

Political Education for Novice Voters to Increase Voter Participation in the Simultaneous Elections of 2024

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Abstract: Students in grade XI high school who are novice voters participated in the Community Service Program to address the following issues: (a) first-time voters who are still unsure about their voting responsibilities and the purpose of elections; (b) low voter participation rates in the 2020 Tuban district elections; (c) limited socialization to novice voters in preparation for the simultaneous elections in 2024; and (d) unstable novice voters, particularly those who are high school students, who still require political introduction and education. This Community Service activity aims to increase the voter participation rate of novice voters in Tuban district in the simultaneous elections of 2024. The Community Service activity uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, which includes education, coaching, and awareness-raising for novice voters conducted through direct presentations and Q&A sessions with grade XI students at SMAN 1 Grabagan and MAN 1 Tuban. The result of this Community Service activity is an increase in the participation rate of novice voters in Tuban district in the simultaneous elections of 2024.

Keywords: participation; political education; voter

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Received : 29 September 2023 **Accepted :** 23 February 2024 **Published :** 16 July 2024

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.20527/btjpm.v6i3.10255>

How to cite: Musrifah, S., Bulqiyah, H., Fahrian, D., Sumarno, S., Yuliyanti, L. I., Ulandari, S., Wijaya, B. A., Setyawan, H., & Juliansa, E. M. P. (2024). Political education for novice voters to increase voter participation in the simultaneous elections of 2024. *Bubungan Tinggi: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 6(3), 606-611.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is set to hold simultaneous elections in 2024 in the near future. The General Election Commission Regulation of 2022 (Wibawana, 2023) governs the implementation of Law Number 7 of 2017 on Elections. The 2024 elections include legislative elections to choose members of the People's Consultative Assembly, Regional Representative Council, Provincial Legislative Council, and District/City Legislative Councils. Additionally, the elections for the

President and Vice President of Indonesia and regional leaders will take place (Kompas.com).

Since the General Election and Regional Election (Pilkada) are held in the same year, this marks the largest democratic event in Indonesia to date. On February 14, 2024, the President, Vice President, Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly members, Provincial and District/City Legislative Councils, and Regional Representative Councils will be elected. Throughout Indonesia, elections for governors and

deputy governors, regents and deputy regents, and mayors and deputy mayors will take place on November 27, 2024.

Based on factual and administrative verification, for the 2024 elections, there are 18 national political parties and six local parties in Aceh (kpu.go.id), consisting of 9 parliamentary parties, five non-parliamentary parties, and four new parties (Kusnandar, 2023). The variety of elections to be conducted simultaneously underscores the importance of political education for novice voters. The voter participation rate in the 2024 elections is likely to decrease because novice voters lack an understanding of democracy and face a lack of political education (Almuntasor et al., 2022).

According to Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections, eligible voters are citizens aged 17 (seventeen) years or older, married, or have been married. Novice voters, also known as first-time voters, are citizens who meet the qualifications as voters and use their voting rights for the first time in a general election, such as national or regional

elections (Sa'ban et al., 2022). By age, those who first have the right to vote are 17 years old and currently studying at the Senior High School (SMA) level. Currently, individuals born within this age range belong to the modern generation, often referred to as the millennial generation, ranging from 17 to 36 years old (Zen, 2022).

Based on the continuous voter list recapitulation in May 2022 released by the Tuban District Election Commission, there are 941,812 eligible voters ready to exercise their voting rights in the 2024 simultaneous elections. This includes 465,225 males and 476,587 females, distributed across 20 sub-districts and 328 villages (KPU Kabupaten Tuban, n.d.). This data reflects a decrease of 707 voters from the total Permanent Voter List (DPT) in the Tuban District Head Election in 2020, which had a total of 942,519 people, with novice voters comprising 30.8% (Bulqiyah & Kono, 2023). The decline is attributed to factors such as voter deaths, relocations, new registrations, and changes in data.

Table 1 Number of voters based on age in the 2020 tuban district head election

No	Age of Voter	Number	Number of Valid Votes	Number of Invalid Votes
1	17-30	216.861		
2	31-50	383.532		
3	51-100	342.126		
	Total	942.519	705.189	15.900

(Bulqiyah & Kono, 2023)

According to the data in Table 1, the number of invalid votes was quite high in the 2020 Tuban District Head Election. Within the invalid votes, there were also votes from novice voters (30.8%). The presence of invalid votes and the failure to exercise voting rights in elections pose complex challenges to the sustainable development of Tuban district and the country. One of the causes is the need for more political education, especially for novice voters, as an initial contribution to Indonesia in choosing representatives or national leaders.

Novice voters receive significant attention in every election because the proportion of young voters (aged 17-39) is predicted to approach 60 percent and has the potential to determine the outcome of political contests in 2024. Indeed, this figure is often linked as the origin of the expected improvement in the future of democracy in Indonesia (Batapilu, 2023). Their role is crucial in the context of political participation and determining the direction and results of elections. The primary challenge for novice voters in elections is the potential occurrence of money politics, especially

among novice voters in rural and urban areas (Harjanto, 2021) (dkpp.go.id). Therefore, an effort is required to address this issue.

Hence, community service activities organized by lecturers from the Political Science Program at the University of PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban offer a solution to tackle these issues. This solution involves providing political education for novice voters in Tuban Regency Senior High Schools. The aim is to increase the political participation of novice voters in the 2024 simultaneous elections and create the use of voting rights with high-quality outcomes.

Political education is required for novice voters currently studying at Senior High Schools in Tuban District to improve high-quality political participation. Political education should not only focus on the voting process but also provide novice voters with broad knowledge about state institutions, political practices, political funding, democracy, national defense, and the role of social media in politics. So far, social media has been underutilized for providing political information to novice voters.

