

Heuristic political behavior in the 2024 presidential general election: Fandom humanities case study

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ABSTRACT

The K-Popers phenomenon in the elections in Indonesia in 2024 is the first record in the history of election contestation because it contains a combination of South Korean Pop culture and Indonesian Politics. K-Pop fans have the characteristics of a strong social group so that when they enter politics they join the Humanities fandom and form a social group that supports Anies Baswedan as a candidate for President of Indonesia in 2024-2029. This research aims to describe the representation of heuristic political behavior from the Humanities fandom in the 2024 elections. This research uses qualitative research methods with a literature study approach. So the data source in this research comes from secondary data. The research results show that the representation of heuristic political behavior from the Humanities fandom is in the form of creating a social media account K-Pop terms in updates on Anies' activities, right up to making fan merch (photocards, light sticks, glasses, etc.). The political behavior carried out by individuals in the Humanities fandom is based on the styles of K-Popers present in politics which have inadvertently been formed by Anies. This K-Popers style ultimately makes individuals in the Humanities fandom more expressive in politics.

Keywords:

behavior; heuristics; election 2024, KPop

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INTRODUCTION

2024 is the year for the Indonesian people to hold simultaneous general election contestations (elections). The election consists of the election of the president and his deputy, the legislature for the DPR RI, DPRD and DPD (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia, 2024). In this simultaneous election, the presidential election attracted more attention from the wider public. The Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates registered to contest in the 2024 election consist of Anies-Muhaimin serial number 01, Prabowo-Gibran serial number 02, and Ganjar-Mahfud serial number 03. Each Presidential and Vice

Presidential candidate has a group of militant supporters who label each of them. each candidate. For example, serial number 01 is labeled with the name Abah Anies or Abah Owl. Then serial number 02 is labeled with Ayah Bowo or Gemoy, but it is different for Presidential Candidate Ganjar who does not have his supporters specifically label him. However, Ganjar has a nickname for his supporters and this was done deliberately *branding* by Ganjar's winning team, namely Team Penguin. This is also shared by the Anies-Muhaimin couple, namely Humanies, which was trended by the social media account X (Twitter) @aniesbubble.

The phenomenon of Humanies supporters (fandom) trending by @aniesbubble started with a live broadcast by Anies on Tiktok social media on December 23 2023 (Baswedan, 2024). In Anies' first live broadcast on Tiktok social media, the euphoria was not too massive, labeling Anies as Abah Owl. However, Anies's nickname as Abah Anies has begun to be echoed by Anies' viewers after the end of Anies' live broadcast on Tiktok (Fahmi, 2024). Labeling Anies as 'Abah' is a symbolic interpretation for Anies when Anies can provide answers outside the political context that are thrown to his audience on live Tiktok. These questions generally involve love problems, family problems, and even lecture problems for the audience. In a publication regarding the trend of calling Anies as 'Abah Anies', Ismail Fahmi noted that it began to gain attention on Twitter around 30 December 2023, with peak interactions occurring around 2 January 2024. The trend shows a pattern that resembles a natural spike, which is an average came from X's social media accounts which were neutral towards the candidate pair and also from accounts supporting Anies. This trend has a gradual increase followed by a gradual decrease so that Ismail Fahmi's findings conclude that it is a natural trend (Fahmi, 2024).



Figure 1. One of the accounts on X's social media tweeted against Anies

Then the emergence of the term Abah Owl for Anies, which is symbolized as an owl, came from the mass base of supporters from Fandom Humanies from the @aniesbubble account, which is a youth group that is passionate about South Korean Pop culture (K-Pop). The K-Pop fan base sees Anies as a figure who has similarities to their idols in South Korea. For example, in one of the tweets from the social media account evening or when they have finished the show.



Figure 2. Anies postcard merch by @HaveAniesDay

This way of looking at Anies gave a continued reaction from K-Pop fans to give him the symbol of an owl, hence the name Abah Owl for Anies. The reaction from K-pop fans to this phenomenon is even more massive. Several K-Pop fans started to take the initiative to make Anies merch designs like a Korean Pop idol (in picture 2). The support base for the Humanies fandom is K-Pop fans who also like Anies personally, so they have a tendency to vote for Anies in the 2024 presidential election.



