

Awakening the Spirit of Political Participation: Political Literacy Strategies for Millennials

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Abstract: This research explores the contribution of political literacy in enriching the political participation of the millennial generation in the Sidenreng Rappang Regency. This research collected data through observation, interviews, and documentation using a qualitative description approach. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, with processing using Nvivo12 Plus. The research findings show that political literacy plays a significant role in motivating millennial participation, as seen from the achievement of the three indicators. Although political will emerges as the dominant indicator, awareness of the importance of engaging in institutional political activity also plays an important role. Supporting factors, such as political stimuli, environmental situation, and political education, are essential catalysts for millennials' active participation. In this context, the environment and political situation are the dominant factors, outperforming other factors. The results of this study provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between political literacy and millennials' political participation, emphasizing the role of political environment and situation as key drivers. The implications of these findings can help policy designers develop more effective strategies for improving political literacy and, consequently, increase the political participation of millennials in Sidenreng Rappang Regency.

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INTRODUCTION

The General Election in Indonesia on February 14, 2024, sparked significant discussions among millennials voters, primarily students (Priambodo, 2023; Saepudin et al., 2023; Wijayanti et al., 2023). The election emphasized the importance of active participation in the democratic process and fulfilling civic obligations. The simultaneous occurrence of multiple elections in 2023 led to discussions about exercising voting rights, emphasizing the importance of civic responsibility, and creating a platform for diverse viewpoints among new voters.

Millennials, aged 17 to 37, are primarily interested in technology but less interested in politics due to their lack of political literacy (Erameh & Fadipe, 2023; Handoko et al., 2023; Seyfi et al., 2023). Factors contributing to their low interest include corruption accusations and unfavorable government policies (Nelson & Afonso, 2019; Umam et al., 2020). This perception suggests that political objectives often outweigh the people's interests, making it challenging to enhance political literacy among millennials and engage them more effectively in the democratic process.

Political literacy is crucial for avoiding misinterpretation, especially among millennials who are susceptible to inaccurate information (Bryer et al., 2020; Nelson & Afonso, 2019). It encompasses not only elections but also democratic principles, rights, and duties. Democratic literacy is a balanced combination of information, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for becoming a responsible citizen (Jónsson & Garces Rodriguez, 2021; Tugtekin & Koc, 2020). Enhancing political and democratic literacy among millennials can empower them to be more influential in driving change and fostering a democratic and accountable society.

The millennial generation, comprising 204,807,222 people, is increasingly active in the national Permanent Voter List (Ayu, 2023; Robin et al., 2022). However, they are at risk of becoming non-participating contributors in the 2024 elections. To ensure their participation, efforts must be made to enhance political literacy, provide clear policy information, and foster a sense of responsibility for their role in shaping the nation's future (Buschman, 2019). In 2019, 70 to 80 million out of 193 million voters participated, representing 35 percent-40 percent of young voters who could significantly impact election results and the nation's development. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering informed and engaged participation in political affairs.

Research is crucial to understanding how millennial voters in Sidenreng Rappang Regency exercise their voting rights, totaling 54,653 first-time voters in 2024. The significant presence of millennial voters prompts inquiries about their judicious use of voting rights, potential abstention from participating in the democratic process, or involvement in money politics through accepting bribes from legislative candidates (Anugrah et al., 2023).

The Election Law, notably Article 280, explicitly forbids campaign participants and teams from offering or providing money and other items to election campaign participants. Article 284 further says that breaches of these restrictions will result in severe penalties. This study may determine the presence of infractions in Sidenreng Rappang Regency and the level of involvement of young voters in behaviors that might lead to legal consequences. To increase millennial voter engagement, it is crucial to comprehend their behavior and promote knowledge of fair elections, clean processes, and active democratic involvement while avoiding adverse impacts.

Political socialization significantly influences millennials' political literacy, shaping their societal contributions (Battocchio et al., 2023; Smets, 2021). This process, involving social factors, helps individuals become engaged and influential members of society. The political socialization of millennials can enhance their political consciousness, motivating them to actively participate in political endeavors (Ford Dowe, 2022; Zamponi, 2019). By gaining political insight, they understand the importance of not only passively observing but also actively participating in the country's progress. This political knowledge is expected to motivate individuals to participate in political activities, even at the grassroots level.

