantren teachers, ensuring that the content is integrated into the broader educational goals of the institution.

Additionally, KPU could involve pesantren alumni who have gone on to hold leadership or civic positions as role models, encouraging current students to see the value of civic participation. By fostering a long-term relationship with pesantren and embedding voter education within their existing structures, KPU can create a sustainable model of electoral engagement that endures beyond individual elections.

The “Goes to Pesantren” strategy faces a number of unique challenges, including cultural and religious sensitivities, structural barriers, and varying perceptions of politics within pesantren communities. However, by taking a culturally sensitive, inclusive, and adaptive approach, KPU has the potential to overcome these challenges and successfully engage pesantren students in the electoral process.

²² Maimun dan Rudi Santoso, “Existency Role Of The General Election Supervisory Agency In Lampung Law Enforcement Of The 2019 Election.”

Key to this success will be the involvement of kyai and religious leaders, the adaptation of voter education materials to fit the pesantren environment, and the use of both traditional and digital outreach methods. With sustained efforts and long-term engagement, KPU can help foster a generation of santri who are not only committed to their religious duties but also active participants in Indonesia's democratic system.

b. High Schools as Early Platforms for Political Engagement

Engaging high school students in political processes and discussions is crucial for building a foundation of civic responsibility and encouraging long-term participation in democratic activities. High schools are a vital platform where students can be introduced to the concepts of governance, elections, and their role as future voters ²³. Recognizing this, the KPU Bandar Lampung has included high schools in its 'Goes to Campus, School, and Islamic Boarding School' initiative, aiming to cultivate early political engagement among young people.

High school students, many of whom are approaching the legal voting age, represent a pivotal demographic. These students are in the process of forming their political identities and values, and early exposure to the importance of voting can have a lasting influence on their future behavior as citizens ²⁴. However, this effort also faces its own set of challenges, such as the varying levels of political awareness among students, the constraints of the academic curriculum, and the need to balance voter education with the age-appropriate development of political literacy.

1. The Importance of Civic Education in High Schools

Civic education in high schools is one of the most effective ways to foster political engagement. Students are at a stage where they are beginning to understand the larger societal systems that govern their lives, and civic education helps them connect these systems to their personal responsibilities as citizens. Many countries with strong democracies have incorporated civic education as a key component of their high school curriculum, emphasizing knowledge of political processes, the importance of voting, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens ²⁵.

In Indonesia, civic education is already part of the high school curriculum under the subject of *Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* (PPKn). This subject covers topics such as democracy, governance, human rights, and the role of citizens

²³ Wantu, Hamim, and Lumusrin, "Penguatan Pengetahuan Siswa Terhadap Pemilu Dan Isu Politik Kebangsaan Di SMA Negeri 1 Gorontalo Utara."

²⁴ Eichhorn and Berg, *Lowering the Voting Age to 16*, 114.

²⁵ Riyanti and Prasetyo, "Political Education of New Voters Through Civic Education in Indonesia."

in the political process ²⁶. However, the level of engagement and the depth of understanding among students can vary depending on how the material is taught. KPU's "Goes to School" initiative aims to supplement this education by providing practical, real-world examples of how students can participate in elections and political life.

By focusing on high schools, KPU is addressing a key gap in voter education—reaching young people before they turn 17, the legal voting age in Indonesia. This proactive approach helps to ensure that when students are eligible to vote, they already have a basic understanding of the process and feel confident in their ability to make informed decisions. Early voter education can reduce the likelihood of voter apathy and help build a habit of voting from a young age.

2. Developing Political Literacy in Adolescents

Adolescence is a formative period in terms of political development, where students begin to develop their own opinions on social, political, and economic issues. While many high school students may not yet be eligible to vote, they are already exposed to political information through the media, family discussions, and their communities. Schools play a crucial role in helping students process this information and develop critical thinking skills, enabling them to evaluate different viewpoints and form their own political identities.

Political literacy involves not just understanding how the electoral system works, but also developing the ability to critically engage with political discourse, identify reliable sources of information, and recognize the influence of political messaging ²⁷. This is particularly important in an era of widespread misinformation and social media, where young people are frequently exposed to competing narratives and opinions. KPU's efforts in high schools aim to build political literacy by introducing students to the electoral process, the significance of their vote, and the broader democratic framework within which elections take place.