METHOD

Using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method, this community service activity aims to generate knowledge, address issues, and fulfil the practical needs of the community (Putri & Sembiring, 2021; Qomar et al., 2022). The activities involve education, coaching, and awareness conducted face-to-face through lectures and direct Q&A sessions with 11th-grade students from SMA Negeri 1 Grabagan and MAN Negeri 1 Tuban. The choice of 11th-grade students is based on their age, as they fall into the category of novice voters.

The community service team, consisting of four individuals, conducted outreach to Novice Voters in the 2024

Simultaneous Elections. The coaching materials were divided into four interesting themes: Novice Voters in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections, presented by Sri Musrifah, S.IP, M.IP.; Becoming Informed Voters, presented by Hasanul Bulqiyah, S.IP, M.Sos.; Rules in the Implementation of the 2024 Simultaneous Elections, presented by Sumarno, SH., M.Si.; and the Significance of Novice Voters' Voices in the 2024 Elections, presented by Denny Fahrian, S.IP, M.Sos. This outreach aims to increase novice voters' knowledge about the 2024 simultaneous elections and their crucial role in this democratic event. The aim is to raise awareness among novice voters to exercise their voting rights in the 2024 simultaneous elections.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Due to their tremendous enthusiasm, most novice voters lack the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions. There are moments when novice voters are indecisive, apathetic, and politically uninformed and often follow the majority in their group. Moreover, novice voters are considered the most susceptible to negative external influences, leading them to become pragmatic and indifferent to the election process. Therefore, they still require enlightenment through education, coaching, and awareness.

Families play a significant role in various aspects of life that influence novice voters' perspectives, such as teaching them about politics and building their attributes. How can this start? Perhaps in a comfortable political class (Putri & Sari, 2020). Socio-economic status, parental social orientation, high school activities for adolescents, and parental participation influence young voters' political participation (Putri & Sari, 2020). As women are more easily persuaded than men, gender also influences the attitudes of novice voters.

Every democratic event in Indonesia always involves novice voters. As a result, involving novice voters in elections is essential because they constitute a significant portion and can potentially sway the outcome of every election. Introducing novice voters and enhancing their awareness of participating in the election process is crucial.

Political education is everyone's responsibility, including political parties, NGOs, community organizations, and other academic institutions. The Election Commission and Election Supervisory Agency are not only election organizers but also part of the community. Involving all parties in educating novice voters will result in informed voters who, with the knowledge they acquire, will enhance their political participation. The success of these efforts also relies on the leaders elected by the people in the next five years.

Led by the team of lecturers from the Political Science Program at the University of PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban, this community service activity is part of the collaborative role to provide political education to novice voters about the 2024 simultaneous elections. It aims to enlighten Generation Z about Novice Voters in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections, Becoming Informed Voters, Rules in the Implementation of the 2024 Simultaneous Elections, and the Significance of Novice Voters' Voices in the 2024 Simultaneous Elections.

After participating in this Community Service activity, 11th-grade students are expected to become informed voters. They should ensure their registration as permanent voters in the Permanent Voter List (DPT), express a desire to obtain information and track records of candidates, inquire about voter eligibility criteria, actively follow election developments, and, most importantly, not abstain from voting.

Novice voters are highly connected to the internet and technology, more tolerant and open-minded, critical and analytical, highly enthusiastic and rational, and eager for change. Their voices fall into the independent, critical, and rational young voters category.

According to the 2019 Election DP4 data, novice voters constitute 50% of the national electorate, which can influence election outcomes. Novice voters also have a wide network, allowing issues brought by the millennial generation to permeate society easily. They are recognized as agents of change, functioning as a pressure group. Elections are how people choose representatives to manage the country, formulate public policies, and protect and serve the people to realize a fair, prosperous society (Selvia, 2023).

This activity indicates that Indonesia is currently experiencing a demographic bonus, with more people in the productive age group (working age) than those who are not productive. The productive age here is the working age, ranging from 15 to 64 years. Therefore, the number of novice voters is quite substantial. Since novice voters have been exposed to technology since birth, political parties will be more effective in approaching them using technology. Exposure to technology has negative and positive impacts on the voting behaviour of novice voters. The positive impact is that technology, particularly social media, is an effective campaign tool because it is an integral part of their lives. The negative impact is that uncontrolled use of technology, such as social media, can lead to apathetic or apolitical attitudes among novice voters. This may make novice voters reluctant to cast their votes in the future, even though a single vote from a novice voter can determine the course of a country/region in the next five years. Thus, the voice of novice voters will be significant in participating in elections. The role of novice voters in

elections can be through participation or monitoring the implementation of elections.

CONCLUSION

The success of the simultaneous elections in 2024 is closely tied to the participation of novice voters. The current demography bonus in Indonesia has resulted in a significant proportion of the population being young. This large number presents an opportunity for all participants in the 2024 simultaneous elections to explore and target as a vote bank. However, more than merely targeting them is needed to ensure they cast their votes in accordance with their informed opinions. Political education and awareness about elections are needed. Unfortunately, such activities have not been extensively addressed by election participants. Novice voters represent the future of our nation and our regions. Mishandling them could lead to apathetic, indifferent attitudes and a lack of interest in their affairs, potentially reducing their political participation and increasing the abstention rate in elections. Continuous efforts are needed to provide political education for novice voters. It is not enough to focus only when the elections are approaching; it should be integrated into various activities, such as classroom teaching, youth activities, social events, and more.

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