

Political discussions lead to political efficacy among students in Indonesia

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Submission date: 27-Apr-2023 05:25PM (UTC+0800)

Submission ID: 2077028580

File name: 10.1177_20578911221143674.pdf (1.09M)

Word count: 7647

Character count: 42430

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Journal of Comparative Politics
1-17

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DOI: 10.1177/20578911221143674

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Abstract

Student unions based on religious and political affiliations are of paramount importance in political decision-making around the globe and in Indonesia particularly. The involvement of youth in political arenas and narrative building has become a debated topic among academicians, scholars and policymakers. In the context of Indonesia, the association of youth with religious groups has been seen as very important for engaging them in capacity-building initiatives (students in particular) and in political activities by mobilizing them with general communities. The present study examines the phenomenon of political efficacy through the political participation of youth associated with different religious and political groups. In consideration of the nature of the study, the present research tried to accomplish the desired outcomes by employing a quantitative research design and carrying out surveys. For that purpose, a self-administered questionnaire was developed with the help of literature for gathering data. The data were gathered from students and the general public, focusing on the premise that political discussion and religious group affiliation can be instrumental for political efficacy. The research found that the affiliation of students with religious groups has a strong impact on their involvement in political activities. Along with various political and religious factors, social media is considered a decisive factor in forming youth's political opinions and

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developing a sense of community engagement as well as practising their political rights. The data also show that there is a significant relationship between political efficacy and social media, highlighting that the participation of students in political discussion leads to political efficacy by mobilizing youth with general communities to create a discursive political environment.

Keywords

political discussion, political efficacy, political participation, religious students, social media, social networks, youth

Introduction

Since the Second World War, students in East and Southeast Asia have led strong movements that have toppled authoritarian regimes in countries such as Indonesia (Weiss and Aspinall, 2012). Students under the umbrella of religio-political associations have played a significant role in mobilizing the masses for social and political change. The involvement of youth in politics has changed the political scenario of Indonesia towards strengthening the democracy (Zarkasyi, 2008). Previous studies on democratic practices and the involvement of youth in recent decades have not been given considerable attention to state and political parties (Bessant, 2004; Hostetler, 2012; Ziwoya, 2016). It has been observed that political tendencies are higher where cultural and religious factors influence the general masses to vote and to choose political parties or candidates by families and peer groups (Gibson, 1992; Jennings et al., 2009). With the changing global trends, the mindsets of students in democratic societies are also changing, where existing traditional political structures have evolved from their predecessors. The present study highlights young people's participation via religious associations in political activities in both offline and online (e.g. social media) platforms. It also examines how their participation provides opportunities for other students to contribute to the politics of Indonesia. In short, we investigate how political discussions on social media increase the political efficacy of students in Indonesia with the intervention of religious affiliation.

The history of Indonesian politics includes the involvement of student groups with different religious associations (Kingsbury, 2002; Liddle, 1985). Indonesia has a democratic political system (Djuyandi, and Darmawan, 2021). In 1908, student movements via their participation in politics during the period of Budi Oetomo, a nationalist youth organization, declared a national awakening (termed locally as *Kebangkitan Nasional*). According to Aspinall (2012), student movements in Indonesia are solely by moral principles and ethics, as students strongly follow the State's ideology of five principles known as the *Pancasila* teachings.

Moreover, students' activism and activities in Indonesia are part of extra-parliament action (Wekke and Mukhtar, 2019). Student affiliation with religious institutions or groups are higher in affiliations and also has strong family associations (Fincher et al., 2012). Religious student associations have faced political criticism for their activism (Henn et al., 2002), especially during Suharto's New Order regime when student movements were banned and leaders arrested (Liddle, 1985). Suharto's regime introduced the concept of a 'campus normalization policy' (termed locally as *Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus* or NKK) which sought to depoliticize campus life by restricting student organizations (Zarkasyi, 2008).