Political literacy refers to comprehensive knowledge and comprehension of political processes and concerns, allowing people to fulfil their citizen obligations actively and efficiently (Kahne & Bowyer, 2019). This involves comprehending political systems,

government policies, and social problems that impact society. Political literacy goes beyond merely gathering information (Molina et al., 2021). It includes participating in intricate social activities, allowing people to develop into citizens with both the knowledge and abilities to engage in democratic processes in many manners. Political literacy is crucial for creating a responsive, well-informed society and actively involved in influencing state policy.

Political literacy involves obtaining and understanding information about political procedures and topics, enabling people to act as knowledgeable and involved citizens. It embodies a complex blend of social customs that prepare individuals to engage actively and successfully in civic life, promoting a society where people may make meaningful contributions to democratic discussions.

Participating in the 2024 elections is a civic responsibility and a significant chance for people to choose leaders for the next five years. Elections are fundamental to democracy, allowing citizens to shape the government and create policies that impact society. Voters are crucial in shaping the governing structure and social direction, highlighting democracy as a participatory and inclusive system.

Participation in elections conducted by the millennial generation is clear evidence of independence and truth to voice their opinions (Laksmitha & Susanto, 2019). In addition, the participation of the millennial generation in election participation can be a motivation for more positive change (Aries Munandar, 2017). By participating in participation, millennials have the potential to influence policy and elect leaders who can deliver on their aspirations (Sofiyatul & Dewi, 2021). Political efficacy expresses an individual's belief in his role in the political process and has the effect of social or political change (Khakim, 2023).

Millennials need to develop attitudes, skills and actions in a real way to ensure their political participation contributes positively to their environment (Pratama et al., 2022). Political education can be said to be an effort to change political perceptions in society, especially the millennial generation (Rahmawati, 2021). Political education aims to enable individuals to understand legal principles and political structures. With political education, the millennial generation has the opportunity to understand, and use their rights and obligations as citizens (Siregar, 2023)

Political participation is the participation of ordinary citizens in determining all decisions that concern or affect their lives. Political participation is the voluntary activities of citizens through which they take part in the process of electing rulers and directly or indirectly in the process of forming public policy (The term political participation will refer to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rules and, directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy) (Matdoan, 2015).

Political participation is the active engagement of individuals or groups in political affairs, influencing government decision-making processes. This engagement is crucial for maintaining the dynamism and energy of a political system, emphasizing the importance of people and organizations in influencing the direction and aims of the state. The millennial age, often associated with strong enthusiasm for technology, may exhibit

little interest in politics. Understanding how to motivate political involvement among millennials is essential for constructing a democratic and vibrant society.

This study investigates the causes contributing to low political involvement among millennials, including issues like widespread corruption in the political sphere. It aims to create educational programs to enhance millennials' understanding of the political system, clarify their involvement in the democratic process, and tackle their skepticism towards government policies. Understanding millennials' communication preferences can help build methods to increase their political involvement.

The study also examines how technology and social media affect the political engagement of millennials, suggesting that using familiar venues and creating innovative political literacy initiatives on social media could be crucial for achieving more significant outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology (Mills & Birks, 2017), gathering data in the form of descriptive verbal information rather than numerical data. The study aims to provide a comprehensive and complete description of the factual realities related to political engagement. The informants were selected via purposive sampling, with researchers specifically choosing people who fitted the requirements of being rookie voters aged 17-21 years in February 2024.

The data gathering process comprises three primary strategies. Initially, a methodical observation of symptoms associated with the study phenomena was conducted to verify data correctness and connect respondents' responses to real-world conditions. Secondly, direct interviews were conducted to gather more data and enhance the existing information (Katz, 2022). Documentation, including images, was used as a data gathering method to provide a visual aspect to the study findings.