Interactive workshops, role-playing activities, and debates are effective ways to engage high school students and help them grasp political concepts. For instance, mock elections can simulate the voting process, giving students a hands-on experience of how elections work. This not only familiarizes them with the mechanics of voting but also helps them appreciate the significance of their participation in shaping governance. KPU can collaborate with schools to integrate

²⁶ Nurjana, "Politik Pendidikan Islam Indonesia Masa Reformasi (1998-2024)."

²⁷ Wahyuni, Hamsa, and Ramly, "Analisis Wacana Kritis Pada Berita Pemilihan Walikota Makassar Sebagai Bentuk Pendidikan Politik Dan Perannya Dalam Pembelajaran Membaca Kritis Bagi Siswa."

these activities into their existing civic education programs, making the learning process both practical and engaging.

3. Addressing the Political Disinterest Among Teenagers

One of the major challenges KPU faces in high schools is the issue of political disinterest or apathy among teenagers ²⁸. Many high school students may not yet see the relevance of politics in their lives, particularly if they feel disconnected from political institutions or view elections as distant, adult responsibilities. This disinterest can be compounded by the complexity of political issues, which may seem overwhelming or unappealing to younger audiences.

To counteract this, KPU must tailor its voter education efforts to resonate with high school students' interests and concerns. Rather than presenting elections as abstract concepts, KPU can frame political engagement in terms of issues that directly impact students' lives, such as education policy, environmental protection, or social justice. When students see how political decisions affect their immediate environment and future opportunities, they are more likely to recognize the value of participating in elections.

Additionally, KPU can leverage social media and digital platforms to reach students in a way that aligns with their communication preferences. Teenagers are highly active on social media, and platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube offer opportunities to deliver voter education content in a format that is accessible and engaging. Short, visually appealing videos that explain the voting process or highlight the importance of youth participation can capture students' attention and make political topics more relatable.

4. Role of Teachers and School Administrators

The role of teachers and school administrators is crucial in the success of KPU's 'Goes to School' initiative ²⁹. Teachers, particularly those who teach civic education (PPKn), are in a unique position to influence students' political development. They serve as facilitators of discussions on democratic principles, human rights, and the responsibilities of citizens. Therefore, KPU needs to collaborate closely with teachers to ensure that voter education is integrated into the curriculum in a way that complements existing lessons.

²⁸ Masduki, Widianingsih, and Simanihuruk, *Pengalaman Pemilih Pemula Di Belantara Informasi Pilpres 2019*.

²⁹ Rochim, "Sosialisasi Pendidikan Politik Pada Siswa Sebagai Sarana Menghadapi Pemilu Serentak Tahun 2024."

One effective strategy is to provide teachers with specialized training on how to incorporate voter education into their teaching. This could include workshops where teachers learn about the latest electoral regulations, the voting process, and strategies for fostering political interest among students. By equipping teachers with the necessary tools and knowledge, KPU can create a multiplier effect, where teachers continue to educate students on the importance of voting long after the initial outreach event.

School administrators also play a key role in facilitating voter education programs. Their support is essential for organizing events, such as school-wide voter education seminars, debates, or mock elections. Administrators can help create a school environment that values civic engagement by encouraging student participation in these activities and making political education a priority within the school's extracurricular offerings. Additionally, administrators can assist in coordinating with KPU to ensure that voter education materials and events are delivered effectively and reach the maximum number of students.

5. Engaging Student Organizations and Extracurricular Activities

High schools are not just academic institutions; they are also hubs for extracurricular activities and student organizations, which can serve as platforms for fostering political engagement. Many high schools have student councils (OSIS) or debate clubs that provide students with leadership opportunities and a forum for discussing social and political issues. These organizations offer a natural entry point for KPU to engage students in discussions about voting and civic participation.

KPU could collaborate with student organizations to co-host events that encourage political discourse and awareness. For example, debate competitions on current political issues, leadership training sessions, or youth forums on electoral participation could all serve to engage students in a deeper exploration of their role in the democratic process. Involving student leaders in the planning and execution of these events can also empower them to take ownership of their political education, making the learning experience more peer-driven and relatable.

Additionally, schools often host annual events, such as graduation ceremonies or sports competitions, which draw large crowds of students. These events provide an ideal opportunity for KPU to set up voter education booths or distribute informational materials. By integrating voter education into existing school activities, KPU can maximize its reach and ensure that the message of electoral participation is heard by a wide audience.