Figure 3. Anies t-shirt merch by @HaveAniesDay

This phenomenon can be explained by a sociological approach to voting behavior theory, where in essence social groups can influence a person's voting behavior. The K-Pop fan group is a social group. They are affiliated with one set of values because they have a similar passion for culture or art from South Korea. So the agreement they already have regarding their preferences is in harmony, namely Pop idols from South Korea. If the social group becomes involved in politics, then the social group immediately obeys Paul F. Lazarsfeld will have an impact on individuals in it to choose a candidate pair that is in harmony with their social group (Syafhendry, 2016). So in the context of this phenomenon, the Humanies fandom, whose mass base of supporters comes from K-Pop fan groups, will directly have an impact on individuals who are not too involved with politics or even don't know political issues at all, participate in voicing and have a tendency to vote for Anies in 2024 presidential election.

For behavioral theory, choosing a sociological approach, this phenomenon is a natural phenomenon. However, what is interesting to note further is that there is heuristic political behavior within the Humanies fandom regarding its orientation towards Anies. Heuristic political behavior is an approach in political studies that attempts to examine a person's tendencies in their political behavior, for society and for state political actors. Political heuristics is an intersection of the study of Political Science and Psychology. In Psychological Science, heuristics are a person's instant decision making in the easiest way (Petersen, 2015).

A study conducted by Steenbergen & Colombo (2018) emphasizes that the reason political heuristic behavior can occur is because of people's ability to draw information regarding political choices by relying on the information that is most easily accessible to them. Much of the information appears in the context of everyday activities and conversations, and much of the information is due to candidate traits rather than a policy focus. He also noted that this phenomenon occurs because there are human cognitive limitations in being able to process complex issues regarding politics. This instant decision-making process is a way for someone to simplify political choices (Petersen, 2015).

The phenomenon of political behavior from the humanitarian fandom is something new for Indonesian political history. A social group that is based on cultural values from South Korea and does not have the main goal of political interests, but can ultimately become a support group for one of the presidential candidates in the 2024 presidential election. This

article aims to describe representative of heuristic political behavior born from humanitarian fandom. To be able to answer the objectives of this research, the discussion will be divided into two sub-chapters. Firstly, the researcher will provide a description of the characteristics of the K-Popers group in looking at their idols and secondly the researcher will describe the social media account. This research does not seek justification for what kind of supportive behavior is best and most ethical in politics. This research was conducted because we wanted to see the representation of the heuristic political behavior of the Humanities fandom in the 2024 presidential election.

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods to describe representative heuristic political behavior that emerged from the Humanities fandom. Qualitative method according to [Arent et al. \(2023\)](#) is a writing method that provides a comprehensive understanding of phenomena such as behavior, perception, motivation and actions. This research method is used by relying on narrative descriptions. The aim of using qualitative methods in this research is to obtain an in-depth explanation of the phenomenon of heuristic political behavior that emerged from the humanities fandom by collecting data originating from this phenomenon. In qualitative research, the quality of the research is considered better if the data obtained is broader, more comprehensive and in-depth. This type of research is a documentation study, so the data source used is secondary data, namely academic literature that has been officially published and is related to the research topic and also uses other sources that can be used to explain the phenomenon of heuristic political behavior that was born from the humanities fandom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this research are divided into several sub-discussions. To achieve the research objective, namely describing representative heuristic political behavior that emerged from humanity fandom, a more detailed elucidation of the characteristics of K-Pop fandom in Indonesia is needed and a brief investigation of the influx of Korean Pop culture into Indonesia. In this way, the discussion sub-chapters of this research consist of the characteristics of K-Pop fandom in Indonesia and humanitarian fandom and heuristic political behavior.

Characteristics of K-Pop Fandom in Indonesia

The existence of the K-Pop fandom began as a phenomenon *Hallyu* (*Korean Wave*) ([Fauziah & Kusumawati, 2015](#)). *Hallyu* is a term that describes the phenomenon of the spread of Korean pop culture in the form of Korean drama series, films and pop music throughout the world. In notes [I. C. Sari & Jamaan \(2014\)](#) term *Hallyu* for the first time existed in China in 1999 through *Beijing Youth Daily* for the success achieved by the K-Pop idol group in holding their concert in Beijing that year. Then the phenomenon of *Hallyu* spread to all corners of the world became increasingly widespread in 2010. Several main actors were involved in the spread process of *Hallyu* consisting of the government, private parties and idol groups. The government plays a role as a supervisor and supporter of the spread of *Hallyu* through regulations. The government agency responsible for this is on record [I. C. Sari & Jamaan \(2014\)](#) is the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of South Korea (*Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism* (MCST)). MCST consists of many departments, some of which are responsible for the dissemination of culture, such as; *Korea Creative Content Agency* (KOCCA), *Korean Tourism Organization* and *Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange* (KOFICE) ([I. C. Sari & Jamaan, 2014](#)).