The researcher used Nvivo12 plus software for data analysis in data processing (Samiri et al., 2023). Using this method, the researcher was able to methodically categorize the qualitative results, leading to a thorough comprehension of political literacy tactics that might inspire political engagement among millennials. This study combines strong qualitative methodologies with sophisticated technologies to analyze and understand data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Political Literacy Level of Millennial Voters

In research on the political literacy level of millennial voters, Madhok's concept is applied by focusing on three leading indicators of political literacy. First, political will and awareness are vital indicators that assess the extent to which millennial voters understand and are aware of the importance of political activity. Second, the ability to have an opinion is an important aspect that assesses the extent to which millennial voters can develop critical political views and opinions. Third, knowledge of policies is an indicator that reflects millennial voters' understanding of political issues and policies that are the focus of the electoral process. By focusing on these three indicators, the research

aims to provide a holistic picture of the political literacy of millennial voters, opening up a deeper understanding of their level of political engagement and awareness.

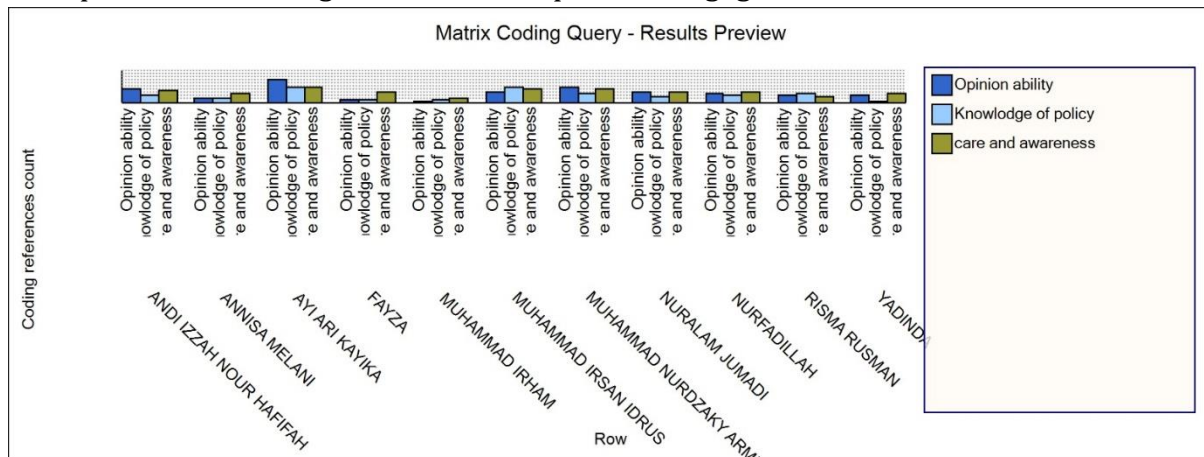


Figure 1. Visualization of Informants' Political Literacy Level

Analysis of political literacy among millennials, such as Muhammad Nurdzaky Armi, Nuralam Jumadi, Fayza, Nurfadillah, Muhammad Irham, Andi Izzah Nour Hafifah, Risma Rusman, Ayi Ari Kayika, Muhammad Irsan Idrus, Annisa Melani, and Yadinda Mahardika, shows significant variation in factors affecting their political understanding.

From the analysis results, each millennial has a different focus in their political literacy. For example, Muhammad Nurdzaky Armi points out that having an opinion is the most dominant indicator of his understanding of politics. Meanwhile, Nuralam Jumadi and Fayza pointed out that willingness and awareness of the activities of political institutions and the ability to form opinions are the main factors that affect their political literacy.

Other millennials, such as Muhammad Irham and Yadinda Mahardika, show a high focus on awareness of the activities of political institutions, while Muhammad Irsan Idrus focuses more on policy knowledge. On the other hand, Ayi Ari Kayika shows that the ability to form opinions is the most dominant aspect of her political literacy.

It is important to note that these factors may influence each other. For example, understanding political institutions' activities can help millennials form their opinions. In addition, political policies can also play an essential role in shaping political literacy, especially for those who have more profound knowledge of the policy.

This analysis also underscores the need for a holistic approach to increasing political literacy among millennials. This includes efforts to raise awareness of the activities of political institutions, provide better information about political policies, and stimulate the ability to form critical opinions. With a better understanding of each millennial's preferences and focuses, stakeholders can design political literacy programs that are more effective and tailored to their needs.

In addition to differences in political literacy focus between millennials, this analysis reveals that everyone has different preferences and priorities in understanding and engaging in the political realm. For example, there are millennials like Annisa Melani who emphasize the importance of awareness and understanding of the activities of

political institutions. Meanwhile, some prioritize the ability to form opinions, as seen in the case of Ayi Ari Kayika.