The youth studies literature has found that the importance of youth activism and its creative role during election campaigns marks a significant shift from the old pattern of political movements to the new model of activism (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019). It is closely related to the rise of religiously inclined students in Indonesian politics, which has manifested in both local and national

elections for many years (Hadiz, 2014). Furthermore, the influential and revolutionary role of students in national politics (Shaheen, 2008) has a major role in political activities. Studies on youth have noted that youth ³³ain the main focus of political parties, emphasizing their importance in national politics (Bilal et al., 2018; Hussain et al., 2018; Shah et al., 2017).

The motivation behind the ¹⁷icipation in political matters is predominantly the need for political parties and interest groups to encourage people to participate in politics. It primarily focuses on political attitudes, interest in becoming active citizens and an increase in political efficacy which can influence individual decisions towards participation. In bringing social change to society, the youth have become a decisive factor in political mobilization and play a pertinent role in the political structure (Klemmensen et al., 2012).

The current study focuses on the youth's political involvement in mobilizing general communities in Indonesia, and the role in politics of youngsters belonging to different religious associations. Their membership of religious parties in Indonesia exerts a ¹⁹eat impact on political participation and shows strong ties with different socio-religious groups. The study has aimed to address the following research questions: (1) Does religious association provide both the social context and the forms of online community engagement that promote political participation? (2) Considering the youth-specific interest, how do religious social networks (social networking) develop strong social ⁴²ations and foster political participation?

Since social media have provided the chance to participate in political discussions (Hussain et al., 2018; Middaugh, 2016), where religion is a significant force behind this and can influence political participation in three ways including discussion inside religious places, individual commitments and level of networks. In addition to the theoretical contribution, social identity theory states that the importance of group association that identifies a person's self-concept and belongingness to some interests (Tajfel and Turner, 2004) is determined by the activism mode. The study thus poses that despite this, direct influences in different dimensions of religion on political participation do exist, and there are also other powerful indirect relationships that are mediated by both various interpersonal relations and digitalized communication media processes.

This article is divided into four sections. In the first and second sections, we provide a synthesis of the available literature on religious affiliations and participation, social networks and religiosity and cyber democracy in Indonesia. The third section briefly discusses the research methods of this study, how the data has been collected, exogenous variables, the development of research instrument and the procedure of statistical analysis deployed for data. The fourth ⁴ection discusses the results analysis and discussion through various statistical tests using models. In the fifth section, we discuss the findings and policy implications for further direction on youth involvement for the betterment of communities.

Literature review

There are multiple reasons behind changing the political scenario, and ¹⁹the use of social media among you⁴⁵sters is one major factor in this. Studies on social media by Gromping (2014) indicated that social media is a new way of political participation in the world. Discussions on social media may strengthen groups with sim⁴⁰ political perspectives. Similarly, social networking sites have unwrapped new paths for youth to participate in political and social activities in their societies (Androustopoulos et al., 2018). The religious parties in Indonesia also follow their leaders on social media and other networking sites for the main purpose of using the social media accounts to connect with other political activists (Lengauer, 2018).

Youth religious affiliations and participation

The study concerns the engagement of young religious political aspirants and their participation in online and offline spheres. A student's religious affiliation is directly correlated with their level of political participation, and its effect on the democratic process is the key indicator of the current research. The term participation means taking part in some activities (Scaff, 1975). It is a common phenomenon among citizens to participate and share their grievances and expectations with the government (Verba and Nie, 1987). The rising involvement of religious students in online and networked forms of political participation has given rise to a current research focus on new media, youth, and political engagement among religious organizations (Rheingans and Hollands, 2013). Moreover, as Greenberg (2000) stated, political communication within the context of the religious institute provides not only incentives and funds but also information that motivates voters to participate and learn about political matters. It is also indicated (Minkenberg, 2018) that religious affiliations can foster political efficacy and knowledge in their supporters and encourage them to participate¹³ in politics on the basis of device forces and their actions on society.

The transformation of social media in the political arena has created a new debate regarding student political engagements through the platform of religious organizations, which has been started in the literature on youth studies. The latest research, instead of pondering on youth political detachment, has examined how religious¹⁶ students define and enact political engagement in Indonesia. Scholars have reported that there is a positive influence of political interest on social media where people can participate in politics (Bae, 2014). Observers have expected the rise in online activities among established political parties to have helped in increasing¹⁸ young votes in elections (Michaelsen, 2011).