K-Pop is spread through videos uploaded to YouTube, introducing it *boyband* and *girl band* which was able to gain popularity all over the world. The phenomenon that then occurred was the proliferation of K-pop fans in all parts of the world and formed a fandom. Evidence of the existence of K-Pop culture for the first time in Indonesia is marked by music *boy band* or *girl band* South Korea. Some examples from *boyband* or *girl band* that exist in Indonesia are Super Junior, Girls Generation, Big Bang, Wonder Girls, and so on (Pertiwi, 2023).

K-Pop fans who form fandoms have several characteristics towards their idols. For example, research conducted by Zahra (2019) towards fandom *boy group* iKON shows that one of the characteristics of the K-pop fan fandom (in this case the iKON fandom) is having routine activities *fangirling* both individually and in groups. Activity *fangirling* individually this is done by updating information about their idols on various social media, always providing support to their idols in the form of streaming, especially on Korean media sites, making donations and supporting all their idols' activities. Meanwhile, activities *fangirling* which is done in groups by attending events with iKONIC friends (fandom), holding mini concerts and watching iKON videos together. Then the fandom also has a consumerist nature of their idol's work. This is shown by the tendency to collect K-Pop merchandise, especially idol products, such as albums (Zahra, 2019).

Something similar was written by D. A. Sari & Asriwandari (2019) about the characteristics of K-pop fan clubs in Pekanbaru. Based on the results of their searches and direct observations of K-pop fan clubs in Pekanbaru, they have characteristics of consumptive behavior towards collections related to their idols, especially in the form of albums. Apart from that, with other K-Pop fans we often watch concerts together, *gatherings*, or other K-Pop community activities. For them, this behavior is a representation of their liking for the idols they like. Then another characteristic is their passion for accessories related to their idols. These accessories are the result of fans' creativity. Even though they have negative consumptive behavior towards collecting goods or other things related to their idols, there is also positive behavior regarding this, namely saving behavior. Even though in the end the thrift and savings activities are carried out for the sake of their collection (D. A. Sari & Asriwandari, 2019).

Besides that, Rahma & Fauzi (2023) found more detailed characteristics that the consumer behavior of K-Pop fans is not only limited to collecting albums from their idols. Apart from being fond of buying, light sticks, fan meetings, streaming music videos, active in community and charity activities. Apart from that, K-Pop fans also often do fan meetings or participate in fan projects. Characteristics of K-Pop fans Rahma & Fauzi (2023) find it in the Exo-L fandom in Surabaya. In addition, the K-Pop fan community is often involved in community activities and social events such as charity as a form of their support for fellow K-Pop fans and also the surrounding community. With these community activities, they believe they can build closer relationships between themselves. Based on the findings of research on the characteristics of K-Pop fans in different regions in Indonesia conducted by Zahra (2019), D. A. Sari & Asriwandari (2019) and Rahma & Fauzi (2023) concluded a similar characteristic, namely the nature of fanaticism and dedication through active participation in supporting his idols, social activities with the K-Pop fan community, and creativity to create several *merch* related to their idols.

Heuristic Political Behavior Fandom Humanies

The phenomenon of K-Pop fandom and its enthusiasm for political contestation in Indonesia is a new phenomenon for elections in Indonesia. This is a new color for elections in Indonesia because so far elections in Indonesia for executive contestation, starting from

the regional elections, gubernatorial elections, and up to the presidential elections have often been colored by religious politics. However, the involvement of K-Pop fandom in social movements is nothing new for Indonesia. For example, in October 2020 The Jakarta Post reported that there was a social movement in the aspect of environmental preservation taking place in Demak, Central Java carried out by the BTS Fandom. This social movement occurred because one of the idols from their BTS Fandom had a birthday and the fandom raised funds to carry out a social movement to preserve the environment as a form of celebrating the birthday of one of their BTS idols (Wira, 2020).