These differences reflect the complexity of the factors that shape political literacy. Some millennials may be more interested in the practical aspects of day-to-day politics, such as the activities of political institutions. In contrast, others may focus more on concrete ideological or policy aspects of politics. In this context, embracing the diversity of political literacy preferences and priorities is essential. Political education efforts should accommodate various learning styles and interests, ensuring all millennials can feel involved and supported in understanding the political system.

In addition, the role of formal and informal education also needs to be considered. Schools, colleges, and community organizations can collaborate to increase millennials' political understanding. This support can include teaching about the political system, introducing public policy, and learning the critical skills necessary to form an informed opinion.

To improve political literacy, it should also be noted that these factors are interrelated and do not always stand alone. For example, knowledge of policy can enrich the ability to form opinions, while awareness of the activities of political institutions can provide a broader context for political engagement. A further understanding of political literacy preferences and priorities among millennials can be the basis for designing more effective and relevant political education strategies. Encouraging their participation and involvement in the political process can form a more aware and positively engaged society in the country's development.

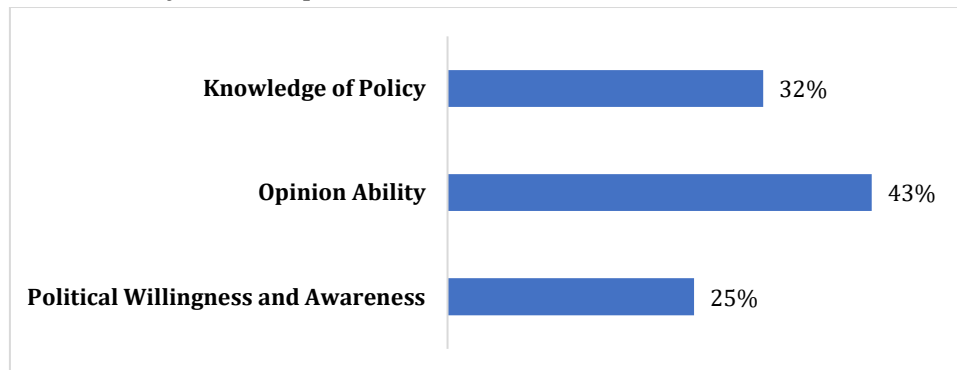


Figure 2. Validate the level of Political Literacy

From the indicators of political literacy, it is clear that Awareness and Awareness of the importance of political institution activities are the most dominant indicators of informants as novice voters in increasing the political participation of the millennial generation; even so, only 7 out of 11 informants who both have high percentage in Awareness and Awareness of the importance of political institution activities until the overall percentage of dominant indicators reaches 43 percent while The ability to express opinions is 3 out of 11 informants and has a general rate of 32 percent, then for the indicator that has the lowest rate, namely knowledge about policy, which is 1 out of 11 informants with a total of 25 percent.

Based on the concept of Madhok, there are 3 (three) indicators of political literacy, as explained earlier, namely having Awareness and, the ability to express opinions and knowledge about policies.

1. Awareness of the importance of the activities of political institutions

Political Awareness refers to the level of knowledge and understanding of a person or group of people about various aspects of politics, including political issues, political structures, and political actors. In contrast, Awareness of the importance of political agency activities includes multiple activities related to government institutions, political parties, and other political organizations. The following is the essence of the indicators of Awareness and Awareness of the importance of political institution activities that the researcher summarized from informant interviews, namely, the existence of institutions or political institutions that provide socialization before elections is beneficial for the millennial generation, especially novice voters. Irresponsible individuals easily influence novice voters. With the socialization carried out by General Election Commission members, novice voters have the knowledge or political literacy to fight hoaxes about elections that can change the perception of novice voters themselves.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by (Dwi Susanti, 2020) that political literacy helps first-time voters understand how political systems function, including elections, the role of political institutions, and policy-making processes.