The more the individual has an interest in politics, the more likely they are to participate in politics (Gordon, 2008). It has been argued by Chun (2013) and Boulianne (2015) that a higher interest in the political sphere increases political participation. Similarly, Galuh (2016) confirmed that activities on social media can influence social movements in Indonesia that incite mass participation in politics. Meanwhile, research conducted with a sample of 3500 youngsters stated that political interests influence participation in politics through social media (Baumgartner and Morris, 2010).

Social networks and religiosity

Political networks and social media have encouraged young people to participate in political activities. The measurement of religiosity among young people is investigated by various scales like questionnaires that explore religious participation (Al Zaben et al., 2015) and their political affiliation with religious parties (Koenig and Bussing, 2010). In addition, Barendregt (2012) stated that social networks provide facilities for religious youth to participate in political events. The scholarship on sociology of religion indicates that religion is one of the influencing factors in strengthening social networks in politics (Emerson et al. 2011; McGuire, 2002; Roberts and Y¹⁵ne, 2012). Besides religious affiliation, other factors are also useful, such as social support, since there is a positive association between religion and social behaviour (Saud et al., 2021). The current study seeks to understand how social networks among religious parties are strong and motivate voters to participate in political activism.

Cyber democracy in Indonesia

The unique character⁹ of cyber democracy allows everyone to share and transform civic and political information to the public. Individuals on social media have the authority to choose and form

opinions according to their interests and preferences. In Indonesia, this potential becomes more unrestricted as it is encouraged and supported by the existing democratic environment that ensures each person's freedom of speech and opinion on social media. The online communities and social media are reflected to take on the role of an agent of socio-political change (Gordon, 2008; Modgil, al., 2021; Hur and Kwon, 2014).

The rise in the use of social media in Indonesia as a source of public information has altered the pattern of social interactions (Lim, 2017). This is due to social media's particular characteristics that enable users not only to share information but also to post their ideas on politics. Interestingly, this feature allows anyone active on social media to engage and get involved for political purposes. Every social media activist can take on the role of a message distributor (Weeks and Holbert, 2013). Social media networks are used to understand individual socio-political aspects ranging from polarization to political entities (Lee et al., 2022; Arora et al., 2022; Kushwaha et al., 2021). Some experts have, thus, declared that social media is a decisive factor in the intense change of the communication structure. There has been a transition from the print era to the interactive digital communication era (Khang et al., 2012). Twitter, as a social media, has opened new avenues and set up a new model of the communication channel among Indonesian political parties and politicians. Beers (2014) described that activities performed on social media have a progressive impact on political communication among Indonesians. A study conducted by Kushwaha et al. (2020) found that Twitter has emerged as one of the basic and primary sources of social media for sharing opinions, interests, points of view on events and for availability of online content on politics.

According to his study, tweets on general elections received the most reaction from citizens, which indicated that political themes contribute to an interesting public discussion on social media. From these previous studies done by others, it is acknowledged that the communication effects of political participation and the use of social media resulting at different levels of participation. We have also made several references to the possible direct or indirect effects of religious association on political participation that are mediated through multiple ways of social media and mass communication processes. Therefore, this present research explores closely the connection and impact of student religious affiliation on their activism on social media and in the public arena, which to our understanding is still quite understudied by scholars in Indonesia.

Research methods

The present study applies different procedures and steps involved in accomplishing research. For the purpose of achieving the objectives and understanding the nature of the study, a quantitative research design was employed and the data were gathered by carrying out surveys in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia.

Data collection

The data were collected by carrying out a survey on a sample of 400 respondents chosen on the basis of their responses towards consent of participation in the study. Out of 400 respondents, 378 were selected for data analysis on the basis of completed responses. As the quantitative research aims to generalize the results on a broad perspective and population, the survey is considered one of the best methods to gather data in a short period of time and from a large number of people. Thus, the survey was conducted to collect data in order to evaluate the role of politico-religious organizations and social media in involving youth in political discussions that ultimately lead them to political

efficacy. ³¹ The unit of analysis (sample) for the study comprised students associated with the university and Islamic boarding schools and some people from the general public under the age of 30 years. The pictorial view of the methodology is described in Figure 1.