Another social movement phenomenon from the K-Pop fandom occurred in early 2021, more than 45,000 K-pop fans managed to raise funds amounting to IDR 1.4 billion (around USD 10,000) within ten days for the earthquake and floods in Sulawesi (Andini & Akhni, 2021). This fundraising can be done with the help of sites such as kitabisa.com, social media, and the K-pop-based environmental organization, Kpop4Planet. In notes Andini & Akhni (2021) Fans admitted that they took part in these social activities because they were inspired by their idols. Not only in Indonesia, in several countries K-Pop fandom is also actively involved in social movements and even political participation in elections. For example, in the civil unrest that occurred in the United States (US) in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) conflict that occurred in the US. K-Pop fandom on record Borges & Sacoman (2021) intentionally restructuring itself as a non-racist and anti-racist cultural space. This movement started because there was firm behavior from their idols (BTS) who made donations to the BLM movement. Since then, K-Pop fans have begun to imitate their idols and take a stand to support the anti-racist movement in the US. K-pop fans took to Instagram and Twitter to post memes against the hashtags #whiteoutwednesday and #WhiteLivesMatter, in an effort to silence racist posts and prevent visibility of the BLM movement.

K-Pop fandom and its social movements don't stop there. The social movement of K-Pop fandom in BLM also had an impact on Donald Trump's campaign events. The estimated capacity to attend the event is almost 19,000 guests and almost all of them have been booked online by requesting tickets. However, in reality, when the event took place, less than 6,200 guests were present, according to records (Wise, 2020). This phenomenon could occur due to piracy from K-Pop fandom in requests for Donald Trump's campaign tickets. They deliberately order it with one or more ownership accounts but do not intend to attend it but rather to prevent other people from attending (Wise, 2020).

Then it was different from what happened in Chile. In the US social movements are sparked by their idols, in Chile K-Pop fandom is deliberately mobilized into political movements (Youn, 2023). The Presidential candidate at that time, Gabriel Borik, won the election over José Antonio Kast with the help of strengths, one of which was the mobilization of K-Pop fandom in the 2021 elections in Chile. In notes Youn (2023) consciously the power of social groups from K-Pop fandom in Chile was mobilized for Gabriel Borik's political interests. The K-Pop fandom campaigned for Gabriel Borik's win by making viral posts on social media, holding events to build other communities and printing lots of coffee cup covers with QR codes connected to voter information sites, using K-Pop idols' images in the campaign on social media to gain traction, and also created several campaign props made to resemble photo cards of their K-Pop idols. The victory achieved by Gabriel Boric in the 2021 Chilean elections proves that Gabriel Boric's campaign team has succeeded in seeing the characteristics of fanaticism and solidity to be able to form massive support for Gabriel Boric.

In Indonesia, the K-Pop fandom who are members of Humanies in the 2024 presidential election show their direct involvement in political phenomena. However, its involvement is different from the phenomena that have been written about previously. The

big motivation for K-Pop fandom does not come from the support of one of the idols to take part in the elections in Indonesia, nor does it come from direct invitations from campaign teams such as in Chile. Their involvement occurred because Anies (namely Presidential Candidate 01) was considered a wise figure and resembled their idol. The Humanies fandom phenomenon trended by @aniesbubble started with a live broadcast by Anies on Tiktok social media on December 23 2023 (Baswedan, 2024). This trend shows a gradual increase followed by a gradual decrease resulting in the findings Fahmi (2024) concluded as a natural trend.