2. Ability to Have an Opinion

Refers to the ability of individuals or groups to form, develop, and articulate their views or opinions on political issues and issues relevant in the context of a political system. The following is the essence of the indicator of the ability to express opinions that researchers summarize from the results of informant interviews, namely, the ability to express opinions or opinions in public needs to be done by the millennial generation to voice the aspirations of the community to prospective leaders or government. The ability to express opinions in the millennial generation helps them think critically and not easily accept information like that. In this case, the generation can distinguish news facts and news made up (hoax).

This is in line with the results of research conducted by (Fernandes et al., 2023). Political literacy helps them develop critical skills to filter and evaluate the political information they receive; they can also distinguish fact from opinion, recognize bias in reporting, and seek reliable sources of information.

3. Knowledge of policies

Refers to an individual or group of people's understanding of how the government plans, organizes and allocates resources to achieve development goals and provide public services to citizens. The following is the essence of the indicator of knowledge about policy that the researcher summarized from the results of informant interviews, namely, in terms of policy making, there is a need for government transparency to the millennial generation and the community. With the transparency carried out by the government, the public can understand the purpose of the policies

made and criticize policies that are made incorrectly so that they can be corrected so that the policies made have an impact on the community and the State.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by (Rasyid, 2023). Political literacy helps first-time voters understand relevant and complex political issues. By studying issues such as public policy, economics, environment, and human rights, first-time voters can consider the position of a candidate or political party based on a better understanding of the consequences of political decisions. Political literacy encourages active participation in the political process.

Factors Supporting Millennials' Political Participation

In the study of millennials' political participation, this research focuses on understanding the supporting factors that influence their involvement in political activities. As a conceptual basis, Milbrath suggests that there are three main factors that support political participation, namely political stimulation, situation or environment, and political education. Through this perspective, this research aims to reveal and analyze the extent to which these three factors contribute to the political participation of the millennial generation.

First of all, political stimulation is the focus of the research as one of the important factors that encourage millennials' involvement in politics. In this context, the research will examine the extent to which factors that stimulate political interest, such as ideology, leadership, or crucial issues, play a role in shaping millennials' political attitudes and actions.

Second, the situation or environment is also the focus of research as a supporting factor for millennials' political participation. The analysis will focus on how social, economic and cultural conditions in the surrounding environment can influence the decisions and level of political participation of the millennial generation.

Finally, political education is also an important aspect in this research. By referring to Milbrath's view, political education includes not only formalities in the form of the education system, but also the inclusion of political information in the daily lives of millennials. The research will investigate the extent to which the level of political literacy and understanding of political issues can motivate and empower millennials to actively participate in political life.

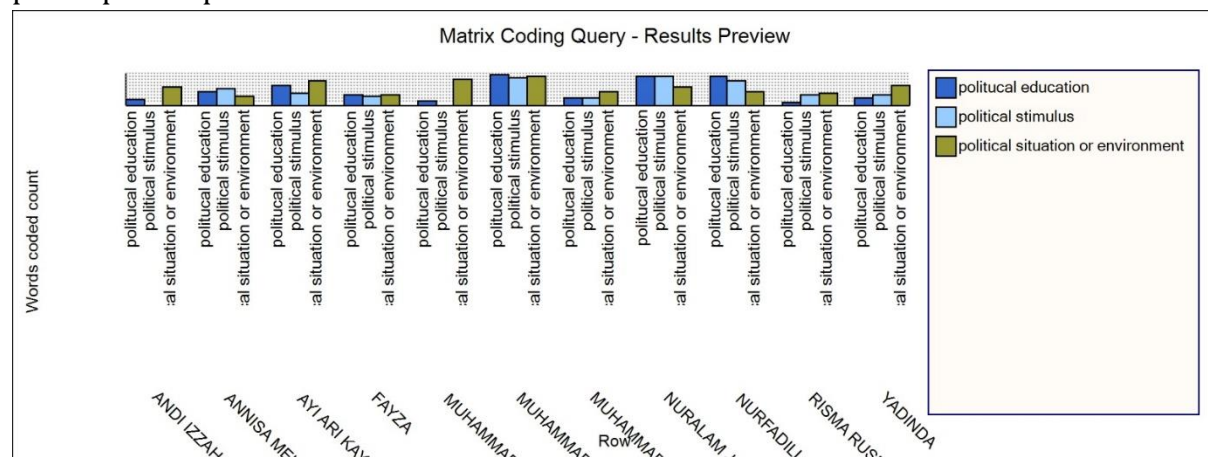


Figure 3. Validate the level of Political Literacy

The data analysis above provides an overview of the factors supporting political participation in a number of millennials, such as Muhammad Nurdzaky Armi, Nuralam Jumadi, Fayza, Nurfadillah, Muhammad Irham, Andi Izzah Nour Hafifah, Risman Rusman, Ayi Ari Kayika, Muhammad Irsan Idrus, Anisa Mellani, and Yadinda Mahardika. From the analysis, there are variations in the dominance of supporting factors for political participation among respondents.