Exogenous variables

There are dependent and independent variables and some exogenous variables taken in the survey. These are sex, age, educational qualification, religious affiliation, level of participation in political activities, respondents' opinions on the effectiveness of various political activities and level of political efficacy. Each variable was scaled 'SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, SDA = Strongly Disagree, DA = Disagree', and 'YES' or 'NO' frequencies.

Research instrument

The research instrument was designed in accordance with ³⁶ the objectives of the research. A semi-structured (open- and closed-ended) self-administered questionnaire was prepared to collect the data from the respondents. The variables showing the responses regarding political affiliation with a religious organization and the level of political involvement are the composed variables in the questionnaire.

Statistical analysis

Data were analysed using different software. They were first listed in MS Excel, properly coded and then re-arranged in SPSS v.25. Univariate (frequency distribution) and Bivariate (Pearson

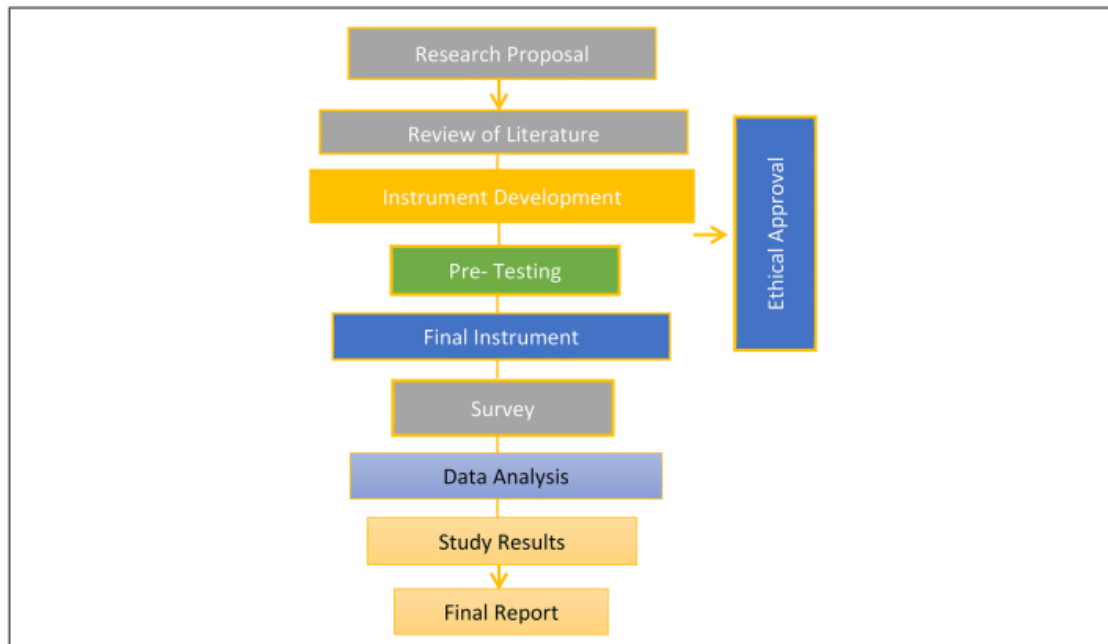


Figure 1. Methodology pictorial view.

correlation, chi-square and ANOVA) analysis was conducted. After presenting the data according to scale and measurement, different tests were applied and all the statistical tests carried different meanings for the aim of interpreting results. Frequency distribution aimed to analyse the frequency and percentage of each variable. The reliability³⁸ and accuracy of the questionnaire and variables were checked. Correlation was applied to know the strength of the relationship²⁹ between variables which were quantitative and converted into numbers after coding, while a chi-square test was carried out to see the significance of association between variables for testing the hypothesis. Lastly, ANOVA for regression²³ was run on the data to find the variance between means of the independent and dependent variables.