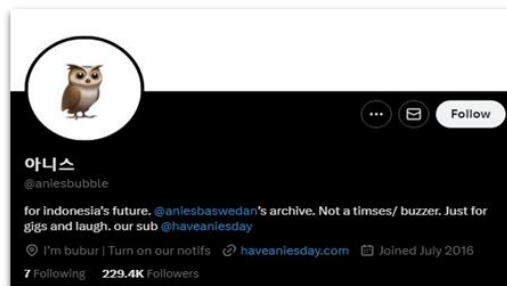


Figure 4. X Social Media Account @aniesbubble

After several live broadcasts on Tiktok, K-Pop fans who felt there were similarities between Anies and their idol then took the initiative to create a social media account on X (twitter) for Anies with the name @aniesbubble. The initial purpose of this account was only to provide notifications to fans regarding Anies' live broadcast activities on Tiktok. This is done because K-Pop idols have social media accounts for fans to access their activities. So that the activities of K-Pop idols can be followed by their fans. This is a characteristic form of K-Pop fans, namely fanaticism and dedication to their idols (Hidayat et al., 2022). The appearance of the term Abah Owl for Anies which is symbolized as an owl from the @aniesbubble account (figure 4) is also the perspective of K-Pop fans who see similarities between Anies and their idols in South Korea. The values believed by the K-Pop fandom in giving symbols to their idols to symbolize the values contained in the individual idol (Rahma & Fauzi, 2023). Anies, who is symbolized as an owl, is a meaning that can only be directly understood by K-Pop fans. Owls are depicted as knowledgeable or intellectual individuals (in figure 5). This is the value that K-Pop fans believe is attached to Anies.



Figure 5. Discussion of Anies' symbolization with the Owl

Even though the @aniesbubble account had just been created at that time, it provided quite massive attention to other K-Pop fans. K-Pop fans are aware that @aniesbubble uses messages in Korean that are deliberately created to emphasize that the account was created on the basis of an independent fan initiative and that the campaign teams of other candidate pairs were prevented from being able to follow @aniesbubble's way of playing. The use of South Korean language, from account bios, post captions, hashtags, to several terms in

replies or comments, contains many of the languages commonly used by K-Pop fans. This behavior made K-Pop fans realize that like their idol, Anies needs to have a fandom or group of fans who can support him in any activity, so this was the trigger for the birth of the Humanies fandom for Anies from the initiative of K-Pop fans (see figure 6).



Figure 6. Release the fandom name for Anies

Apart from symbolization, creating fandom, and the style of releasing activities on the @aniesbubble account that looks like they are looking at their idol, there is another distinctive style from K-Pop fans in the 2024 election to support Anies. For example, in manufacturing *fan merch* or *merch*. Quoted from CNN Indonesia (2024) The Humanies fandom held a viewing event together with the final debate packaged in K-Pop style. The event was entitled Humanies Cup Sleeve which was held at Kopi Nako Jakarta. Apart from the main aim of watching the final debate together and indirectly supporting Anies, the event was attended by many K-Pop fans because the event model was designed with a K-Pop feel.. Starting from fan merch made by the Humanies fandom, starting from photocards, drinking glasses, small fans, light sticks, and other decorations that are similar to K-Pop values (see figure 7).



Figure 7. Debate watch event by fandom humanies at at Kopi Nako Jakarta

Similar behavior from K-Pop fans at campaign events has also been successfully documented on YouTube channels Shihab (2024) who covered Anies' campaign activities. Najwa as a reporter has found a distinctive campaigning style with K-Pop fans which can be seen in figure 8 below. Najwa found two teenage girls who were both K-Pop fans and took the initiative to create a fan *merch*, the contents of which are photocards and various things that merch others about Anies. *Fan merch* will be distributed free of charge. The two teenagers admitted that they were not mobilized by anyone to make it. They show this behavior based on their desire and passion for K-Pop values which are brought into politics. The two teenagers also admitted that they had never been involved in political issues before. This means that the values of K-Pop fans in politics make them actively involved in politics because they consciously participate in campaigns.



Figure 8. Mata Najwa's Report on the Presidential Campaign Trail

Other similar behavior can be seen in Anies' campaign activities in Samarinda on January 11 2024. This time K-Pop fans not only took the initiative to make merch symbolizing Anies or came directly to Anies' campaign event, but the merch was directly given by K-Pop fans to Anies (figure 9). The shape of the merch is a light stick. In the values of K-Pop fans, lightsticks are a special form of merch that is usually used by fans to support their idols (Rahma & Fauzi, 2023). The lightsticks will be used at the idols' concerts and fans will light the lightsticks. The presence of light sticks at Anies' direct campaign event in Samarinda can be interpreted in a similar way.