Muhammad Nurdzaky Armi shows that political education has the dominant influence with a percentage of 33.34 percent, while political stimulation and situation/environment have equal influence at 33.33 percent. In contrast, Nuralam Jumadi shows that political stimulation and political education are the two dominant factors with the same percentage of 38.10 percent, while situation/environment has a lower influence at 23.80 percent.

Fayza shows that political education dominates with a percentage of 40.00 percent, followed by situation/environment (33.33 percent) and political stimulation (26.67 percent). Nurfadillah also shows the dominance of political stimulation and political education with a percentage of 42.86 percent, while the situation/environment has a lower influence (14.28 percent).

Muhammad Irham highlights that the situation/environment has a dominant influence with a high percentage of 72.73 percent, while political education and political stimulation have a lower percentage of 18.18 percent and 9.09 percent respectively. Andi Izzah Nour Hafifah also shows the dominance of the situation/environment with a percentage of 62.50 percent, followed by political education (25 percent) and political stimulation (12.50 percent).

Risman Rusman displays the dominance of political stimulation with a percentage of 44.44 percent, followed by situation/environment (33.33 percent) and political education (22.23 percent). Ayi Ari Kayika shows the dominance of the situation/environment with a percentage of 44.44 percent, followed by political education (38.89 percent) and political stimulation (16.67 percent).

Muhammad Irsan Idrus shows the dominance of political education with a percentage of 34.62 percent, followed by the situation/environment (34.61 percent) and political stimulation (30.77 percent). Anisa Mellani highlights the dominance of political stimulation with a percentage of 41.67 percent, while political education and situation/environment have percentages of 33.33 percent and 25.00 percent respectively. Finally, Yadinda Mahardika displays the dominance of the situation/environment with a percentage of 50 percent, followed by political stimulation (30 percent) and political education (20 percent).

Thus, the analysis shows that political understanding and education contribute to political participation, but factors such as situation/environment and political stimulation also play a significant role. This variability shows the complexity of understanding the factors that drive political participation in millennials, and needs to be considered in designing political education strategies and stimulating political participation among them.

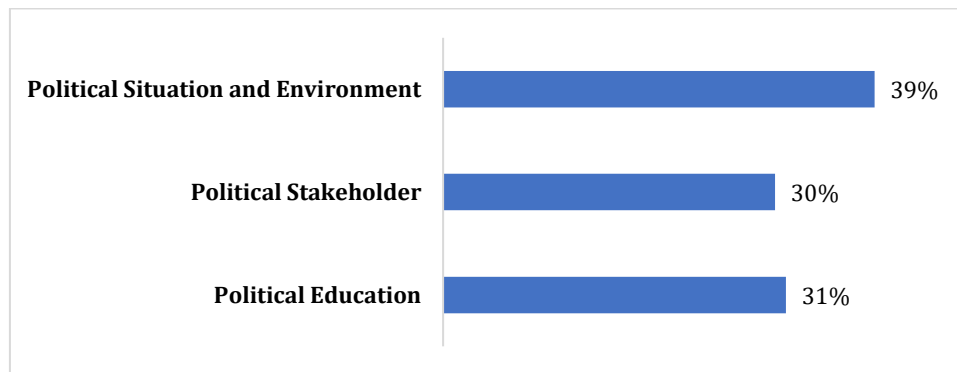


Figure 4. Validation of Supporting Factors for Political Participation

From the supporting factors of political participation, it is clear that the situation or environment is the most dominant of the eleven informants in supporting community participation, especially the millennial generation, although both have a fairly high percentage, but in terms of situation or environment it reaches 39 percent, while in political education it reaches 31 percent, then for the supporting factor that has the lowest percentage is political stimulation with a percentage of 30 percent.