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the socio-economic variables of the respondents. In terms of sex, there were more female (54.2%) than male (45.8%) respondents. They were categorized⁹ as 19–22 years (58.5%) and 23–25 years (26.7%). The data show that age could be measured as a positive indicator for the political participation of youth. Social identity theory explains the importance of group association for how people self-identify and their sense of belongingness, and how they align themselves with certain interests (Tajfel and Turner, 2004).

The respondents were predominantly still in higher education, and some had attained higher degree educational levels including bachelor's, diploma and graduate. Studies have found that education is an essential indicator of political efficacy and participation in conventional politics (Pasek et al., 2008). The present data report that the majority (41.5%) had a bachelor's level of qualification, while less than half (25.9%) had an intermediate level (college) of education, which has an influence on their³ knowledge and familiarity with education and politics.

Table 2 shows levels of interest in local, national and international politics. Young people follow national-level political news on social media (42.3%). They also access information from local news, while others are focused on international politics. So, the view that young people ignore or do not care about political and current affairs seems to be not the case in these results. Yet, only 3.2% had an interest in both the national and international level of politics. While transcribing

Table 1. Socio-demographic variables and responses (n = 378).

Category	Variable	Counts	% of Total
i.	Sex		
	Male	173	45.8
	Female	205	54.2
ii.	³⁵		
	19–22 years	221	58.5
	23–25 years	101	26.7
	26–29 years	56	14.8
iii.	Education		
	Intermediate	98	25.9
	Diploma	53	14.0
	Bachelor's	157	41.5
	Master	70	18.5

Source: Survey questionnaire.

Table 2. Level of participation in political activities (n = 378).

Sr. #	Variables	Scale	Counts	% of Total
i	Level of politics	Local	112	29.6
		National	160	42.3
		International	94	24.9
		National and International	12	3.2
ii.	Using social media	Daily	230	60.8
		Several times in a week	98	25.9
		Once a week	15	4.0
		Rarely	35	9.3
iii.	Using voting rights in elections	Once	92	24.3
		Twice	84	22.2
		More times	167	44.2
		Never	35	9.3
iv.	Comments to a political discussion on social media	Once	93	24.6
		Twice	47	12.4
		More times	216	57.1
		Never	22	5.8
v.	Written any post on social media about politics	Once	188	49.7
		Twice	84	22.2
		More times	91	24.1
		Never	15	4.0
vi.	Ever been a member of a student organization	Yes	288	76.2
		No	90	23.8
vii.	Organizing events as representatives of the younger generation	Yes	284	75.1
		No	94	24.9
viii.	Attending student meetings	Yes	261	69.0
		No	117	31.0
ix.	Taking an active role in the meeting	Yes	224	59.3
		No	154	40.7

Source: Survey questionnaire.

their interests in political activities, it was important to investigate what percentage of their time is used on social media apps; the majority (60.8%) used social media daily. This signifies that respondents of this study have the access and possess the awareness to use social media for political news at local, national, international and international levels.

As the data show, respondents have the capacity and familiarity to use social media for political discourse and are also active in conventional politics. The results tells that amongst the respondents who have cast their votes, a majority (44.2%) of them shared that they used their right to vote more than twice at national level elections. show a higher percentage of respondents who have practice (44.2%) more likely to vote in recent national-level elections. Their participation on social media for engaging on a political post increased (57.1%); however, the frequency of writing a post on social media about politics is practised once (49.7%). This was evidence of their keen interest to participate, post and engage in political discussions online.

Student unions and groups have an impact on the political decisions of individuals (Rhoades and Rhoads, 2003). The majority of respondents (76.2%) had been members of student organizations in their respective institutes. This shows their strong affiliation with student organizations for political participation. This helped to promote and organize events as a litmus test for their participation and their interests in political matters. The data additionally show that attendance in these student meetings are increasing and that respondents have an active role in in political events, discussions and participation on social media.

Table 3 shows the degree of agreement and disagreement of respondents with the statements in four categories of the scale. The table foregrounds the opinion of the respondents' knowledge of political issues. More than half of respondents strongly agreed with easily understanding the political issues and had something to say while discussing political issues; 8.5% strongly disagreed and 34.4% agreed, while very few (12.6%) disagreed and the remaining had a neutral opinion in this regard.