Figure 9. Anies lightstick from K-Pop fans

The involvement of the Humanies fandom or K-Pop fans in the 2024 election contestation is even further away. This time, their characteristic of strong dedication to their idols was shown in another way. Humanistic behavior in the election was demonstrated through social activities, namely the provision of food and drink trucks for individuals who attended Anies' campaign event at Half Pati Unus, South Jakarta on January 18 2024 (see figure 10). This provision was initiated by humanies and reported by @aniesbubble on social media X. This behavior was not only support for Anies but support for other people who came to attend Anies' campaign at that time. Not only that, humanist involvement in the election was also demonstrated by providing a campaign videotron to Anies. This activity was initiated by @aniesbubble and will be reported regularly starting from how to participate, the design of the campaign video that was created, where the Tron video was successfully ordered. According to the @aniesbubble account, there are at least five cities that have been successfully rented for Anies campaign videos by the Humanies fandom, starting from Bekasi City, Central Jakarta, South Jakarta, Medan, to Surabaya.



Figure 10. Food truck from humanities at Anies Jakarta

The actions described above start from creating an X social media account (@aniesbubble) to update Anies' activities to providing *food trucks* For the people who attended Anies' campaign activities, this was an action that had political elements. This is because the involvement of the Humanities fandom can influence potential voters, both for those who are equally fond of K-Pop and attract the attention of people who do not understand K-Pop. The Humanities Fandom also consciously actively supports it by participating in campaigns or debate viewing events, providing support to people who attend campaign events, and providing campaign facilities for Anies. The K-Pop phenomenon in the election contest in Indonesia for the first time can be explained because K-Pop fans create politics like they see K-Pop idols, making them enthusiastic about taking part in political contestations. The reason why in the end Anies is seen as their idol is because Anies is the first presidential candidate to broadcast live on Tiktok and the behavior that Anies does unconsciously is the behavior that K-Pop idols also do to greet their fans in the middle of the night after all concert activities are finished.

The K-Pop phenomenon in the presidential election contest in 2024 is a voting behavior with a sociological approach. The similar values of individuals who are members of social groups such as K-Pop fans make them have a similar perspective in looking at the 2024 presidential election. When the Humanities fandom was formed, these similarities were finally channeled in the right way according to their values, namely making them one of the candidates. be like an idol. It's not the idols they really like like those from South Korea, but the way they look at them is like an idol to Anies. The behavioral theory of choosing a sociological approach here shows that aspects of social groups can have an influence in choosing prospective candidates.

However, at the same time this behavior also represents heuristic political behavior born from the humanities fandom. Individuals who are members of the Humanities fandom choose to support Anies simply because Anies is seen by K-Pop fans as a figure who resembles their idol. So that K-Pop fans support Anies with their K-Popers values. Individuals who are members of the Humanities fandom don't really understand why they should support Anies. Their behavior focuses on the K-Pop style in politics, not focusing on ideas and reasons why they should support Anies. Therefore, the Humanities fandom does exactly what they do in their daily lives when supporting their idols, namely from being active on social media accounts to update idols' social activities, giving symbolic gifts to their idols, using K-Pop terms in updating idol activities, to making *fan merch* (photocards, light sticks, glasses, etc.). The reason why in the end the Humanities fandom became more loyal to be further involved in the Anies campaign was purely because of the characteristics of K-Pop which are dedicated to idols, fanaticism, creativity, and the closeness of the values of their social group. These characteristics can explain why in the end, even though it is only an independent group (Humanities fandom) for Anies, the Humanities fandom can be involved in providing Anies campaign props such as videotron and *food truck*.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of a literature search, this research found that there is heuristic political behavior in the political behavior of the Humanities fandom. The representation of heuristic political behavior is in the form of creating a social media account, to manufacturing *fan merch* (photocards, light sticks, glasses, etc.). The basic reason why heuristic behavior can occur in the humanities fandom is because the values that exist in the humanities fandom are their daily values in supporting their South Korean Pop idols. This can ultimately explain that individuals in the Humanities fandom did not see Anies based on ideas and values for the first time. However, looking at the styles of K-Poppers in politics, Anies has accidentally formed this.

This K-Poppers style ultimately makes individuals in the Humanities fandom more expressive in politics. By becoming more involved in politics, in the end the Humanities fandom became even more loyal and became more involved in Anies' campaign. This happens purely because of the characteristics of passionate K-Pop fans dedication high to idols, fanaticism, creativity, and the closeness of the values of their social group. These characteristics can explain why in the end, even though it is only an independent group (Humanities fandom) for Anies, the Humanities fandom can be involved in providing Anies campaign props such as videotron and *food truck*.

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