By Milbrath quoted in (Febriantanto, 2019) said there are 3 supporting factors in political participation, namely political stimulation, situation or environment and political education.

1) Political Stimulants

The political stimulating factor is an encouragement for a voter to participate in political life. That is, people willing to participate in political life accept political stimulation. Political stimuli are influenced by political discussion activities, the influence of mass media, and formal and informal discussions. The following are the core factors supporting political participation that the researchers summarized from the results of informant interviews, namely, the millennial generation, especially novice voters, instilled motivation in themselves that the millennial generation has a major influence that will change in the next five years and this year is the first year they are directly involved in exercising their voting rights as Indonesian citizens.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by that (Firdha Rezki Dwitya Anggiriani Rifai, 2020) Political stimulation is an effort by the organizers to help increase the political participation of the millennial generation. Not only that, but political stimuli also provide motivation for novice voters to understand political issues that are widely circulated on social media.

2) Factors of the political situation or environment

Where the social environment around a voter is good and conducive so that a voter is willing to happily participate in political activities. In a democratic political environment, people feel freer and more comfortable to engage in political activities than in an authoritarian political environment. The political environment, which is often filled with brutal and violent activities, naturally distances people from the political sphere. The political situation or environment is very influential in increasing political participation of the community, especially the millennial

generation because the environment has a bad political situation either from the infrastructure that has been promised, the lack of interaction between local governments and the community related to political issues being discussed makes the millennial generation who are in college as a channel for aspirations. That way the millennial generation took a demonstration action.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by that (Firdha Rezki Dwitya Anggiriani Rifai, 2020) The political environment helps the community, especially the millennial generation, to stimulate motives and behaviors in an area.

3) Political Education

It is an effort by the government to change citizens to have political awareness by engaging in political activities. The following are the core factors supporting political participation that the researcher summarized from the results of informant interviews, namely, non-formal political education conducted by General Election Commission members for novice voters is very important, with the political education of novice voters on political issues that are widely circulated when approaching elections, procedures for using voting rights, candidate leaders, and basic political situations.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by that (Firdha Rezki Dwitya Anggiriani Rifai, 2020) Political education is very important to be delivered early and known, understood by the people of Indonesia and the younger generation so that the people do not become political objects but also act as political subjects. With the implementation of political education by National and Political Unity Agency of Sidenreng Rappang Regency, it is hoped that the younger generation will become "Political literacy" In order to synergize in development and participatory efforts, because the people will be aware of their rights and obligations, aware of the law, critical, active and creative and constructive.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, researchers can conclude several things related to the political participation of the millennial generation in Sidenreng Rappang Regency. First, political literacy plays a vital role in increasing millennial participation. In this context, political literacy is seen from indicators that include awareness of the importance of political institution activities. Consistently, the leading indicator influencing the millennial generation's political participation is awareness of political institutions' activities.

Second, supporting factors encouraging millennials to actively participate in political activities involve political stimulants, situations or environments, and political education. These findings are in line with Milbrath's view. In this context, the problem or environment becomes the dominant factor influencing the political participation of the millennial generation, while political stimulation and political education also play an essential role.

The results of this study show that efforts to increase the political participation of the millennial generation in Sidenreng Rappang Regency need to strengthen their

political literacy, especially in raising awareness of political activities. In addition, special attention needs to be paid to supporting factors, specially creating a politically stimulating environment and strengthening aspects of political education. Thus, the results of this study can make an essential contribution to designing strategies and policies to encourage more active political participation of the millennial generation in the Sidenreng Rappang Regency area.

Research on millennial political participation in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, Indonesia, has limitations and uses quantitative methods such as surveys. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, conducting similar studies in areas with different social and political characteristics is recommended. In addition, future research may use qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions to understand the context and complex dynamics behind millennial political participation patterns. Further research could explore the relationship between political literacy and millennial political participation, as well as the role of social media and information technology in shaping their patterns of political participation.

In addition, considering contextual and cultural factors that can influence the political participation of millennials in various regions is also very important. By overcoming these limitations and developing a research focus, future research can provide richer insights into millennial political participation, making the results more relevant and helpful in designing policies and strategies for political empowerment for millennials in Indonesia.

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