6. The Impact of Early Political Engagement on Lifelong Voting Behavior

Research shows that early political engagement is a strong predictor of future voting behavior. Young people who are exposed to political discussions and voter education during their high school years are more likely to become habitual voters as adults. This underscores the importance of KPU's efforts to engage high school students before they reach voting age. By instilling a sense of civic responsibility at a young age, KPU is laying the groundwork for a more politically active and informed electorate in the future.

Moreover, the habits and attitudes formed during adolescence can have a lasting impact on a person's relationship with politics. When students are encouraged to think critically about political issues, participate in debates, and understand the importance of their vote, they are more likely to carry these values into adulthood. This long-term impact makes high school voter education an essential component of any strategy aimed at increasing electoral participation.

To further enhance the impact of early political engagement, KPU could consider implementing follow-up programs that track the progress of high school students as they transition to adulthood. For instance, creating an alumni network of students who participated in voter education programs could help maintain their connection to the electoral process. These students could serve as youth ambassadors for KPU, promoting voter education among their peers and encouraging others to participate in elections.

7. Overcoming Challenges in Political Engagement at the High School Level

While high schools offer a promising platform for early political engagement, there are also challenges that KPU must address to ensure the success of its voter education efforts. One significant challenge is the varying level of political knowledge and interest among students. Some students may already be politically aware, while others may have little exposure to civic issues. This diversity in political literacy requires KPU to adopt a differentiated approach that meets students where they are in terms of knowledge and interest.

c. The Role of Digital Media in Engaging Gen Z and Millennials

A key finding of this research is the central role that digital media plays in shaping political engagement among Gen Z and millennials. As digital natives, these generations are accustomed to consuming information online, and they often use social media platforms as their primary source of news and political information³⁰.

³⁰ Santoso, Khairuddin, and Zaelani, "Islamic Legal Analysis on the Role and Functions of Islamic Political Parties in Indonesia."

KPU's ability to adapt its outreach strategies to include digital tools has been crucial in reaching these younger voters.

The research showed that social media campaigns, particularly on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, have been effective in raising awareness about elections and encouraging voter registration. KPU's use of visually engaging content, including infographics, videos, and interactive posts, has helped make electoral information more accessible and appealing to young voters. This aligns with findings from previous studies that suggest that young people are more likely to engage with political content when it is presented in a format that is familiar and easy to digest ³¹.

However, while digital media has proven to be a powerful tool for reaching young voters, it also presents challenges, particularly in combating misinformation. Several respondents noted that they had encountered conflicting information about the electoral process on social media, which made them less confident in their understanding of voting procedures. This highlights the need for KPU to not only provide accurate information but also actively combat misinformation through fact-checking initiatives and partnerships with trusted influencers who can help disseminate reliable content

IV. CONCLUSION

The "Goes to Campus, School, and Islamic Boarding School" initiative by KPU Bandar Lampung is a significant step toward increasing political engagement among Gen Z and Millennials. By strategically targeting university students, pesantren communities, and high school students, KPU recognizes the unique challenges and opportunities each demographic presents. Engaging university students through innovative outreach programs cultivates a culture of civic responsibility and empowers them to become active participants in democracy. Meanwhile, the focus on pesantren highlights the need for cultural sensitivity and collaboration with community leaders, ensuring that voter education is relevant and respectful of the unique contexts within these Islamic boarding schools.

High schools serve as vital platforms for instilling civic values in young individuals who are approaching the legal voting age. KPU's efforts to integrate voter education into high school curricula and extracurricular activities provide students with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate the electoral process effectively. Early engagement in political discourse not only prepares students for future voting but also fosters a lifelong habit of civic participation. However, the

³¹ Santoso, "The Role Of Lampung Province General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) In Election Supervision (Evaluation Of The 2020 Regional Election And Projections For The 2024)."

initiative must also address challenges such as varying levels of political awareness and apathy among students, emphasizing the importance of tailored outreach strategies that resonate with their interests and concerns.

In summary, KPU Bandar Lampung's initiative represents a comprehensive approach to nurturing a politically active youth population. By combining targeted strategies with sustained engagement, KPU is laying the foundation for a more informed and participatory electorate in the future. As Indonesia prepares for upcoming elections, the success of these efforts will be critical in shaping a democratic landscape that values and amplifies the voices of young people. The ongoing commitment to collaboration, creativity in outreach, and fostering a culture of civic duty will ensure that the next generation is not only aware of their rights but also eager to exercise them.

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