The findings also confirm that for the variable 'Posts on Facebook and Twitter provides a unique platform to sensitize people who have ties with religious groups', a high majority (21.9%) of respondents strongly agree about posting on Facebook and Twitter, with just 5.8% having a neutral opinion. It is also found that Facebook is the tool for political activists to sensitize and motivate their followers to participate online and offline (Saud and Margono, 2021). The results also show that internet access is easy for the public, and people regularly post their comments and ideas on social media. During the end of New Order time in 1998, Indonesia experienced the intensification of Islamic practices and discourses, giving rise to technology and information among young religious scholars (Hasan, 2009; Hefner, 2005; van Bruinessen, 2013).

In addition to this, since the internet and social media can easily be accessed from smartphones (Barendgret, 2012), this encouraged use of Da'wah and online teaching of Islamic practices (Salma, 2017). The growing level of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Line and other accounts expedites the process of online posting in Indonesia (Lengauer, 2018). Social media and religious affiliations can sensitize the youth to be a part of political activities, and the youth are agents of social change in society, thus much of voter engagement is increasingly directed towards them. Consequently, the results showed that 17.7% of the study strongly accepted that social media could affect the youth and public to participate in political activities, as they have opportunities and facilities to be a part of such activities.

Table 3. The level of political efficacy among young people (n = 378).

S. No	Categories	DA	SD	N	AG	SA
i.	During the political discussion, I usually have something to say	12.6% (48)	8.5% (32)	12.6% (48)	30.4% (115)	35.7% (135)
ii.	I can understand political issues easily	16.1% (61)	6% (23)	6.6% (25)	41.5% (157)	29.6% (112)
iv.	Posts on Facebook and Twitter are advantageous to sensitize religious groups	---	20.4% (77)	5.8% (22)	21.9% (83)	51.9% (196)
v.	Social media and religious affiliation can sensitize youth to be a part of political activities	21.2% (80)	12.9% (49)	18.5% (70)	17.7% (67)	29.7% (112)

Source: Survey questionnaire.

In many regions, joining a political party is a time-honoured way for the public to express their political views and get politically engaged (Scarrow, 2019). Table 4 shows the different forms of political participation, such as working for political parties and religious organizations. Due to higher affiliation with religious and political parties (Ellison et al., 2010), the respondents of this study are used to working with parties to show their affiliation with them. Their participation in activities can create motivation at the local level as well as for their country. People who work in a political party can influence people and play a role in decision-making in the society. The results in Table 4 show that more than half (52.1%) of the respondents explained that it is 'effective' to work in a political party, 32.6% state it is 'very effective' to have an association with religious political parties, while 15.3% indicated they would 'never' think of working with political organizations or deemed them as effective (see Table 5). Meanwhile, affiliation and working with political parties can give prestige, power and respect in society (Figure 2).

In Table 6, the researcher has applied chi-square to determine the relationship between the variable of age group and political news through social media since the p-value is < 0.5 ; hence, we can claim that our hypothesis has been accepted. However, according to the first assumption of chi-square, it is proposed that the expected count must be $5 >$, while according to the second assumption, the value of p must be < 0.05 . Thus, if we take the first assumption as the reference, then with point of zero cells (0.0%) have an expected count < 5 , which means that chi-square cannot be applied; therefore, it is rejected. However, if ignoring the first assumption and applying the test regardless, our hypothesis has been accepted since the p-value is < 5 (see Table 7).

The table regarding the ANOVA reveals the equation for regression that shows the dependent variable. It is certified that the level of significance is .000, and consequently the hypothesis has been accepted, with social media and religious association as the dependent variables and 'I know more about politics than most people of my age' as the predictors (constant), showing the political efficacy among the respondents. Figure 1 shows the reliability and correlation of some variables. Religiosity is defined as expression, practices, traditional values, engaging groups for religious discussions and sharing knowledge (Koenig, 2020; Saud et al., 2021), while social networks state the association between religious groups and parties (Eschler, 2019). Nonetheless, it is a continuous variable test that is applied when there are more than two response categories, and we need accurate measurements. The study aims to explore social media, religious association and youth participation in political practices. Religious affiliation and association provide opportunities to participate or interact with the larger part of the community (Merino and Nevado, 2014).

Table 4. Distribution of respondents regarding their opinion on the effectiveness of various political activities (n = 378).

Sr.#	Category	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Not at all	58	15.3
ii.	Effective	197	52.1
iii.	Very effective	123	32.6
	Total	378	100.0

Source: Survey questionnaire.

Table 5. Reliability analysis.

Scale reliability statistics	Mean	Sd	Cronbach's α	McDonald's ω
Item reliability statistics	3.23	Mean	Sd	Cronbach's α
Political_Efficacy_1		4.48	0.501	0.788
Political_Efficacy_2		3.23	1.234	0.799
Being_political_active_1		2.35	0.959	0.797
Being_political_active_2		2.24	0.973	0.785
Being_political_active_3		1.70	0.884	0.785
Influence_people_pol_particip_1		1.86	0.663	0.782
Influence_people_pol_particip_2		1.89	0.646	0.781
Pol_active_1		3.89	1.146	0.740
Pol_active_2		4.05	1.005	0.747
Pol_active_3		3.78	1.041	0.751
Pol_active_5		3.86	1.020	0.752
Pol_active_4		4.02	1.050	0.739
Social_me1		3.77	1.025	0.798
Social_me2		3.52	1.001	0.767
Social_me3		3.61	1.105	0.754
Social_me4		3.50	1.127	0.751

Political Efficacy (Pol_Effic) = understanding of respondents' political efficiency and capacity to understand political issues easily. Being politically active (Being_Pol_active) = involvement in political participation and influences people for specific parties or candidates. Politically active (Pol_active) = participation in a few political activities, such as conventional politics. (Social_me) = use of social media for participation and political activities.

Table 6. Testing the hypothesis on the relationship between age and frequency of following news on social media.

Sr.#	Chi-square test			
	Tests	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
1	Pearson chi-square	18.246 ^a	6	.006
No. of valid cases		378		

^aTwo cells (25.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.00.

This study thus shows that social media users are more interested in participating and discussing political matters as a way of engaging in regular political discussions in the online and offline spheres. It also describes that young people have a strong orientation towards changing the political scenario of the country. As such, the youth's interests in political matters can initially lead to their participation in social media (Fraile, 2011; Kushin and Yamamoto, 2010). According to Gutierrez et al. (2006), engaging young people in voting, campaigning and democratic activities can be integrated for a common purpose.

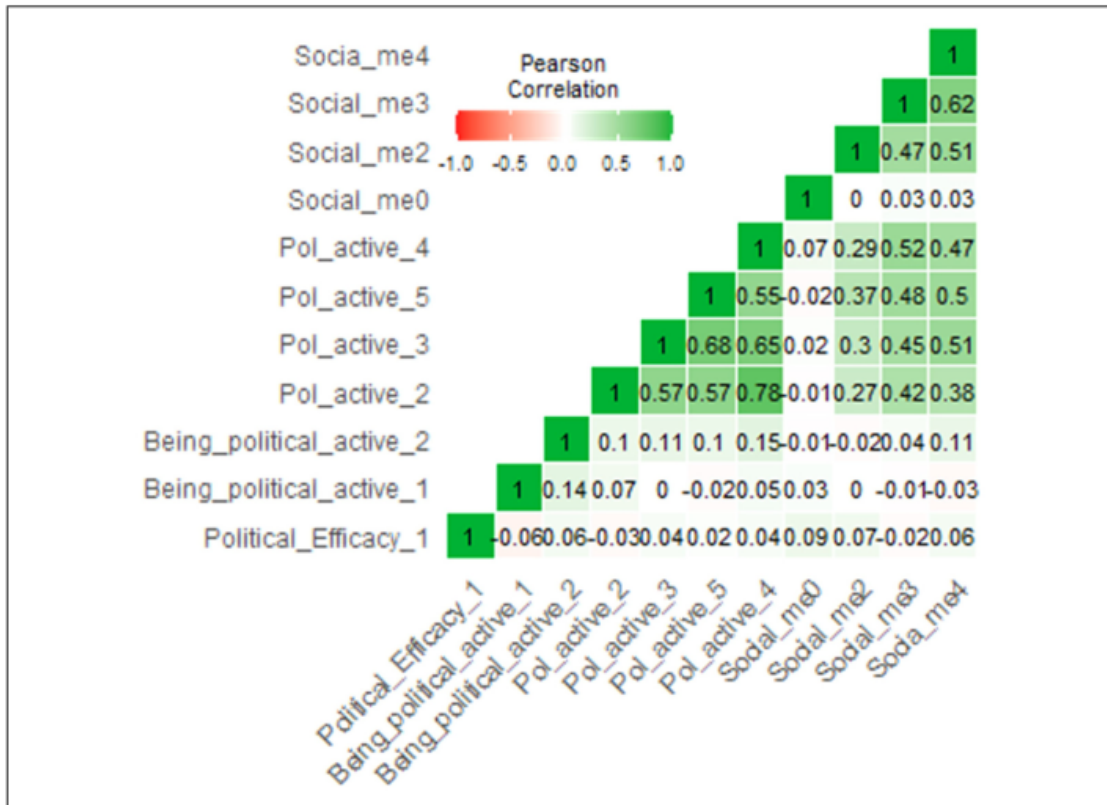


Figure 2. Pearson correlation and reliability results.

Table 7. The model discussed social media activism, religious association and participation.

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
I	Regression	231.028	2	115.514	30.417	.000 ^b
	Residual	619.023	163	3.798		
	Total	850.052	165			

Social media and participation		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
R	Std. Error estimate	6.4	1.1			5.81	.000
.521 ^a	1.94	.006	.056	.008		.113	.910
		.316	.041	.520		7.65	.000

^aDependent variable: Social media activism.

^bPredictors: (Constant) political activism, participation in religious organizations.
Source: Survey questionnaire.

^aPredictors: (Constant), social media activism.

^bDependent variable: Political activism, participation in religious organizations.

Conclusion

In Indonesia, it is evident that youth have been involved in different political activities for various purposes. The data of this study demonstrate that young people in Indonesia have been engaged in multiple political activities due to their strong affiliation with religious groups. The students' affiliation with religious parties has a stronger impact on the political arena and activities where social media has played an active role in influencing and engaging them for the agenda of altering politics. It is also revealed that youth being engaged in diverse political activities, such as discussions in public spheres, leads to mobilizing others for political change and political efficacy. Besides the youth's role in physical spheres, they are engaged in politics through social media platforms to create awareness among others and sensitize the general masses regarding politics.

The research has shown that youths were also involved in sharing of political knowledge and participating in activities such as attending corner meetings and motivating the public to make valid political decisions in line with their religious ideologies. Furthermore, the study provides an insight that discussion on political knowledge creates political interest, and increased debate on political participation could improve their political efficacy. The data present a significant connection between political efficacy and social media, highlighting the trend of more formal and informal participation and inclusion of students in political discussion leading to political efficacy for making a more representative political arena. Moreover, multiple ways of political participation are indicated as useful for political parties and religious organizations. Thus, the higher the level of affiliation with religious parties, the more chances of political representation strengthening the political efficacy and structures.

Practical implications

This study will be an additional benefit to the people of Indonesia in developing the concept of social activities through social media platforms. The stakeholders, such as the Government of Indonesia, may take steps to persuade students from unions with religious affiliations to play an active role in politics.

Acknowledgements

We are thankful to the participants, survey team, students and friends for supporting us during the data collection. The project team also wants to thank the Rector III, Prof. Drs. Hery Purnobasuki and Dean's of Faculty of Social and Political Science for their motivation and encouragement.

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Declaration of conflicting interests


The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This project is funded by Research and Innovation Institution (LPI) for the year of 2020 [432/UN3.14/PT/2020]. The material reported in this article is a part of Universitas Airlangga research project on Civic Engagement, Political socialization and public participation in online and offline Spheres.

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